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STUDENT MOBILITY KEY FIGURES FOR 2024: OVER 412,000 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN FRANCE

In 2022-2023, 412,087 international students will be enrolled in French higher education institutions, an increase of 3% over one year and 17% over five years. In its 2024 edition of Chiffres Clés de la mobilité étudiante (Key Data on Student Mobility), Campus France traces the latest developments in a sector which, after the contrasting impact of Covid and the unanimous upturn that followed it, is entering a more uncertain era.

[Link to the PDF version \(French\)](#)

[Link to the summary \(English\)](#)

14% of students in French higher education are foreign nationals

France remains a top destination for students from all over the world. There are now over 412,000 in the country, **up 3% over one year and 17% over five years**¹. Students from the continent of Europe (EU and non-EU), sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa represent the largest contingents - see Appendix 1. The number of Asian students in France remains stable, thanks in particular to the increase in the number of Indian students, which offsets the decrease in the number of Chinese students on exchange programmes. Globally, France maintains its **6th place** among host countries for student mobility (Appendix 3).

Morocco, Algeria and China are still the three main countries of origin of international students in France (Appendix 2), and 21 of the top 25 contingents of international students are increasing in 2022-2023, with a particularly strong rise in the number of Italian, Spanish, Lebanese, Congolese and Indian students. The number of Ukrainian students has also doubled in one year (+111%), an increase linked to the continuing war.

French students prefer neighbouring or French-speaking countries

In 2021, more than 105,000 French students went abroad to study for a degree. This figure has risen by 16% since 2016, making France the 6th most popular country of origin for internationally mobile students. Their destinations are mainly neighbouring or French-speaking countries: Belgium, the UK, Canada, Switzerland and Spain (Appendix 4). France is also the leading country of origin for Erasmus+ students and staff, with almost 53,000 people leaving

¹ Students of foreign nationality enrolled in French higher education for the 2022-2023 academic year. This includes apprenticeship students in higher technician sections.

in 2022, an increase of 36% in one year. Their preferred destinations are Spain, Germany and Italy.

Worldwide, mobility for study purposes is resuming after the pandemic-related hiatus

The latest comparative data available at the global level is for 2021, a year in which the number of mobile students stagnated due to the pandemic. The number of students enrolled in the United States, Australia, Canada, China and Japan fell to an all-time low, according to data published by UNESCO's statistical institute, the OECD and Eurostat (Appendix 3). But the impact of Covid has been far from uniform: the UK, Germany and Turkey have continued to attract more and more students in 2021, while France has maintained its numbers.

The various national reports available since 2021 show that mobility has picked up again and that more mobile students have returned to the main host countries. However, recently announced changes in public policy and measures to limit the number of mobile students in certain major host countries - namely Canada, the UK, and the Netherlands - could slow the growth in student mobility.

Campus France

Campus France upholds the attractiveness of French higher education by promoting it to international students. It is also responsible for managing French and foreign government grants, supporting student and researcher mobility, managing the France Alumni network and analysing student mobility in France and around the world. The agency coordinates the Campus France Forum in France (372 establishments). Across the world, it relies on the 275 Espaces Campus France, under the authority of the French embassies in 134 countries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Trends in the number of mobile students by zone of origin in France

Étudiants de nationalité étrangère par zone géographique d'origine

Zone d'origine	Effectifs en 2022-2023	Part	Évolution 2017-2022
Afrique subsaharienne	95 285	24%	+34%
Afrique du Nord	91 865	23%	+10%
UE27	73 310	18%	+24%
Asie-Océanie	51 992	13%	-3%
Europe hors UE	29 605	7%	+12%
Moyen-Orient	22 446	6%	+50%
Amérique du Sud	15 322	4%	+1%
Amérique centrale et Caraïbes	9 875	2%	+40%
Amérique du Nord	8 963	2%	+8%
Inconnue	4 220	1%	+8%
Total général	402 883	100%	+17%

Source : MESR/SIES, 2023.

APPENDIX 2: Top 10 countries of origin of international students in France (2022-2023)

	Pays d'origine	2022-2023	Part du total (%)	Évolution 2021-2022	Évolution 2017-2022
1	Maroc	45 162	11%	-3%	+13%
2	Algérie	32 147	8%	+4%	+5%
3	Chine	25 605	6%	-7%	-15%
4	Italie	20 028	5%	+4%	+50%
5	Sénégal	15 251	4%	0%	+39%
6	Tunisie	14 291	4%	+5%	+11%
7	Espagne	11 594	3%	+3%	+48%
8	Liban	11 527	3%	+10%	+103%
9	Côte d'Ivoire	10 691	3%	0%	+32%
10	Cameroun	9 767	2%	+8%	+42%

APPENDIX 3: Top 10 host countries for student mobility worldwide

Pays	Effectifs 2021	Évolution 2020-2021	Évolution 2016-2021	Rang 2021	Rang 2016	Part d'étudiants internationaux
États-Unis	833 204	-13%	-14%	1	1	5%
Royaume-Uni	600 589	+9%	+39%	2	2	20%
Australie	378 439	-17%	+13%	3	3	22%
Allemagne	376 359	+2%	+54%	4	5	11%
Canada***	312 630	-3%	+65%	5	7	17%
France*	252 856	+0,2%	+18%	6	4	9%
Chine**	229 459	-2%	+61%	7	9	0%
Turquie***	224 048	+21%	+155%	8	13	3%
Japon	216 241	-3%	+51%	9	8	6%
Pays-Bas	135 535	+9%	+51%	10	12	14%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, UOE data collection, January 2024.

*The 2016-2021 trend for France is estimated. The counting method for France changed in 2018 and that for Italy in 2019, making any calculation of growth that includes an earlier period irrelevant.

** Hong Kong and Macao included.

***These countries count international students rather than mobile students, which leads to an overestimation of the number of students hosted.

Note: UOE data was collected by the UIS, OECD and Eurostat. The OECD, which collects data for Russia, has not published Russian data for 2020 and 2021 following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. No data for the United Arab Emirates has been published for 2021.

APPENDIX 4: Main destination countries for mobile French students in 2021

Pays de destination	Effectifs 2021	Évolution 2020-2021	Évolution 2016-2021	Rang 2021	Rang 2016
Belgique	19 063	+5%	+13%	1	1
Royaume-Uni	14 042	+1%	+16%	2	3
Canada	13 155	-28%	-16%	3	2
Suisse	12 267	+8%	+27%	4	4
Espagne	10 336	+6%	+92%	5	7
Allemagne	9 074	-2%	+30%	6	5
États-Unis	4 963	-19%	-23%	7	6
Roumanie	2 967	+8%	+37%	8	8
Pays-Bas	2 609	0%	+53%	9	9
Portugal	2 563	+28%	+454%	10	19

Source: UIS, October 2023.