




RULE BRITANNIA

US and UK to remain the top international destinations

H1	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) – a global association of graduate business schools – has [surveyed students considering an international programme in 2021](#) to determine how the pandemic has changed their plans.

-  71% say it has made no difference.
-  17% (1 in 6) are considering a business school closer to home.
-  14% (1 in 7) are considering online learning.

GMAC suggest these findings indicate a potential rise in regional mobility and the adoption of online – or perhaps blended - learning models for a segment of prospective international students.

In its efforts to continue to attract global talent, the [UK government is creating pathways for education](#) and work with a [points-based immigration system](#). The new system will treat EU and non-EU citizens equally. From the summer of 2021, all international students who have completed a degree programme will be permitted to remain in the UK for up to two years (going up to three years for PhD degree students) after successfully completing their studies, through the new Graduate Route. This allows the students to gain meaningful work experience in the country even as they decide their future career move.

The UK government has also simplified the visa process for international students. Since October 2020, the Student Route, which falls under the UK's new points-based immigration system, is applicable, improving the previous Tier 4 route and making a more streamlined experience for sponsoring institutions and students.

Covid-19 may be decelerating student mobility overall, but GMAC's Director suggests that these developments – coupled with the political changes in the US – mean that the US and UK are likely to remain the top two international destinations, and do well.

HONG KONG ON THE RISE

...or do undergraduates tell a different story?

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A [2020 study into student perspectives on the impact of Covid-19 on student mobility](#) examined the expectations of Mainland China and Hong Kong students for studying abroad after the pandemic.

Among the 2,739 respondents, 84 percent showed no interest in studying abroad after the pandemic. The majority of respondents in the study were 18 to 25-year-old first degree seekers.

The top five most popular study destinations are the US (17.1%), Hong Kong (13.4%), the UK (12.2 %), Japan (10.8 %), and Taiwan (10.8 %).

Hong Kong used to be the eighth most popular destination but is now starting to attract more Mainland China students than the UK does. Taiwan, coming up fast, has never been any top ten study destinations for Mainland China students before.

The report concludes that, while the pandemic has significantly decreased international student mobility overall, it is also shifting the direction of flow. East Asian countries and regions are facing more opportunities in the increasingly competitive higher education sector for international students.

It also notes that the trend means UK universities could face a £2.5 billion loss in tuition income. [The recent report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies](#) suggests lost income from reduced international student numbers could be higher at £4.3bn (a 10% drop).

The article also suggests that the current global health crisis could intensify social and economic inequalities across different higher education systems when some countries fail to maintain the scale of international learning because of different speeds of economic recovery post Covid.

FURTHER READING

