

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.