

FOREIGN STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

Among the G-8 countries, the United States had the most foreign students (in absolute numbers) enrolled in higher education, but foreign students made up a higher percentage of enrollment in higher education in Canada, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

Over the past 3 decades, the number of foreign students (i.e., students enrolled outside their country of citizenship) in higher education has grown more than fourfold: from 0.6 million worldwide in 1975 to 2.7 million in 2004 (OECD 2006a). In 2004, G-8 countries hosted about two-thirds of the foreign students in higher education, with a majority of them enrolled in four countries: the United States, which received the largest percentage of these foreign students (22 percent); the United Kingdom (11 percent); Germany (10 percent); and France (9 percent) (figure 3a). Altogether, in 2004, these four G-8 countries accounted for 52 percent of all foreign students enrolled in higher education.

In addition to examining how many foreign students are hosted by each G-8 country (as a percentage of all foreign students enrolled

in higher education), the extent of student mobility in the G-8 countries can be examined by two measures that take into account the size of a country's higher education system: (1) the percentage of a country's students enrolled in higher education who are foreign students (i.e., foreign students by country of destination) and (2) the percentage of a country's students enrolled in higher education who study abroad (i.e., foreign students by country of origin).

Among the G-8 countries, the United States had the most foreign students (in absolute numbers) enrolled in higher education, but foreign students made up a higher percentage of enrollment in higher education in the United Kingdom (16 percent) as well as in Germany, France, and Canada (11 percent each) (figure 3b). The United States was one of the countries with the smallest percentages of foreign students (3 percent); the others were Japan (3 percent), Italy (2 percent), and the Russian Federation (1 percent).

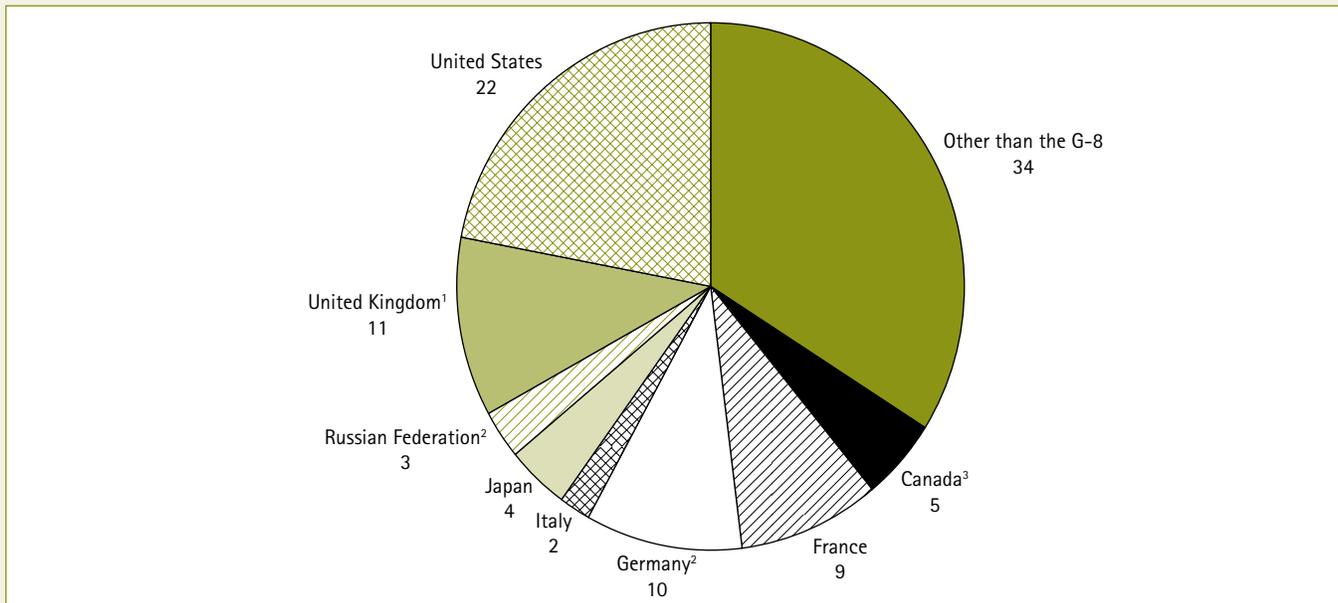
With the exception of the Russian Federation, all of the G-8 countries had a greater percentage of students coming into the country than going abroad to study. The percentage of students enrolled in higher education and going abroad to study was between 1 and 2 percent for all of the G-8 countries.

Definitions and Methodology

Foreign students are defined as noncitizens enrolled in education programs in a host country (thus, some permanent residents are included). As shown in the figures, education levels are defined accord-

ing to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A.

Figure 3a. Percentage distribution of foreign students enrolled in higher education programs, by country of destination: 2004



¹The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

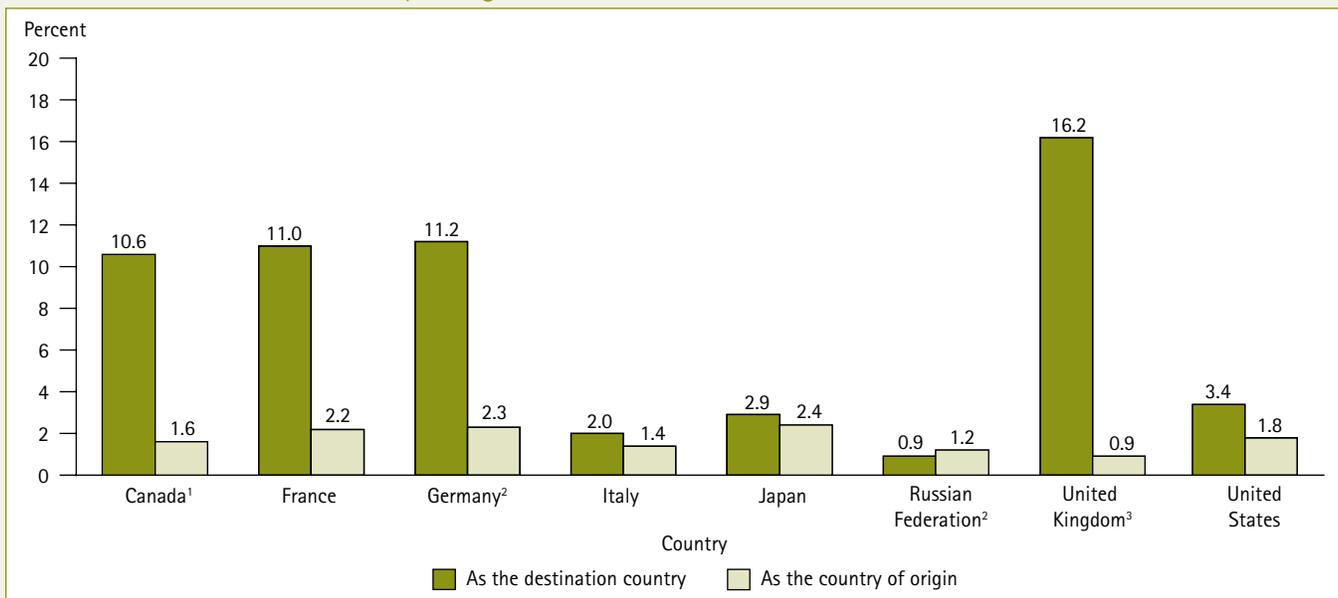
²Excludes advanced research programs (i.e., doctoral level of academic higher education).

³Reference year is 2002 rather than 2004.

NOTE: Foreign students are defined as noncitizens enrolled in education programs in a host country (thus, some permanent residents are included). Data show the percentage of enrolled foreign students in each G-8 country of destination. Countries of origin include 30 OECD countries, 177 non-OECD countries, and some nonspecified countries. Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Except where otherwise noted, data shown include ISCED levels 5A (academic higher education below the doctoral level), 5B (vocational higher education), and 6 (doctoral level of academic higher education). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, table C3.8. Paris: Author.

Figure 3b. Foreign students as a percentage of all students enrolled in higher education programs, by country of destination and country of origin: 2004



¹Reference year is 2002 rather than 2004.

²Excludes advanced research programs (i.e., doctoral level of academic higher education).

³The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

NOTE: Foreign students are defined as noncitizens enrolled in education programs in a host country (thus, some permanent residents are included). Countries of origin include 30 OECD countries, 177 non-OECD countries, and some nonspecified countries. Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Except where otherwise noted, data shown include ISCED levels 5A (academic higher education below the doctoral level), 5B (vocational higher education), and 6 (doctoral level of academic higher education). For more information on the ISCED levels, see appendix A in this report.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006*, tables C3.1 and C3.2. Paris: Author.