

CENTRE
FOR
MIGRATION
CONTROL



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:

A RECORD HIGH

2022/23

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Figures due to be released by the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) next February will show that foreign students in the UK have increased by almost 200,000 in just twelve months.

The Centre for Migration Control has found that the number of foreign students studying at UK higher education institutions has increased by 28.1% between the 2021/22 and the 2022/23 academic years.

CMC sent Freedom of Information requests to 80 higher education providers, accounting for 383,125 of the 680,000 international students that were resident in the UK for the 2021/2022 academic year.

They found that, for the 2022/2023 academic year, the number of international students at these institutions had leapt to 490,865, an increase of 107,740 (28.1%). A breakdown of this data is available in Annex A.

The rate of student population increase at these 80 institutions closely matches the rate of increase across the entire higher education sector. For example, between 19/20 and 20/21 the overall foreign student population in the UK increased by 8.7%, whilst at these 80 universities it increased by 7.7%.

A year later, between 20/21 and 21/22 the entire sector saw a population increase of 12.3%, whilst the 80 universities saw one of 13.7%.

Were this rate of increase to carry across all institutions, then **the number of foreign students at UK universities during the 2022/23 academic year will have reached a record high of 870,000.**

This would be a near doubling of the number of international students that were resident in the UK in the 2016/2017 academic year (442,375).

This number of students is equivalent to the entire combined student population of 216 higher education institutions. Meaning that, effectively 216 UK universities are there solely to service foreign students.

Even if this huge increase, seen across 100 universities, was not applicable at other institutions in the sector then **the number of foreign students in the UK would still reach a record high of 787,000**

Increase in foreign students

In 2019 the Conservative Government set itself the target of recruiting 600,000 international students into the British higher education system by 2030.¹

HESA figures show that in 2020/2021 there were 605,130 international students in the UK, meaning that the target had been met almost a decade early.

¹ [International students in UK higher education - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/library/research-briefings/cross-sections/summary-of-research-briefings/international-students-in-uk-higher-education)

A year later, in 2021/22 there were 680,000 international students which, until this year, had been the record.

In May the Daily Telegraph revealed that the Education Secretary Gillian Keegan had said she was “hugely proud” that over 600,000 students were studying in the UK.²

The Department for Education made it clear that “The 600,000 every year is not a speed limit. It is not capping. It’s going over that threshold as there are economic benefits and they return home. If the Home Office sought to bring in any cap or reduction, there would be a robust conversation.”³

The year before the Conservative Party came into power the number of foreign students at British universities was 405,805⁴.

2016/2017 – 442,375⁵

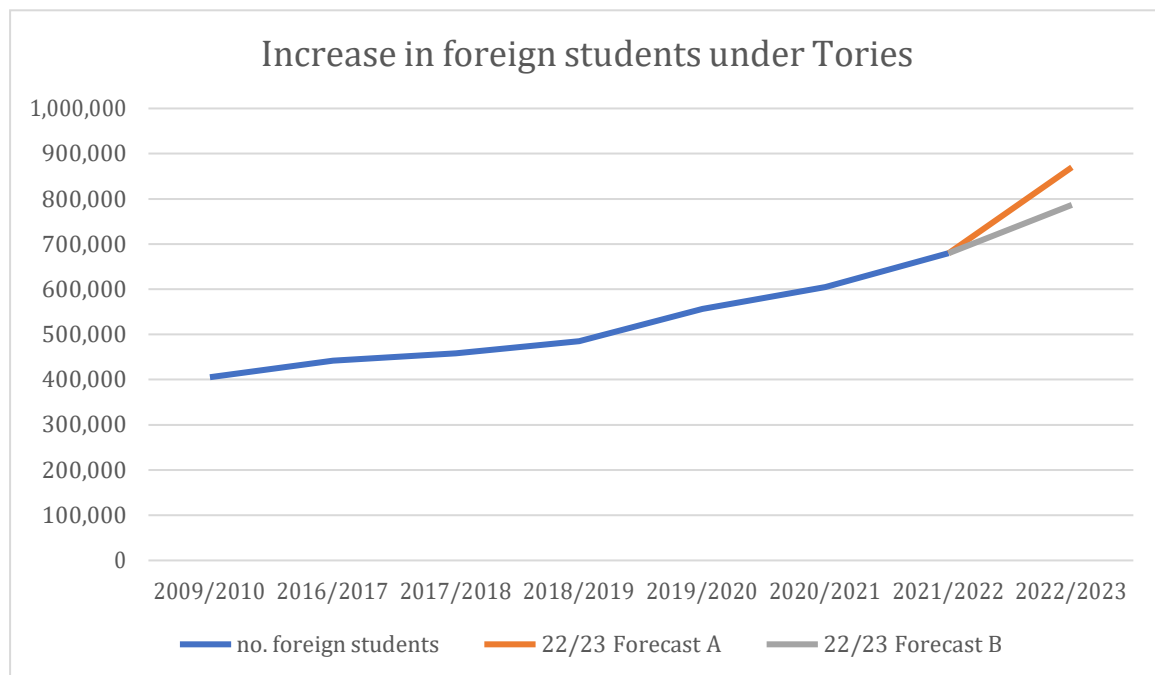
2017/2018 – 458,490⁶

2018/2019 – 485,645⁷

2019/2020 – 556,625⁸

2020/2021 – 605,130⁹

2021/2022 – 680,000¹⁰



² [Gillian Keegan 'hugely proud' of 600,000 foreign students coming to UK every year \(telegraph.co.uk\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2021/05/11/gillian-keegan-hugely-proud-600000-foreign-students-coming-to-uk-every-year/)

³ [Gillian Keegan 'hugely proud' of 600,000 foreign students coming to UK every year \(telegraph.co.uk\)](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2021/05/11/gillian-keegan-hugely-proud-600000-foreign-students-coming-to-uk-every-year/)

⁴ [Introduction - Students 2009/10 | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/introduction-to-students-2009-10)

⁵ [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2016/17 | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-2016-17)

⁶ [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2017/18 | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-2017-18)

⁷ [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2018/19 | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-2018-19)

⁸ [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2019/20 | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-2019-20)

⁹ [Higher Education Student Statistics 2020/21 released | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-2020-21-released)

¹⁰ [Higher Education Student Statistics: UK 2021/22 released | HESA](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/higher-education-student-statistics-uk-2021-22-released)

Increase in foreign students' dependents

In May this year the government and Suella Braverman, who was then Home Secretary, announced plans to limit the number of dependents that could accompany foreign students to the UK.

The measures, due to come into force in January, mean that only postgraduate foreign students studying in the UK will be eligible to bring family members with them.¹¹

Analysis of ONS data by the Centre also shows that the number of non-EU dependents being brought to the UK by foreign students has skyrocketed since 2018.

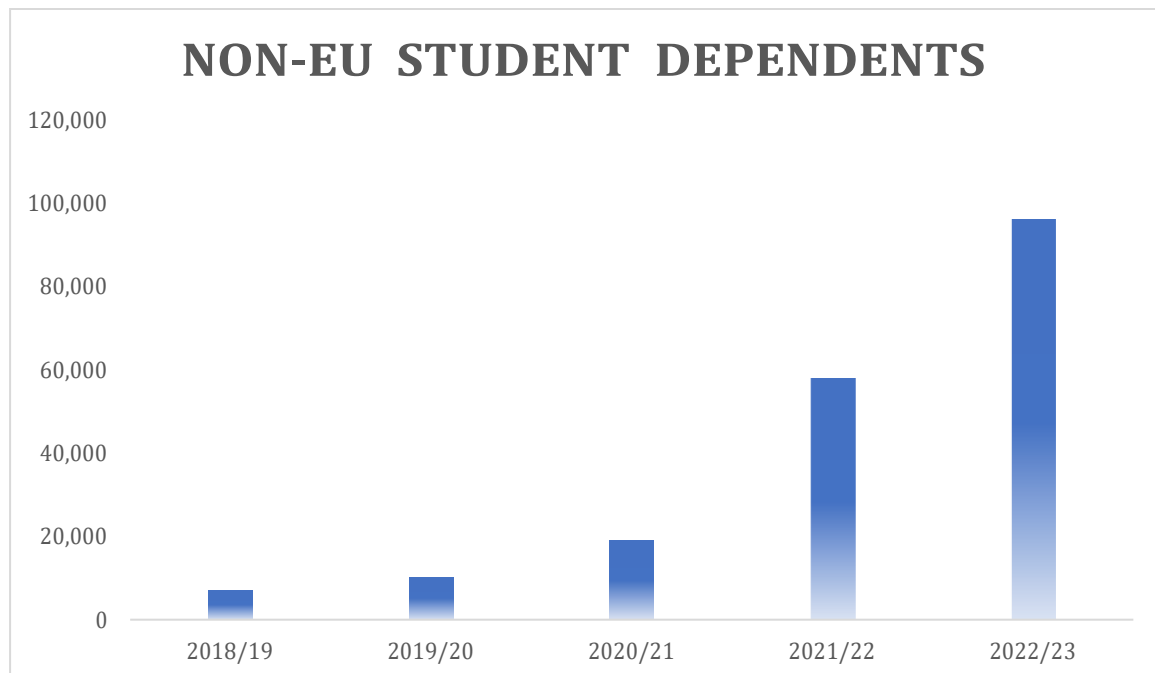
In the twelve months from June 2022 to June 2023, 282,000 non-EU students arrived, bringing with them 96,000 dependents. This ratio means that one in three students are bringing a dependent with them (1: 2.9)

The previous year, ending June 2022, saw the arrival of non-EU 262,000 students and 58,000 dependents. This meant one in five students brought a dependent with them (1: 4.5)

2020/2021 – 118,000 students and 19,000 dependents. (1: 6.2)

2019/2020 – 114,000 students and 10,000 dependents (1: 14)

2018/2019 – 119,000 students and 7,000 dependents. (1: 17)



¹¹ [Changes to student visa route will reduce net migration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-student-visa-route-will-reduce-net-migration)

FOI responses:

	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/2022	2022/2023	Increase	%Change
University of West of Scotland	1485	2490	5050	8070	3020	59.80%
University of Bedfordshire	5525	6810	6035	8307	2272	37.65%
Leeds Trinity	85	90	50	104	54	108.00%
Anglia Ruskin	4675	6350	7170	7565	395	5.51%
University of Wolverhampton	1535	2185	1935	4579	2644	136.64%
Northampton	2355	2965	4465	4844	379	8.49%
Westminster	6495	5965	7035	7439	404	5.74%
Middlesex	5590	5220	4600	4903	303	6.59%
De Montfort	7025	6170	8075	10304	2229	27.60%
York St John	605	945	1355	6884	5529	408.04%
Canterbury Christ Church	640	685	795	2406	1611	202.64%
Bradford	1605	1815	3355	4461	1106	32.97%
Queen Margaret Edinburgh	1140	1230	1185	546	-639	-53.92%
Abertay Dundee	605	645	600	600	0	0.00%
Derby	1950	2235	2870	3268	398	13.87%
Winchester	455	405	535	944	409	76.45%
Brunel	4605	5640	7010	11561	4551	64.92%
Robert Gordon	2250	2770	3470	4504	1034	29.80%
Teeside	2520	3780	6125	8264	2139	34.92%
Roehampton	1260	2000	3685	7808	4123	111.89%
Birmingham City	4025	4330	4840	5033	193	3.99%
Kingston	4745	4850	6200	5053	-1147	-18.50%

St Mary's	815	990	945	741	-204	-21.59%
Worcester	1070	820	985	1637	652	66.19%
Hertfordshire	6325	9725	13230	15925	2695	20.37%
Chichester	235	300	250	277	27	10.80%
Salford	1950	3135	4325	8736	4411	101.99%
LJMU	1955	2015	1925	2024	99	5.14%
Suffolk	910	1415	1345	5751	4406	327.58%
Glasgow Caledonian	2210	2525	3570	2961	-609	-17.06%
St George's	340	305	285	250	-35	-12.28%
Liverpool Hope	220	275	345	674	329	95.36%
Bournemouth	2630	2695	2780	2999	219	7.88%
Birkbeck	1425	1555	1410	1695	285	20.21%
Arts University Bournemouth	590	575	580	758	178	30.69%
Cardiff	8475	7725	7530	9608	2078	27.60%
Cranfield	2145	2160	2685	8929	6244	232.55%
Edge Hill	385	425	495	966	471	95.15%
Glyndwr University	575	960	1375	2605	1230	89.45%
Hartpury	155	170	170	195	25	14.71%
LSE	8170	9030	8520	8574	54	0.63%
Herriot Watt	3335	3270	4135	11850	7715	186.58%
Newcastle	7615	6615	6215	5965	-250	-4.02%
Leeds Beckett	1585	2275	3270	4287	1017	31.10%
King's College	13475	15550	17155	25241	8086	47.13%
MMU	2750	2785	2890	4697	1807	62.53%
Nottingham Trent	5225	5405	6595	7180	585	8.87%
Royal Agricultural	145	145	185	217	32	17.30%

Queen Mary	7370	7795	8935	14530	5595	62.62%
Royal Holloway	3000	2680	2610	3107	497	19.04%
Queen's Belfast	4205	4985	5175	4419	-756	-14.61%
Hallam	2540	3005	5205	7359	2154	41.38%
Institute of Cancer Research	35	35	40	55	15	37.50%
RADA	45	45	40	21	-19	-47.50%
Swansea	3470	3620	4270	5000	730	17.10%
Aberdeen	5150	4825	4690	3328	-1362	-29.04%
Edinburgh	14625	15590	18050	23967	5917	32.78%
Warwick	10045	10305	11065	12885	1820	16.45%
University Arts London	10755	11230	12060	10732	-1328	-11.01%
Lancaster	5425	5475	5245	4524	-721	-13.75%
Bath	5420	4905	4765	3992	-773	-16.22%
Cambridge	7550	7270	7205	7575	370	5.14%
Brighton	2525	2445	2395	3033	638	26.64%
Dundee	3000	3055	4110	6806	2696	65.60%
Glasgow	10490	13245	17390	14145	-3245	-18.66%
Hull	1950	2200	3580	4489	909	25.39%
Leeds	10760	10445	11125	14294	3169	28.49%
Leicester	4425	4255	5185	7200	2015	38.86%
Liverpool	9165	7805	6975	8005	1030	14.77%
Stirling	2955	3670	4235	4124	-111	-2.62%
Manchester	15335	17625	18170	17306	-864	-4.76%
Portsmouth	5750	6375	6785	11222	4437	65.39%
St Andrews	4625	5130	5425	4431	-994	-18.32%

Reading	4475	4175	3925	4500	575	14.65%
Strathclyde	4880	4605	5305	7778	2473	46.62%
Sunderland	3105	3600	4990	14657	9667	193.73%
Highlands and Islands	345	425	320	269	-51	-15.94%
York	4590	5840	5905	5840	-65	-1.10%
St Mark and St John	45	50	30	250	220	733.33%
Nottingham	8805	7715	8285	8833	548	6.61%
TOTALS	312745	336845	383125	490865	107740	28.12%

