



Emerging Futures 7

Voice of the
International Student

April 2025

About Emerging Futures

Amplifying the voice of international students

IDP's Emerging Futures research aims to equip the international education sector, institutions and policy makers with insights to offer exceptional global education experiences aligned to student priorities. Emerging Futures, Voice of the International Student, examines the attitudes, motivations and intentions of international students.

In this survey we explore what 'high quality education' means to international students and how they understand if an institution provides it. We also looked at top concerns of studying internationally, and new for this study, the motivations for getting an international qualification.



Evolution of our research

100,000+ students surveyed over 13 surveys

Crossroads 1-5

April 2020
– July 2021



New Horizons

August
2021



Emerging Futures 1-7

March 2022 –
March 2025

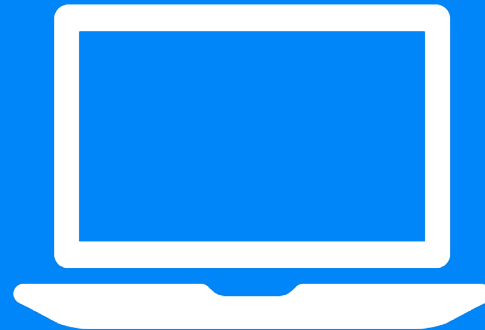
Research context

A survey of students (prospective, applied, current and completed)

**15-minute
survey**



**Administered
in English and
Chinese**



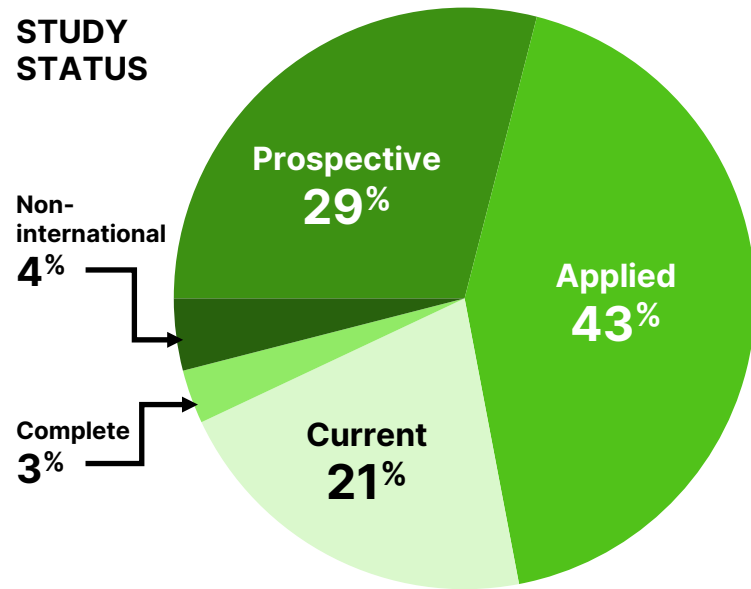
**Conducted
between
Feb 9 – Mar 9,
2025**



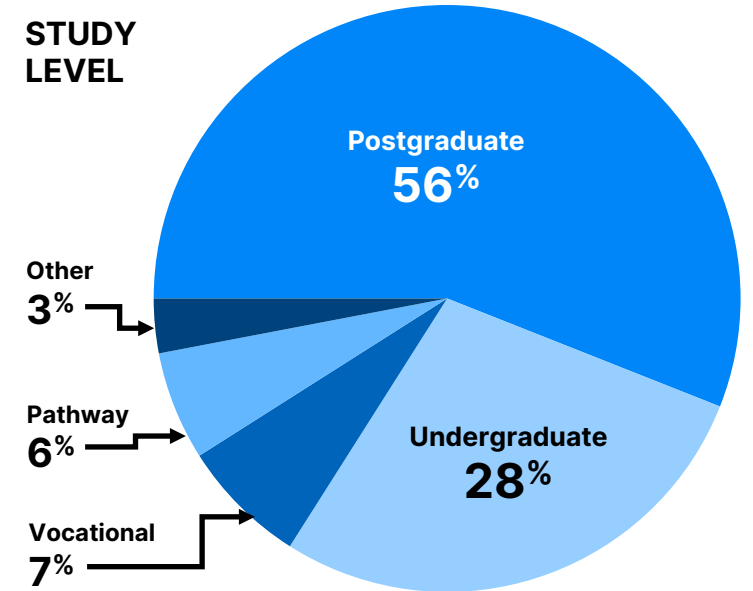
Student respondent profile

6,000+ respondents from across the globe

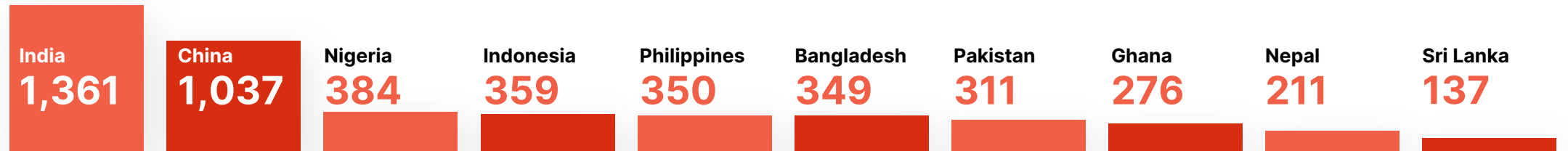
STUDY STATUS



STUDY LEVEL



TOP 10 SOURCE MARKETS





Key findings

Headlines from
Emerging Futures 7

Key findings

What insights can institutions, governments and the sector take away?

Students are driven by career development, job outcomes and return on their investment when choosing where to study internationally

- 'Career development' remains the primary motivator to study internationally (69% in Emerging Futures 1 in March 2022 and 67% Emerging Futures 7 in March 2025); interest in acquiring global knowledge slightly decreased overall (60% EF1 to 56% EF7), suggesting other factors may be rising in relative importance.
- Students' understanding of whether an institution provides 'high-quality education' is now largely based on its 'graduate employment rate'. This outranked 'institution ranking' and 'quality of academic staff' showing that students are seeking tangible outcomes from their studies.
- 'Job outcomes from the institution' was the top non-academic factor when choosing an institution for 58% of international students.



Reasons to study for an international qualification

International students are career focused with an eye on return on their investment



67%

Career development



67%

Education quality



56%

Acquiring global knowledge



50%

Reputable qualifications



47%

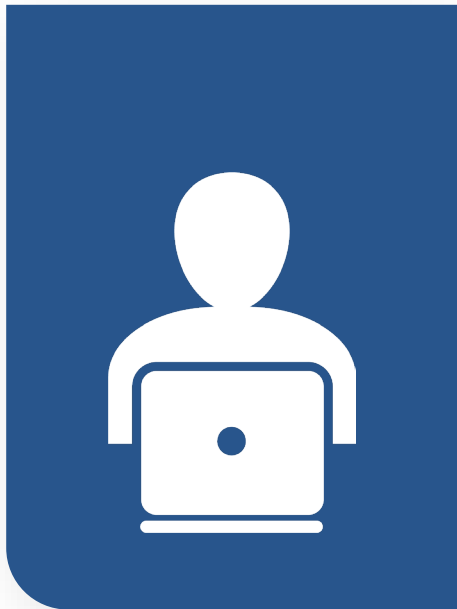
Education options

Primary factors in 'high quality education'

Post-graduation employment is the top factor in understanding if an institution provides 'high quality education'

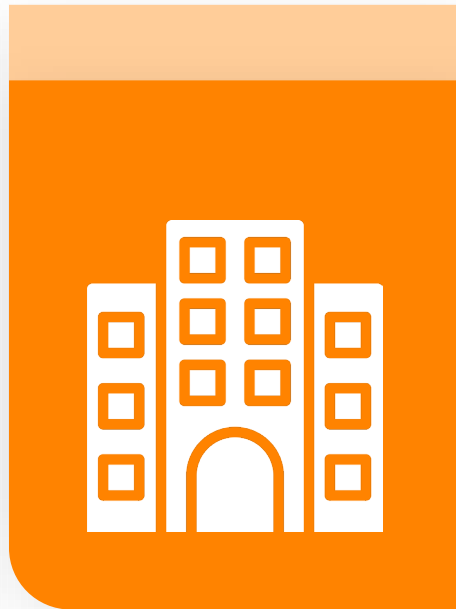
1

Graduate
employment rate



2

Institution
ranking



3

Facilities available
to students



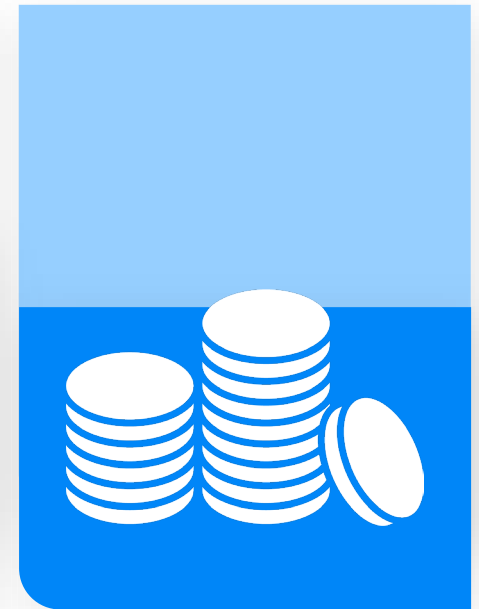
4

Quality of
academic staff



5

Cost of
tuition fees



Non-academic factors in choosing an institution

Job outcomes after graduation are the most important factor



58%

Job outcomes from the institution



53%

Range of scholarships



52%

Access to part-time work opportunities



46%

Student visa support services



37%

Location within the destination country

Top concerns for studying internationally

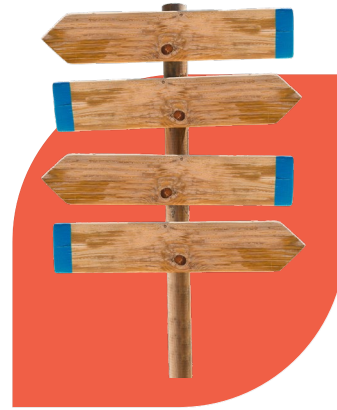
Cost and finances are the biggest concern for students by a wide margin



66%
Cost and
finances



47%
Visa
challenges



44%
Career plans



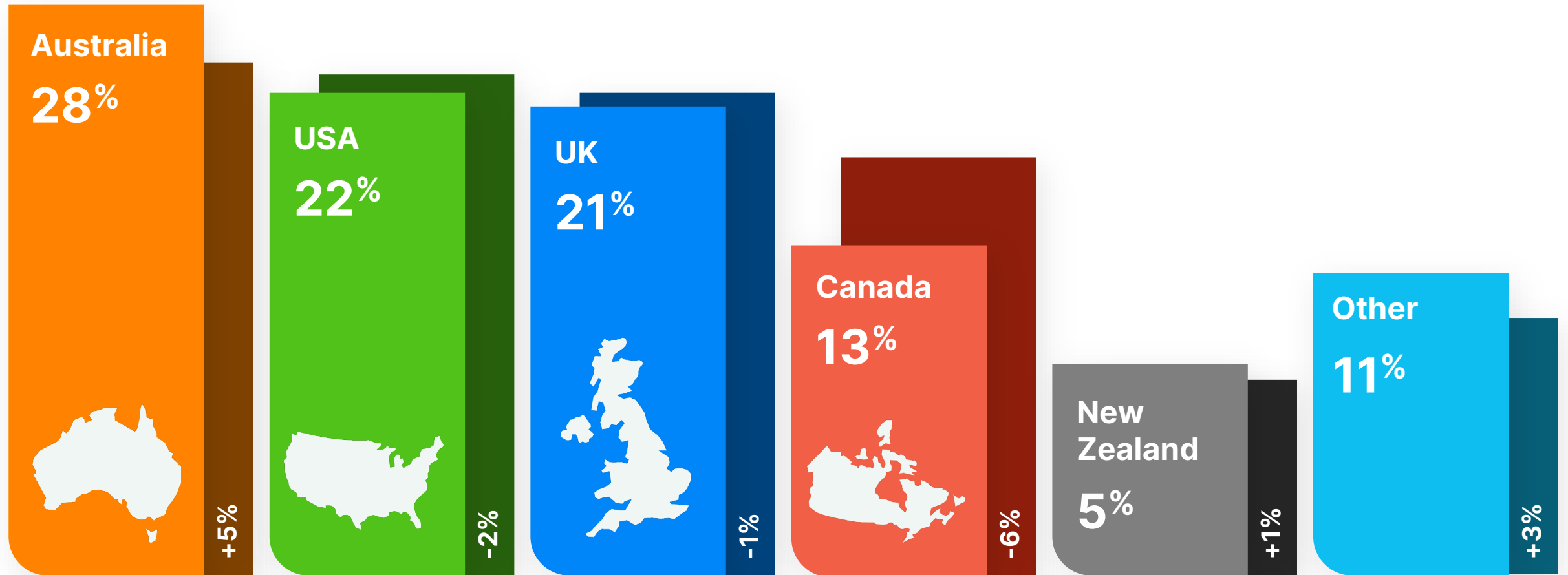
43%
Housing



39%
Balancing
work and
studies

First-choice destinations over time

Australia strengthens its lead as first-choice destination while Canada's decline persists



Primary factors in first choice

Globally, high quality of education and post-study employment are top considerations

1

High quality of education



2

Good employment opportunities after graduation



3

Safe country for international students



4

Availability of scholarships



5

Institutions are attractive



Perceptions of study destinations

The USA and Australia lead perceptions of most aspects with the UK leading in international student policies

QUALITY OF EDUCATION



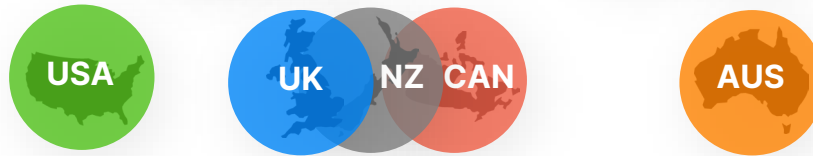
VALUE FOR MONEY



GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



POST-STUDY WORK VISA POLICIES



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT POLICIES



6 LOWEST

10 HIGHEST

What students say – USA

“““

A post-study work visa is very important.

Employers don't want to waste resources training someone who may not be able to stay. So, they set a prerequisite: you must have the legal right to work here before they are willing to invest in training you. Otherwise, everyone who joins is a beginner, and they can't afford to train just anyone.

- IDP student from China studying in the US



Summary

What insights can institutions, governments and the sector take away?

Students are driven by career development, job outcomes and return on their investment when choosing where to study internationally

- Jobs after graduation, employment and career outcomes have emerged as the top factors in choosing a destination, choosing an institution and even why to study internationally at all.
- Employability is a critical priority, underscoring the need for institutions to strengthen career support and industry connections to enhance students' international study experience.
- Governments and policymakers must be reminded to protect post-study work opportunities and to embrace the international student cohort, who go on to fill vital skill gaps and foster long-lasting diplomatic ties between their home and host countries.



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