

Local impact of transnational education

A pilot study in selected
European Union countries

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Key findings

In this study we explore the impacts of UK transnational education (TNE) programmes on the delivery process and the partner institutions and students involved. These impacts vary according to the form of TNE delivery, its location and across broad subject disciplines. Further research is needed to verify the validity of these preliminary findings. The main areas of impact are summarised below.

Contribution to place: The local skills agenda

- **TNE addresses local labour market needs.** Programmes focus on addressing identified skills gaps in the localities involved and produce graduates with relevant high-level knowledge and skills. Many TNE providers are actively looking to identify future labour market needs and develop programmes with which to meet them.
- **UK TNE is seen as having an 'internationalising' role that helps to build prosperity for local areas and facilitates local authorities' ambitions to attract international businesses.** Local stakeholders believe that UK TNE programmes will attract international students who will join the labour market with graduate-level knowledge and skills that can support global businesses' needs in the locality. A survey found that 35 per cent of TNE students enrolled on UK programmes were international. While this suggests that UK TNE programmes contribute to local internationalisation of higher education (HE) agendas, further work is needed to provide statistical verification of this finding.
- **English-language taught programmes are a critical factor in attracting and retaining international businesses.** For students, they also maximise international employment opportunities, including with multinational companies in-country. Except for a small number of language and culture programmes, this study found that TNE programmes were delivered in English, and this highlights the substantial language capital offered locally by students enrolled on, and graduates of, such programmes. An online survey carried out with TNE students established that over three-quarters (79 per cent) spoke two or more foreign languages.
- **UK TNE programmes are perceived as contributing to the local development, circulation and transfer of knowledge.** Together with their ability to attract and retain businesses, these programmes can counteract 'brain drain' in the local area.
- **TNE programmes have an immediate and positive impact on local economies.** Like all HE providers, TNE providers employ local staff (academic and non-academic) and attract students to the area, both groups becoming essential consumers of local services.

Contribution to local HE partners

- The immediate impact of TNE programmes on local partners is to enable them to offer UK university programmes with **high employability prospects**. The student survey highlights the importance students place on their TNE programme's contribution to career prospects, with 89 per cent either agreeing or strongly agreeing that it would give them better opportunities to find the right job for their career aspirations.
- Building reputation is longer term and ultimately impacts on the the future viability of local HE provision. Local partners see co-branding with a reputable UK institution as a critical benefit, enhancing their reputation and positioning in-country as quality providers in the local talent supply chain.
- Another valuable contribution is the **transfer of knowledge from UK partners to local academic systems, processes and practices**, including 'know-how' in quality assurance, programme development and programme delivery. In the short term, local partners use the UK providers' systems and practices to bridge gaps in their own organisations. In the longer term, they are motivated to gain know-how themselves and transfer it broadly to their own institutional and programme development.
- According to the local partners, UK TNE contributes to their capacity development. **Partners highlighted the impact on their institutions of staff development provided by their UK partners in critical areas such as teaching skills, curriculum design, evaluation and assessment, and programme management.**
- UK TNE providers are also seen to expand local partners' international networks and to provide mobility opportunities for longer-term collaboration in teaching and research. Partnership with UK higher education institutions (HEIs) enables local staff to work as members of global and diverse teams, building both their personal skills and their contacts.

89%

of students agree or strongly agree that the UK programme gives them more chance to find the right job



Contribution to people: The local community

Students and their families are essential members of the local community. For them, a TNE's critical contribution lies in its ability to fulfil their career aspirations by equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed for successful participation in the labour market.

The factors they identify as most important include quality, content and approaches to learning; local recognition of UK TNE programmes; programmes being taught in English; the opportunity to improve students' international outlook (84 per cent of students identified this as very important or important); awareness and understanding of other cultures (83 per cent); and opportunities for international student mobility, such as spending a semester abroad at a UK university.

- Family and work commitments are also significant considerations for many students. In the student survey these factors were ranked as important or very important (92 per cent and 82 per cent of the surveyed students respectively). **TNE enables students to study locally and within their own communities. Local families benefit from a lower cost of study than studying in the UK.**
- **While there is an assumption that local communities benefit from retaining talented students, further research is needed to test and understand this.** Of the surveyed students, 55 per cent agreed that they would be able to make a more significant contribution to their local community because of their TNE course.

- This study found that subjects such as those related to medical studies enable students to apply their newly learned skills and knowledge in their communities. Examples include the specialised skills of staff and students being used to provide clinics and other services to underprivileged families. Local supervisors of clinical and work placements are also motivated and encouraged to keep their knowledge up to date and to engage in continuing professional development.
- More specifically, some UK providers run public seminars and workshops in their areas of expertise. Others contribute to local events through financial sponsorship or other in-kind support.

Contribution to local access to HE

- TNE programmes provide access to HE courses and development opportunities that have limited availability locally. This scarcity may be because there are no courses locally, there are insufficient places on courses, or because students with specific personal characteristics (such as age – those already in employment may need flexible education provision) find it challenging to get back into education once they have left the system. While most TNE courses are taught in English, those that are taught in the local language are perceived as enabling greater access to quality international programmes. They reduce the language barrier to learning, lower dropout rates and allow employment of a wider pool of local academics.
- TNE programmes also appear to fulfil a broader development role for local communities and regions. Respondents describe TNE as developing local talent pools, retaining talent locally and discouraging brain drain, and contributing to local knowledge economies by creating and circulating knowledge within the local area.

- **The role of TNE in widening access – and its potential contribution to developing localities, regions and countries – is largely unexplored.** However, by putting the findings from this study into a global context, the following findings emerge:

- There is a direct contribution of UK TNE to the achievement of United Nations Strategic Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by increasing access to HE and improving education capacity in host countries – 62 per cent of all UK TNE is offered in less developed countries (official development assistance [ODA] countries).
- Primary evidence suggests that UK TNE acts as a mechanism to support a global widening-of-participation agenda by improving access for underrepresented and disadvantaged groups. This is evident even in European non-ODA countries.

Measuring and prioritising impact

- Student enrolment numbers are the primary 'hard' measure used to measure the scale of TNE by both UK providers and local partners.
- Student progression to HE programmes in the UK is not part of the measurement. In contrast to UK TNE in other parts of the world, **TNE in Europe is not viewed as a recruitment pathway into UK courses. TNE students are seen as different from those who would go to the UK to study, meaning that TNE is a complementary activity which does not compete with recruitment to the UK.**
- Graduate outcomes, such as entry to employment and (to a lesser extent) progression to postgraduate courses (but not necessarily in the UK) are seen as measures that HEIs might use in the future. Currently, data on these outcomes is not systematically collected.
- UK HEIs and local partners cite reputation, profile and standing in-country as important success measures (i.e. impacts for the institution). Respondents frequently describe the importance of feedback and support from employers, city authorities, etc. Again, however, data is not systematically collected.

- The term 'local impact' is not commonly used; instead, impact is typically described in terms of institutions being able to effectively meet local needs. This is a critical factor for the viability and longer-term sustainability of TNE programmes. For both UK HEIs and local partners, the consideration of local labour market needs and how best to address them is a high priority. There are several ways in which these shape and drive TNE:
 - HEIs focus on niche and specialist subjects that address specific unmet local skills gaps (and play to the UK HEI's strengths). This holds true across different types of TNE ('Our decisions about TNE are no longer institution driven but are local student/business driven').
 - HEIs' strategies focus on complementarity, not competition. They take care not to replicate existing provision or create competition that will have a negative impact on other local providers ('our strategy is synergy not competition').
 - Location and place are significant considerations ('success depends on where you set up').
 - Building and managing local relationships is seen as critical to the success and sustainability of programmes. Priority is given to the UK HEI or the local partner actively fostering these relationships. UK HEIs' direct engagement with local stakeholders differs according to the TNE model of delivery (with campus models having much greater engagement than validation or franchising operations).
 - Reputation, brand and reach in the locality or region are essential considerations to balance student numbers and financial returns. Some respondents envisage future trade-offs between financial and non-financial returns – for example, some high-volume but low-income programmes could be strategically important because they deliver high visibility and branding in a country.

Dispelling misconceptions about TNE

- The study dispels some commonly held misconceptions about TNE. The first is that 'TNE acts as a direct substitute for international student mobility'. The findings show that, in Europe, TNE and outbound student mobility are not direct substitutes. Instead, they are separate markets. Some UK HEIs are using TNE strategically to establish or strengthen their footholds in Europe (a vital consideration post-Brexit). This chimes with broader research showing that TNE is acting as a mechanism for UK HEIs to maintain access in vital offshore markets. The past decade shows a consistent trend of the number of UK TNE students growing faster than the number of inbound students to the UK. Rather than UK TNE growth reducing inward mobility, it has helped UK HEIs to offset some of the decline in inbound students.
- A second misconception is that 'TNE is an inferior quality type of HE provision'. The study findings challenge this, with respondents highlighting the quality, relevance and recognition of UK TNE as significant reasons for its attractiveness locally. Local partners also point to the rigorous quality-assurance requirements for running UK programmes. For them, this provides valuable capacity building which has a wider impact across their institutions.

— **The ability to effectively meet local needs is a critical factor for the viability and longer term sustainability of TNE programmes.**



This report puts forward recommendations for government-level policy makers and HEIs as the main stakeholders involved in TNE:

General recommendation

- The terms of reference of the research should be expanded beyond the pilot stage to verify its initial findings across a statistically significant sample.

HEI-level recommendations

- HEIs should consider systematic capture of information about the local impacts of their TNE activities.
- Many of the impact definitions are limited to measuring income per student. Reducing the role of TNE to the generation of financial returns is too narrow and underestimates real impacts in the country of delivery. Anecdotal evidence and case studies suggest that experiences for those involved can, in fact, be life changing.

Government-level recommendations

- Exploration of ideas of global citizenship and the extent to which TNE promotes them.
- The relationship between TNE and the SDGs needs to be explored. Also, the impact of TNE on widening access to quality HE requires further attention.
- This research suggests that UK TNE contributes to countries' internationalisation of their HE agendas. More research is needed to verify the scale of this contribution.

Local impact of transnational education

A pilot study in selected European Union countries

Background

The British Council has commissioned this pilot study to explore the impact of TNE on local communities. The study aims to understand whether the local impact for both sending and host institutions is considered when establishing global partnerships.

The study focuses on selected EU countries grouped into two tiers, based on their engagement in TNE. The latter is measured by the number of students on UK TNE programmes and whether they are involved in delivering or hosting such programmes.

Tier 1
includes Cyprus, Germany, and Greece.

Tier 2
includes Italy, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain, France, Malta, Portugal, and Lithuania.

1

Research aims and methodology

2

2.1 Research objectives

The original objectives included establishing the following:

- To what extent do global TNE partnerships impact the local partner, place and public? For example:
 - **Local partner:** Do partnerships change the offer of the host institution outside the actual TNE course?
 - **Local place:** Does the arrival of TNE partnerships impact the local institutions or the local cultural offer?
 - **Local public:** Does TNE change cultural perceptions, intercultural awareness and understanding? How do TNE programmes contribute to internationalisation at home?
- How can TNE impact be measured at the local level?
- To what extent is the local impact a consideration for both sending and host institutions when establishing global TNE partnerships?
- Is the local impact of international TNE an essential consideration for institutions when developing programmes? Are TNE providers ignorant or unsure about 'the local' where they offer courses?
- What do local institutions hope and expect to gain from developing TNE programmes? What are their motivations and objectives?
- What do the international partners hope and expect to gain from developing TNE programmes?
- To what extent is 'local impact' a part of both partners' considerations? How high on the list of priorities does 'local impact' rate?
- How do institutions define local impact, and how (if at all) do they measure this?

2.2 Research methodology

The research took place between the end of February and June 2020. The study used qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.

Structured interviews were carried out with HEIs active in TNE provision across the selected EU countries. An attempt was made to contact local stakeholders and international partner institutions.

A survey with TNE students was carried out which aimed to capture the impact of TNE programmes. The survey was distributed through the local partners to their students.

To contextualise the findings with HEIs and students, the study examined the impact of TNE on mobility patterns and whether more significant TNE provision affected inbound student mobility from the respective countries.

Countries across Europe went into lockdown in the second and third week in March in response to Covid-19. Therefore, most of the research was carried out during the pandemic outbreak, which affected the data collection. The interview schedule was severely disrupted by the outbreak of Covid-19, with access to international stakeholders becoming extremely difficult. Most of the interviews were conducted with UK HEIs either engaged in TNE activities or setting up an overseas physical presence.

The pandemic outbreak equally disrupted student surveys. Local exams which took place in May presented an additional challenge.

Local impact of TNE in selected EU countries

3

This section draws on the findings from the stakeholder interviews and the student survey.

3.1 Stakeholder perspectives

Structured interviews were conducted with nine HEIs involved in delivering TNE programmes. Of these, four interviews were with the UK provider, three with an international campus or office in Europe, and two with the local HEI partner in-country. The researchers were also able to interview one local state representative (Saxony). Interview questions were designed to obtain stakeholders' perspectives on the impact of programmes on local place, partner and public. They also explored how HEIs measured local impact and how important a consideration this was for them.

3.1.1 Impact on place

The vast majority of programmes were set up in response to local business needs and sought to plug specialist skills gaps which would not otherwise be met by local providers. Gaps were both current and future (for example, identifying where new industries and businesses were planned or beginning to grow). Local stakeholders perceived the contribution of TNE to the local skills agenda as the most significant impact on place. For UK HEIs, the local skills agenda – and unmet needs within it – was the primary consideration in deciding what programmes to deliver in which place.

Another impact on place was identified as supporting cities' and regions' ambitions to attract international businesses. A ready supply of English-speaking and globally aware graduates was seen as an important 'pull' factor ('international graduates for international businesses'). Interviewees noted that the presence of international students also benefited cities

and regions by contributing to their internationalisation agendas.

TNE programmes were perceived to be contributing to knowledge development and transfer both locally and regionally. One important consideration was their ability to retain students in the country and the region, thereby preventing brain drain. An important dimension of the local delivery of English-taught programmes was their appeal to international students from other EU and non-EU countries with a strong demand for study abroad, such as Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Turkey and other nations bordering the EU.

UK HEIs placed great importance on the role of TNE in sustaining their engagement with students from across the EU whose mobility to the UK might be disrupted by Brexit. Students from the new accession states, who tend to be more price sensitive than those from the old EU states, were seen as a particularly vulnerable group. The higher tuition fee levels for EU students from the 2021-2 academic year onwards are likely to have a negative impact on the numbers of EU students coming to the UK. To ensure continued engagement with students from Europe and maintenance of research links with European partner institutions, several UK universities have set up branch campuses in the past few years.

In all countries, HE is a significant employer and service consumer.¹ TNE provision is no exception. One of the practical impacts identified is its contribution to local economies through the employment of local academic and non-academic staff and the use of a wide range of local services.

The newly established University of Lancaster in Leipzig provides a good illustration of how an institution expects to sustain a relationship with EU students and universities in the post-Brexit context.

¹ E.g. in the UK, universities directly employ 404,000 people and support the employment of a further 544,000. They generate £95 billion for the economy (Oxford Economics (2017) *The Economic Impact of Universities in 2014-15: Report for Universities UK*. <https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/the-economic-impact-of-universities-in-2014-15>).

The vast majority of programmes were set up in response to local business needs. They were plugging specialist skill gaps which would not otherwise be met by local providers.



Case study:

Lancaster University Leipzig

In January 2020, Lancaster University (LU) Leipzig commenced operations as a branch campus of the UK's Lancaster University. Named 'International University of the Year' by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020, Lancaster University consistently ranked in the top ten of all three UK national league tables. It was also awarded the highest score in the UK government's 2017 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

LU Leipzig's strategic plan envisions ambitious growth while prioritising an outstanding student experience underpinned by teaching excellence, high-quality research and strong stakeholder engagement. LU Leipzig also represents a deep strategic partnership between Lancaster University and Navitas, guided by a 'one campus' culture in which the university provides all academic oversight and teaching of university programmes while Navitas provides campus and professional support services and staffing of pre-university programmes. Committed to providing the same academic quality and student experience as

offered in the university's main UK campus, LU Leipzig commenced operations with four Lancaster University-accredited Bachelor of Science programmes: (BSc (Hons) Business Management; BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance; BSc (Hons) Computer Science; and BSc (Hons) Software Engineering), as well as foundation programmes delivered in conjunction with Navitas.

Lancaster University chose Leipzig based on the city's many recreational and cultural opportunities, its booming economy and dynamic growth, its diverse social structure and student-friendly infrastructure, and its attractive lifestyle and housing market. Together, these provide an outstanding student experience as well as longer-term settlement opportunities and job prospects.

Lancaster University's decision to establish its European campus in Germany was supported by a number of institutions, including the Saxon State Ministry for Science, the Arts and Tourism, Germany Trade & Invest (GTAI), Invest Region Leipzig, the Leipzig City Council, the British Embassy in Berlin, and the British Council. LU Leipzig benefits stakeholders in Leipzig and the region by helping to minimise the employability gap, strengthening Leipzig's reputation as an academic hub, supporting the city's internationalisation strategy, enhancing the city's global reputation as a lucrative location for investment, increasing the network of 'ambassadors' for the city, and supporting the local economy.

Case study contributed by Dr Elisabeth Grindel-Denby (Campus Director) and Dr Mark Brewer (Academic Dean).

3.1.2 Impact on partner

Impact on partner was identified in two broad areas: first, UK TNE gives local partners the means to improve their attractiveness in local education markets; second, it builds institutional capacity by developing their knowledge, systems and human resources.

In improving attractiveness, HEIs described the impact for the partner as being able to offer UK university degrees for highly sought-after subjects with employability prospects, both national and international. Programmes were attractive to students' families because they were local and offered at a fraction of the cost of studying in the UK. At a broader level, co-branding with a highly rated UK institution had a significant impact on partners in improving their positioning as quality providers in-country.

In terms of institutional capacity building, HEIs placed significant importance on the transfer of knowledge from UK partners and cross-fertilisation of academic processes, practices and systems. Building know-how in programme development, programme delivery and processes, and quality-assurance mechanisms was critically important. So was the opportunity to keep knowledge and processes current through the UK HEI partner's updating of programmes and systems. Local partner HEIs were able to access staff development from their UK partner for a range of areas, including curriculum development, teaching skills, assessment and student support. Working with their UK counterparts provided opportunities for staff to expand their international networks and mobility, potentially leading to longer-term collaboration in teaching and research. In delivering TNE programmes in-country, staff were often working as members of global teams, further expanding these opportunities. Capacity building from TNE also had comprehensive application to local partners' other programmes and systems.

While the focus of the structured interviews was on impact on local partners, interviewees also described the impact for UK HEIs themselves, chiefly the opportunity to establish a foothold in Europe or expand and strengthen their existing position. For many, Brexit was an important driver of recent TNE initiatives, guiding decisions about location and positioning of programmes in Europe.

3.1.3 Impact on public

Interview questions sought HEIs' perspectives on the impact of TNE on three particular groups among the local public in partner locations: students, parents and the broader community.

Students placed a high value on employability. TNE programmes developed personal and professional capabilities that enabled them to compete successfully for jobs. UK HEIs' emphasis on the student experience helped to add to students' life skills.

An important factor in employability, whether locally or globally, was that students acquired internationally accepted knowledge, skills and competencies. The programmes taught in English maximised international employment opportunities with global companies in-country. On some programmes, students' international experience was further enhanced by opportunities to study for a semester in the UK with the UK HEI.

In some countries, UK TNE gave a greater choice of study programmes, enabling students to study for the profession of their choice – an opportunity not available through domestic provision. UK programmes had the added advantage of a clearly defined and often shorter length of study, which meant that students could often enter the labour market sooner than their peers.

While most courses were taught in the English language, there were examples (mainly in Greece and Cyprus) where courses were taught in the local language. In these cases, impact was achieved through increasing access to quality international programmes for students whose lack of English would have been a significant barrier. These programmes reduced dropout rates and were able to employ a wider pool of local academics.

Perspectives from individual students were collected through the student survey (See Section 3.2 Student perspectives).

For parents, TNE programmes were seen to offer affordable, quality HE in-country, leading to high employability for their children. Courses were also seen as presenting a safer option than studying overseas.

Stakeholders offered less information on the impact of TNE on local communities. Nevertheless, interviewees described benefits derived from the specialised skills of staff and students. These were mostly in medical

3.1.4 Measuring impact

The primary 'hard' measures of impact for both sending and host institutions was student enrolment numbers on in-country programmes and the income derived. Student progression to programmes in the UK, however, was not part of the measurement. In contrast to UK TNE in some other parts of the world, TNE in Europe was not viewed as a recruitment pathway into UK-based courses. TNE students were seen as a different group from those who would go to the UK to study and TNE was therefore perceived to be a complementary activity which did not compete with recruitment of students to the UK.

HEIs also identified two other gauges of impact. The first was graduate outcomes. This was predominantly in terms of graduate entry to employment and, to a lesser extent, progression to postgraduate courses (not necessarily in the UK). While most HEIs did not have formal mechanisms or requirements in place to track these outcomes, staff often informally followed graduates' progress.

The second area of impact sought by HEIs was building and strengthening their reputation, profile and standing in-country. Interviewees placed great importance on feedback and support from employers and city authorities as measures of institutional success. Again, no examples were found of formal mechanisms or requirements to measure this type of impact.

Compared with the range of impact measures applied to UK-based programmes, those for TNE were relatively underdeveloped.

In contrast to UK TNE in some other parts of the world, TNE in Europe was not viewed as a recruitment pathway into UK-based courses. TNE students were seen as a different group from those who would go to the UK to study and TNE was therefore perceived to be a complementary activity which did not compete with recruitment of students to the UK.

arenas, with examples of clinics and other services being offered to underprivileged families. There was also an impact on local practitioners who supervised students on clinical and work placements and who, because of this opportunity, were motivated to update their knowledge and take part in continuing professional development. More widely, there were examples of local communities benefiting from HEIs running public seminars and workshops in their expertise areas. There were also examples of HEIs contributing (financially and otherwise) to local events.

The University of London in Paris (ULIP) offers a perspective developed over a century of experience with local stakeholders. The ULIP was initially set up as a philanthropic institution in 1894 by Edith Williams, one of the first British-qualified English professors in France. The *Guilde Franco-Anglaise*, as it was initially called, was an English teaching institution set up to respond to the enormous interest in learning English in France. Since then, the institution has undergone a series of changes in its activities and stakeholders. At present, it offers interdisciplinary undergraduate programmes in French studies, international politics, history and cultural studies, and a range of postgraduate programmes. A detailed timeline of the development of the ULIP is available in the Annex of this report.

3.1.5 Local impact as a consideration for HEIs providing TNE

The term 'local impact' was not commonly used by respondents. Instead, impact was typically described in terms of institutions placing a high priority on meeting local needs. The viability and longer-term sustainability of programmes were seen to be critically dependent on their success in this area. There were several ways in which this consideration drove and shaped how UK HEIs conducted TNE:

- HEIs focused on niche and specialist subject areas which directly addressed specific unmet local skills gaps (and which played to the UK HEI's strengths). This held true across the spectrum of the provision from validation and franchising to campus development ('our decisions about TNE are no longer institution driven but are local student/business driven').
- The strategy pursued by HEIs was one of complementarity rather than competition – they took care not to replicate existing provision or create competition which would negatively impact on local providers ('our strategy is synergy not competition').
- All HEIs recognised that relationship building and management were critical factors in the success and sustainability of programmes. Relationships were actively fostered either by the UK HEI or by their country partner. The level of direct engagement by UK HEIs was linked to the particular TNE model – so campus models involved significant direct engagement with local authorities, businesses and communities. However, there was also evidence that HEIs operating solely through a partner in-country were increasingly seeing direct engagement in-country as necessary for reputation building. Examples were given of HEIs getting directly involved with local and regional governments.
- Reputation, brand and reach were important considerations alongside the more obvious return on investment (all HEIs recognised the links between these aspects). Thinking about the future, some interviewees could see possible trade-offs between financial and non-financial returns – for example, some programmes which were high volume but not high income might nevertheless be strategically important because they delivered high visibility and branding in a country.

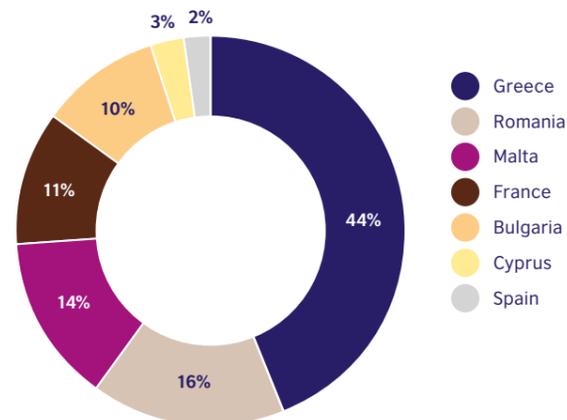
- HEIs recognised that research collaboration was a long-term aim for some local partners. This was also the case for some UK HEIs, and examples were given of active relationship building with relevant local and regional academic networks.

3.2 Student perspectives

Local partners distributed the online survey to the students on their TNE programmes. We do not have the enrolment data of the respective programmes and it is therefore impossible to calculate the response rate of the study. The student survey received 78 responses, with 71 students completing the questionnaire thoroughly and agreeing to their responses being cited. The first part of this section provides a profile of students undertaking UK TNE programmes; the second part looks at how students perceive the impact of these programmes.

3.2.1 Profile of students

Figure 1: Country of study for TNE students (n = 63)



Most of the responses came from students in Greece (44 per cent) and Romania (16 per cent), who collectively accounted for 60 per cent of total survey participation, followed by Malta (14 per cent), France (11 per cent) and Bulgaria (10 per cent).

International students on UK TNE programmes

UK TNE programmes attract international as well as home students in the country of delivery. The study found that over a third of TNE students (35 per cent of the respondents) were international students. This ties in with interviewees' perceptions (see section 3.1.1) of some of the benefits and impacts on 'place'.

The largest group of international TNE students was from the UK (39 per cent), followed by Albania, Italy and Malaysia with 9 per cent each. Most of the UK students were enrolled on programmes delivered at a branch campus.

The rest of the nationalities were on various types of programme, including validated local delivery, branch campus and online.

Figure 2: Nationality of TNE students (n = 63)

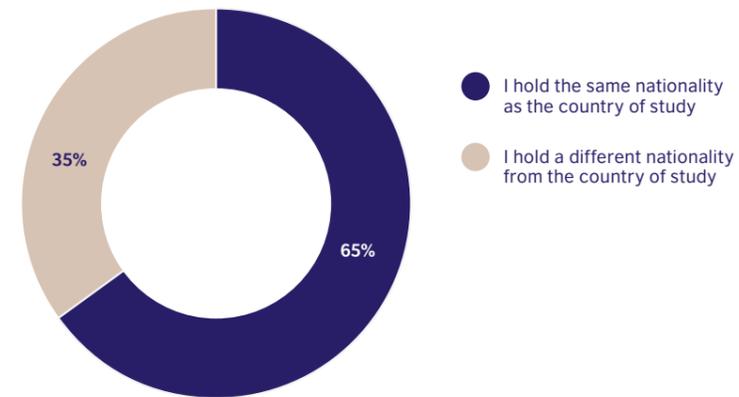
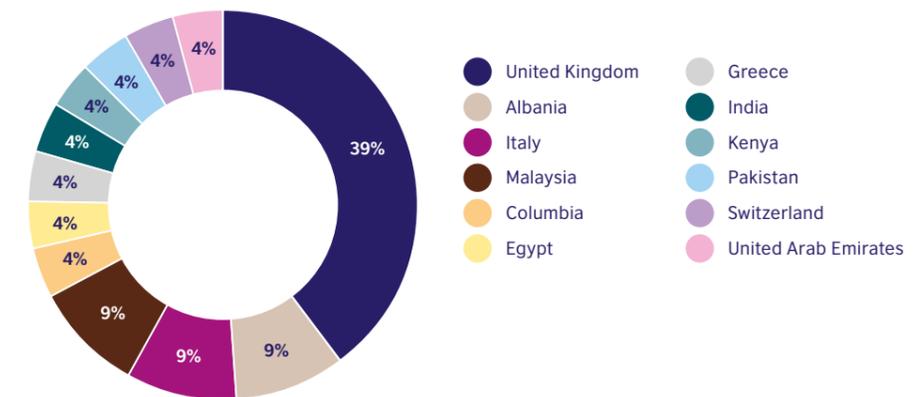
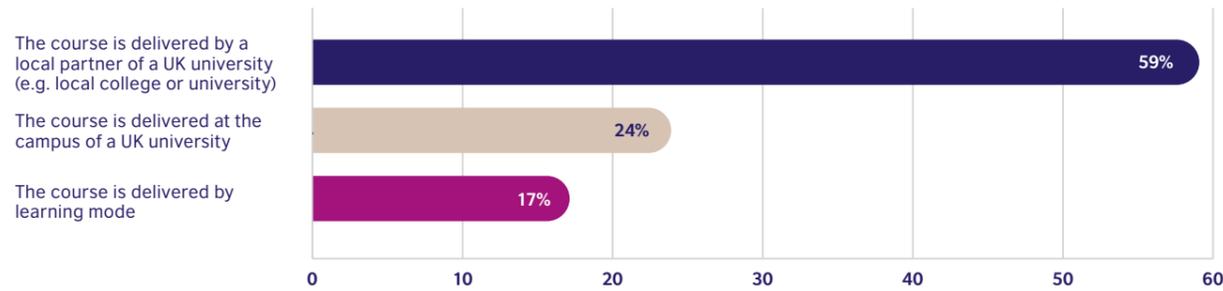


Figure 3: Home country of international learners on TNE programmes (n = 23)



The majority of the TNE programmes were delivered by local partners of UK HEIs (59 per cent), followed by branch campus operations (24 per cent) and online delivery (17 per cent)².

Figure 4:
Type of TNE programme (n = 59)



The majority of the international TNE students (61 per cent) studied at a branch campus of a UK university.

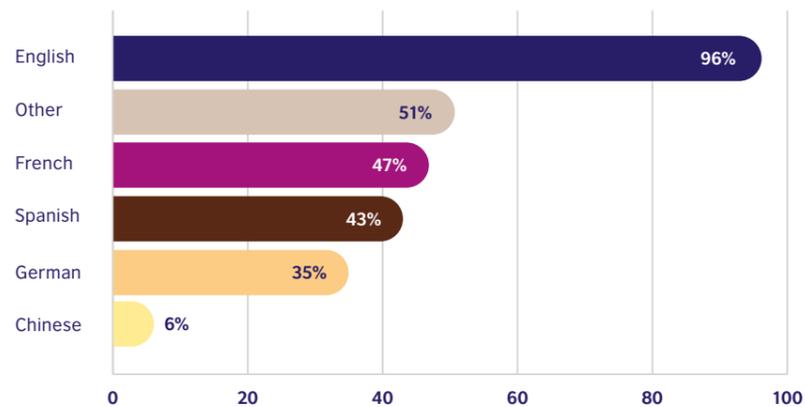
Most of the surveyed students were at undergraduate level (71 per cent), followed by postgraduate level (21 per cent) and professional qualifications (9 per cent). In common with respondent profiles in much market research, most of the respondents were female (58 per cent). Two-thirds of the respondents (66 per cent) were between 18 and 22 years of age.

The survey shows that almost four-fifths of the students spoke two or more languages in addition to their mother tongue (79 per cent).

Provided most of the education is delivered in the English language, TNE students' fluency in foreign languages tends to be higher than that of domestically enrolled students. Almost all the surveyed students spoke English as a foreign language (96 per cent)³, followed by French (47 per cent), Spanish (43 per cent) and German (35 per cent). TNE students' most spoken 'other' languages included Italian, Arabic and Russian, at 15 per cent each.

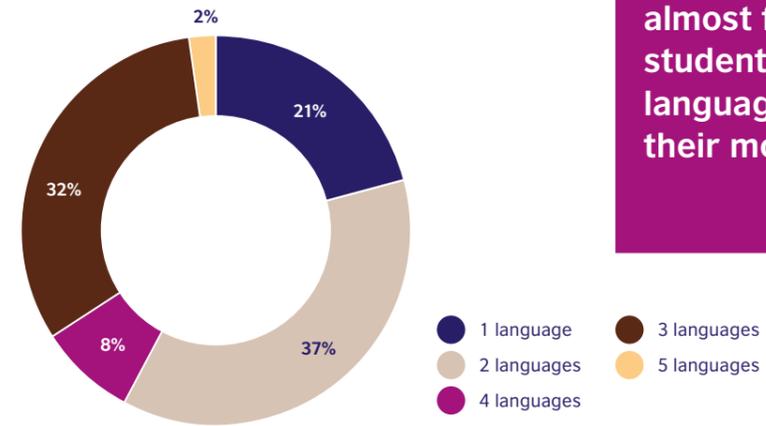
Again, these findings tend to support the view of interviewees (3.1.1) that benefits for 'place' include a ready supply of English-speaking, globally aware graduates.

Figure 5:
Foreign languages spoken by TNE students (n = 63)



² The focus of this research study was local impact of TNE programmes delivered directly by the UK HEI or their local partners. Research was therefore restricted to those programmes with face-to-face tuition. As a result, online and distance learning, which is the dominant form of TNE in Europe, is underrepresented in these figures.

Figure 6:
Number of foreign languages spoken (n = 63)



The survey showed that almost four-fifths of the students spoke two or more languages in addition to their mother tongue (79%).

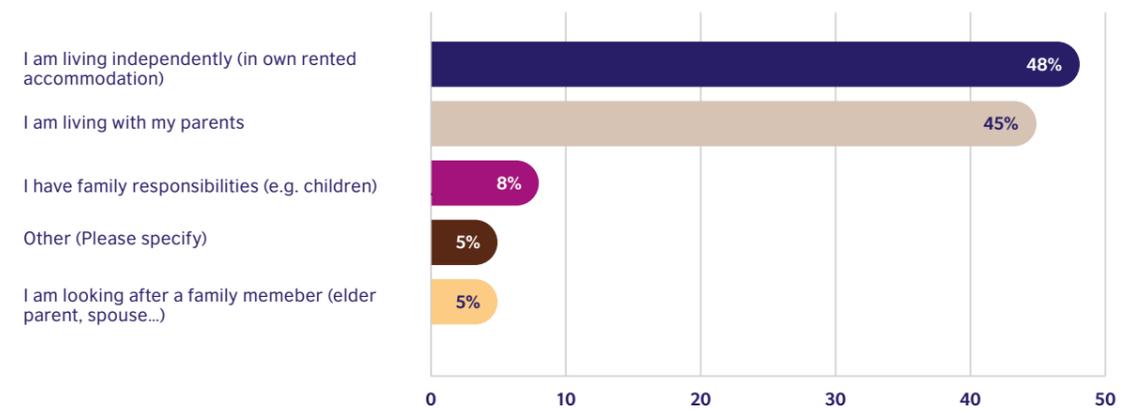
TNE students who spoke two foreign languages (in addition to their mother tongue) estimated at 37 per cent of the respondents, followed by those with three languages (32 per cent), one language (21 per cent) and four languages (8 per cent).

There was an almost equal split between students living independently (48 per cent) and those living with their parents (45 per cent).

Important considerations for students

Family and work commitments were the most significant considerations for the TNE students and were rated as essential or very important by 92 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively. Leisure time and friends also attracted many responses. The lowest-scored attributes were religion followed by politics, described by the students as not important or with little importance (60 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively).

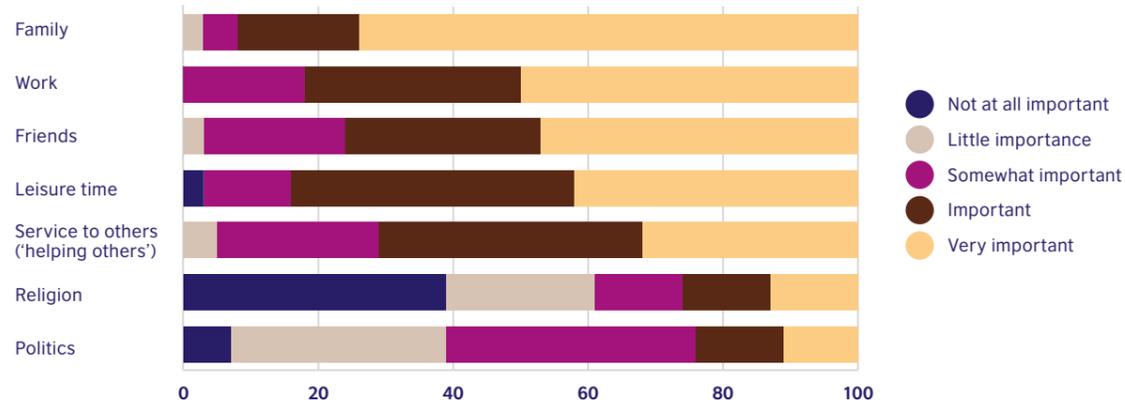
Figure 7:
Do you have family or caring responsibilities? (n = 71)



NB: Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could select more than one option to describe their caring responsibilities.

³ A small number of programmes were in language and culture studies and were not taught in the English language. As such, proficiency in English was not a requirement. Also, quite a few of the international students on TNE programmes were from the UK, and so for them English did not qualify as a foreign language.

Figure 8:
How important is each of the following for you? (n = 38)



3.2.3 Student perspectives on impact

Questions were designed to obtain students' perspectives on the impact of TNE programmes on their personal and professional lives. They also sought views on how their courses impacted on their engagement in public life.

Overall, students reported that their TNE programme had a positive influence on their personal life. The most significant impacts were found to be on their confidence, with 77 per cent reporting positive and very positive influence, followed by personal interests (74 per cent) and view of the world (63 per cent). However, 16 per cent of the students reported a negative impact of the programmes on their hobbies and non-study-related activities.

Figure 9:
Impact of TNE course on personal life (n = 57)

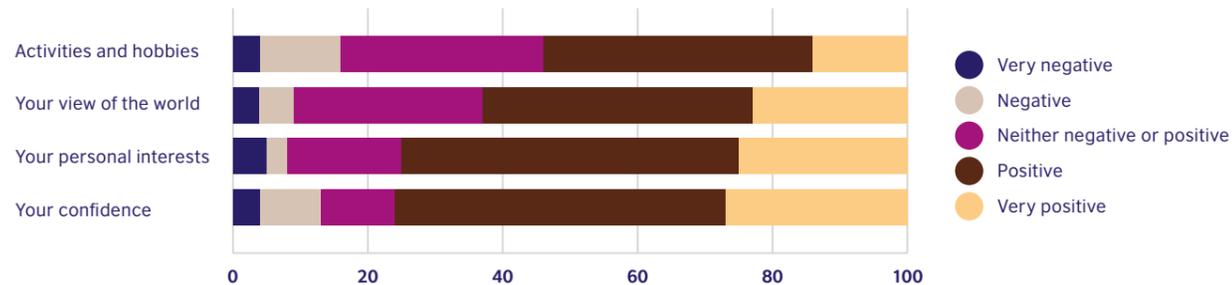
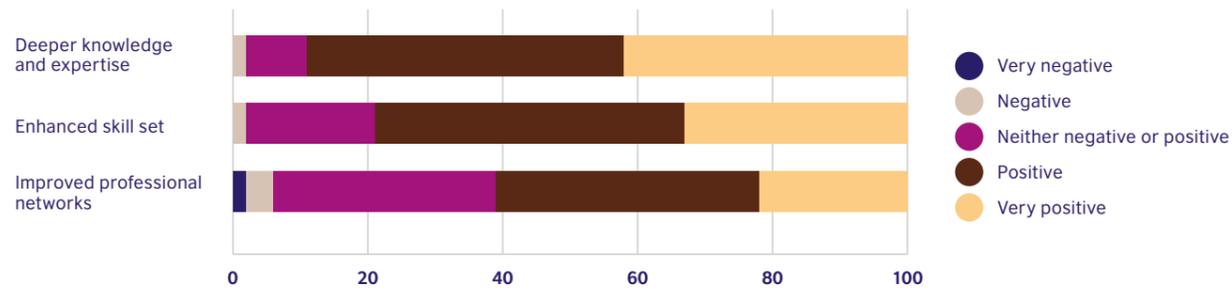


Figure 10:
Impact of TNE course on professional life (n = 57)

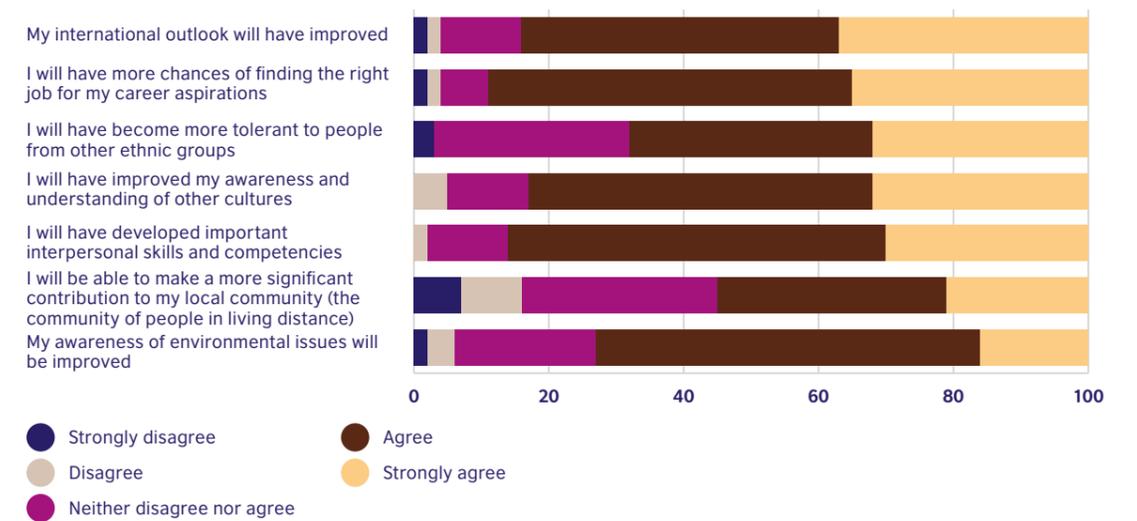


Similarly, TNE programmes brought significant benefits to learners' professional lives. These included deeper knowledge and expertise, with 89 per cent of the students stating either very positive or positive impact (42 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively). Enhanced skill set was noted by 79 per cent of the students (33 per cent and 46 per cent reported very positive or positive impact). Of the respondents, 62 per cent identified improvements to their professional networks, while a third of them said there were neither negative nor positive impacts for this aspect.

TNE programmes appeared not to impact on students' public lives, with more than half of the students not reporting any impacts on participation in environmental networks, cultural events or political engagement.

In addition to the personal, professional and public aspects, students were asked to comment on whether there were other areas of impact; 96 per cent of the respondents stated there were none. The few exceptions were from international students on TNE programmes who reported that 'relationships at home suffer from living abroad'.

Figure 11:
To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (n = 37)



Student responses suggest that TNE programmes are delivering significant impact in terms of students' career prospects (89 per cent either agreeing or strongly agreeing), developing their interpersonal skills and competencies (86 per cent), improving their international outlook (84 per cent) and improving their awareness and understanding of other cultures (83 per cent).

For many students, the most important benefit was that programmes offered them the right career path and broadened their knowledge:

'I found out about this [programme] and from the first moment it convinced me that it would be the best option that I could take advantage of, opening numerous doors in my life.'

'The course is helping broaden my knowledge in many different fields.'

'[It] will make me a competitive employee on the domestic and international market of labour.'

TNE programmes were seen to offer the advantage of employability. Commonly mentioned were high-level knowledge, personal and professional skill sets, and professional networking:

'It provides top educational knowledge from the best professionals in the market, providing networking and good skill sets for career growth.'

'High level of knowledge, which can help me to improve my theoretical base and professional skills.'

'Higher self-esteem, knowledge and confidence gained.' (UK student)

Some students identified the approach to learning as an essential factor:

'The course has a "modern" way of teaching, as well as learning skills from the past.'

These international programmes were deemed to offer more opportunities than domestic ones. A quarter of the students had participated in student mobility experiences (one student reporting that one of the advantages was being 'able to travel around the world').

Programmes were seen to open more doors to both domestic and international employment, especially those taught in the English language:

'It is the only university in [country name] that provides internship opportunities in foreign countries, and also the only [one] that requires English at a high level.'

'A chance to study in English, which is a language of international communication, and a possibility to be surrounded by the international environment.'

Students also had the opportunity to learn about different cultures and lifestyles:

'I think anyone who spends a significant amount of time abroad learns a lot about different people, cultures and lifestyles and has a much higher tolerance for new people and new experiences.'

'Cross-cultural communication and understanding, a greater understanding of Europe.'

The organisation of UK TNE programmes offered advantages such as a quality alternative to local education provision:

'I think they provide an excellent alternative to the [local] public education system that is plagued by national exams and having to pay private teachers in order to prepare you for them as they are extremely demanding and difficult. While on the surface, public education in my country appears to be free, without any private paid preparation outside of school a student stands no chance in the national exams as the public education of senior high school alone is not even close to enough for scoring high. Having an alternative is great and much needed.'

An essential aspect of TNE which is largely underexplored is the role of TNE as a means of widening access to HE. Comments included:

'Because the specific local university does not accept students of more than 30 years of age. Also, the certificate issued is of higher prestige.'

'I did not have any other options/offers to study medicine.'

'I took examinations for entering in another university in my country. I failed to enter and study a specific course I would like. Finally, I came across this course, which has to do with the subject I wanted to study, and I started it.'

'It provides top educational knowledge from the best professionals in the market, providing networking and good skill sets for career growth.'

'Because the national exams to enter a local university are very hard, and you potentially lose a year of your life if you fail without any compensation.' (This comment was in the context of resitting the entry exams the following year.)

As well as the advantages of programmes, some respondents also noted challenges, such as recognition of TNE qualifications in some countries:

'The country still has some issues with that type of education and the community doesn't accept this easlilly.'

'Although the system is fighting private education in [country name] by not granting equal academic rights, I hope that in the future it will be more accepted.'

'More needs to be done so the course is more embedded in the local community.'

In addition to the impact of TNE on them, some students also commented on the impact on their local community:

'In terms of the area and community, the university that provides this course attracts a lot of international students, making them aware of the city, area and the whole country. The local community has a chance to have contacts with people of different nations, making them more tolerant towards other groups of people.'

'The most significant contribution is the chance for the local community to [see] a system of education that is said to be better than the domestic one in order to gain a deeper knowledge and needed experience.'

Of the students, 55 per cent agreed that their programmes would help them to make a significant personal contribution to their local community (described by one student as 'better citizenship'). A few examples, mainly from students on medical courses, show TNE programmes supporting better local engagement in healthcare:

'I used to engage with [country name] patients every two weeks with a GP for sessions, and my course has helped me have better interactions in the healthcare setting.'

'In terms of the area and community, the university that provides this course attracts a lot of international students, making them aware of the city, area and the whole country. The local community has a chance to have contacts with people of different nations, making them more tolerant towards other groups of people.'

A non-medical example quoted was:

'I am engaged in helping local organisations with international networking and bidding for externally funded projects, mainly [through] Erasmus.'

No differences in TNE students' political views were found compared with those of their peers enrolled in local institutions. TNE students are likely to vote similarly to the other HE students in countries' general elections. Also, their civic engagement and participation in public debates was found to be similar to that of other students.

TNE and sustainability

4

Our analysis of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data shows that 62 per cent⁴ of UK TNE is offered in ODA⁵ countries. This is an important finding that confirms that TNE takes place in many less-developed countries and contributes to increasing student access and improving the capacity of domestic HE systems. Similarly, alongside its impact on ODA countries' HE systems, UK TNE also contributes to enhancing the capacity of HE systems in European countries. Notable examples are Cyprus, Greece and Malta, in which TNE development in niche subjects – such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and engineering – has contributed to decelerating brain drain.

4.1 Contribution of TNE to HE access in Europe

Participation rates in HE across the studied EU countries is comparatively high, and therefore the contribution of TNE to the widening of access can primarily be studied in a qualitative manner. Further research is required to quantify the role of TNE in widening access to high-quality and flexible HE provision which complements that of the host country.

This section investigates how TNE enables access to HE for disadvantaged groups of the population underrepresented in HE. For example, research evidence from Greece suggests that TNE enables individuals who otherwise would not be able to access it to benefit from good-quality HE (Papageorgiou, Makellaraki, and Tsiligiris, 2020). Thus, it contributes to UN SDG4⁶ and acts as a direct mechanism to support the implementation of the widening-participation agenda at a global scale. This is a broadly uncaptured area of TNE impact and exporting institutions should aim to explore how their TNE arrangements contribute towards the global widening of participation.

Below we present a case study of Greece that investigates how TNE complements local HE provision and widens access to HE.

Further research is required to quantify the role of TNE in widening access to high quality and flexible higher education provision, which complements that of the host country.

⁴ That is, 441,558 students of the total of 662,424 UK TNE students reported in the HESA offshore record.

⁵ ODA is defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee as 'government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The [committee] adopted ODA as the "gold standard" of foreign aid in 1969 and it remains the main source of financing for development aid'. The list of ODA countries used in this study can be found at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2018-and-2019-flows.pdf>.

⁶ The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains 17 goals including a new global education goal (SDG 4). SDG 4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.



Case study:

Prospects for TNE in Greece

With 18,315 students enrolled on UK TNE programmes in 2019, Greece is the largest host country of UK TNE in Europe and the tenth largest globally.⁷ The majority of UK TNE students are enrolled on undergraduate courses offered via international partnerships between UK universities and Greek private colleges.⁸ There are 35 Greek private colleges with no degree-awarding powers solely acting as local partners of UK and other foreign universities. Academic delivery of UK TNE programmes in Greece includes a mixture of models consisting of both Greek- and English-language components. Demand for UK TNE in Greece is driven by four factors: 1) expectations for better employability prospects, both nationally and internationally; 2) prospects for continuing studies abroad; 3) lack of available courses in Greek universities, particularly in dynamic and modern subjects; and 4) the cost involved in preparation for the national examinations for entering Greek universities.⁹

⁷ 662,424 UK TNE students at public HEIs reported in the HESA offshore record.

⁸ Tsiligiris, V. (2019) Research on Greece–UK higher education institutional collaboration in the field of transnational education. British Council.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Papageorgiou, F., Makellaraki, V., and Tsiligiris, V. (2020) 'Transnational education as enabler of access to quality higher education and its link to UN SDG4: the case of Greece', in Tsiligiris, V., Lawton, W., and Hill, C. (eds) Importing transnational education: capacity, sustainability and student experience from the host country perspective. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹¹ Ibid.

Primary evidence indicates that UK TNE offered in Greece is having a positive impact on enabling access and widening participation for students from disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds.¹⁰ There are three enabling factors in the impact of UK TNE in Greece: 1) affordability of UK TNE in terms of the overall cost involved, particularly in comparison with the cost of Greek higher education; 2) provision of courses not available in Greek universities; and 3) the partial or staged use of Greek as the language of delivery and assessment.¹¹

Will tuition in the local language widen access to higher education? A perspective from a Greek college

The Greek market has over time been progressively moving towards delivery in the Greek language. The rationale for Greek delivery is: 1) Greek students often give up on studying English while preparing for the Pan-Hellenic examinations. Because of the short period between the publishing of the Pan-Hellenic examination results and the start of the new academic year, students' ability to study for the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) would mean that they would miss out on at least one academic year; 2) Greek students are able to avoid the language barrier (English) and focus on attaining the knowledge, skills and competencies set out for their professions. The impact of using the local language has been:

- 1) higher levels of student recruitment in any given programme;
- 2) lower drop-out rates;
- 3) higher student satisfaction with their academic programmes;
- 4) the ability to recruit from a wider pool of academics within the national market.

4.2 Does TNE widen access to HE? A historical and comparative perspective

While capturing the quantitative contribution of TNE to access to HE in countries with low participation rates is outside this study's scope, we have attempted to develop a proxy that illustrates the impact of TNE on widening access to HE (Table 1). The University of

London substantiates this example through its network of affiliated local colleges. Over time, the local affiliated institutions developed into independent universities of national importance. Nowadays, they play a critical role in delivering HE in their locations.

Table 1: Institutions set up by the University of London that have developed into independent universities

Institution	Date special relationship established	Year first students admitted	Year last students admitted	Year institution became independent	Alternative names (and notes)
Gordon Memorial College, Khartoum, Sudan	22 May 1946	1948	1956	1956	University of Khartoum
University College of the West Indies	23 July 1947	1948	1964	1962	University of the West Indies
University College, Ghana	21 July 1948	1949	1960	1959	The University of Ghana, Legon
University College Ibadan, Nigeria	25 February 1948	1949	1961	1962	The University of Nigeria
Makerere University College, Uganda	16 November 1949	1951	1963	1963	Constituent of the University of East Africa
The University College, Nairobi, Kenya	29 March 1961	1961	1962	1963	The University of Nairobi; The Royal Technical College, Nairobi; Gandhi Memorial College (Constituent of the University of East Africa)

Source: Adapted from Jones, C. K. (2008) The people's university: 150 Years of the University of London and its external students. University of London.

The text box below attempts to quantify the contribution of UK TNE to local HE provision. We assume that education delivery through TNE is captured in the local HE data reporting. The chart shows the percentage contribution of UK TNE to locally delivered HE.

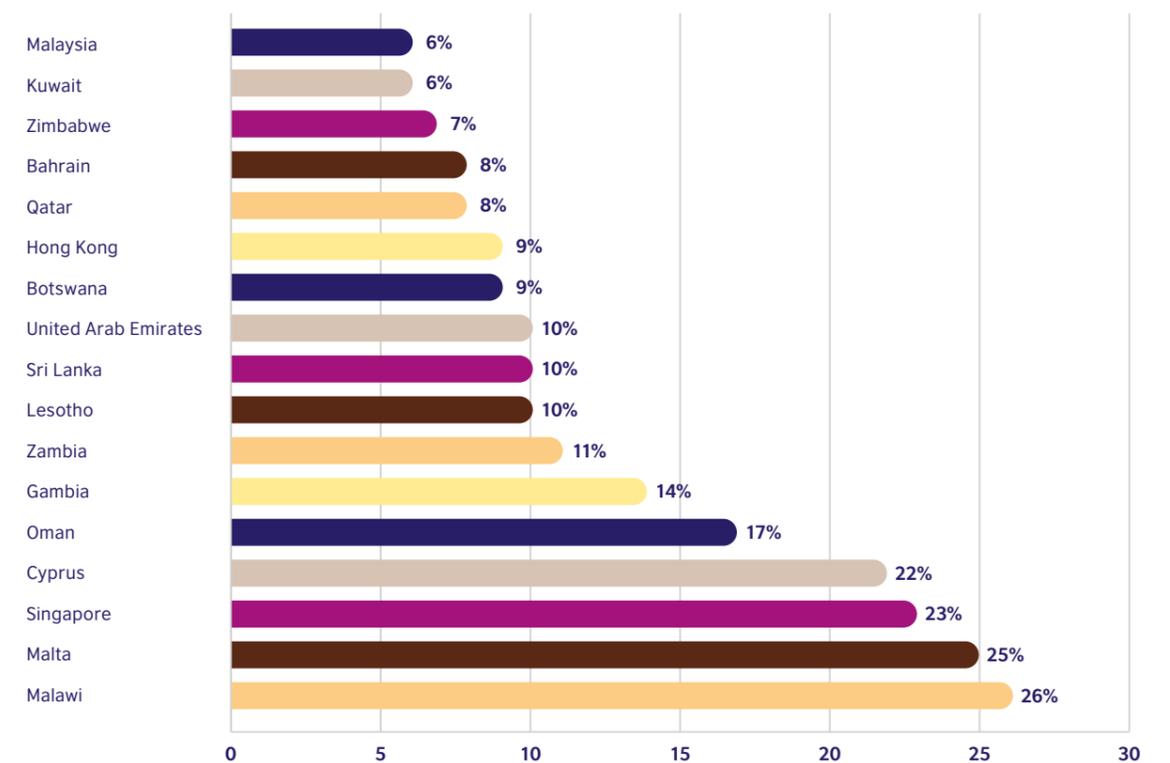
In focusing on the student demand side, we attempt to quantify the contribution of TNE to local tertiary education provision. We assume that local tertiary education statistics capture accurately all local education provision delivered by private and public institutions. Typically, UK TNE is delivered independently or alongside a local partner. International students enrolled on qualifications delivered by UK HEIs are reported by the HESA Aggregate offshore record. The chart below shows UK TNE students in their country of domicile, expressed as a percentage of locally enrolled tertiary education students, as reported by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Does TNE widen access to HE?

There is very little research on the potential of TNE as a contributor to expanding the capacity of local HE provision. TNE's ability to build capacity is twofold:

- i. The absorption of unmet demand for tertiary education.
- ii. The development of local higher education institutions and staff. This includes training of academic staff and development of new courses.

Figure 12: Countries with significant contribution of UK TNE to local HE provision



Source: HESA Aggregate offshore record, UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Note: These findings need to be treated with caution. We assume students on TNE programmes are reported by the respective authorities to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and included in the local enrolments.

Dispelling common misconceptions

5

The study findings challenge some commonly held views about TNE, highlighting important misconceptions which serve to misinform UK government and HE sector strategies in Europe. While the findings of the current study serve to support and illustrate the evidence in 5.1 and 5.2 in the context of TNE in Europe, these misconceptions are unlikely to be limited to Europe, and further research would be needed to assess this limitation.

5.1 TNE as ‘a direct substitute for international student mobility’

Previous research has identified that TNE and outbound student mobility are essentially two separate markets, but with some minor substitution effects subject to several contextual factors.^{12,13,14.}

The relationship between TNE and international student mobility (ISM) is not static. Instead, it is subject to a range of factors that determine the existence and the exact nature of any substitution effects.¹⁵ For example, in countries where outbound mobility is primarily due to a persistent shortage in the domestic supply of HE, TNE develops to close this capacity gap and therefore has a direct substitution effect. However, once the market reaches an equilibrium between supply and demand, a range of contextual factors (including quality and reputation of domestic HEIs vs TNE awarding institutions) will determine whether ISM will compete with TNE.

The data from HESA and UNESCO for the period 2008 to 2018, summarised in Table 2 below, shows that at the global level UK TNE grows faster than the flow of outbound students to the UK (7 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively). At the same time, the average cross-annual rate of growth of outbound mobility globally is 6 per cent. It may be argued that the difference in the growth of ISM between the UK and the world (2 per cent and 6 per cent) is an outcome of UK TNE development. However, as other research¹⁶ has identified, this is primarily due to the emergence of other countries as destinations for international students (e.g. Netherlands, Germany) and the concurrent growth in the capacity of HE systems in significant sending countries (e.g. China, Malaysia, Greece, Cyprus).¹⁷ In fact, TNE is a way for UK HEIs to maintain access to these markets and offset part of the decline in the flow of international students.

¹² Tsiligiris, V. (2014) Transnational education vs international student mobility: substitutes or distinct markets? Report for the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, pp. 1–53. http://www.obhe.ac.uk/documents/view_details?id=952

¹³ Levatino, A. (2017) Transnational higher education and international student mobility: determinants and linkage. Higher Education, 73(5), pp. 637–653. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-016-9985-z>

¹⁴ Bennell, P. (2020) The internationalisation of higher education provision in the United Kingdom: patterns and relationships between onshore and offshore overseas student enrolment. International Journal of Educational Development, 74, p. 102162.

¹⁵ Tsiligiris, V. (2014) Transnational education vs international student mobility: substitutes or distinct markets? Report for the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, pp. 1–53.

¹⁶ Albach, P. G., Reisberg, L., and Rumbley, L. E. (2009) Trends in global higher education: tracking an academic revolution. UNESCO. http://www.cep.edu.rs/public/Albach,_Reisberg,_Rumbley_Tracking_an_Academic_Revolution_UNESCO_2009.pdf

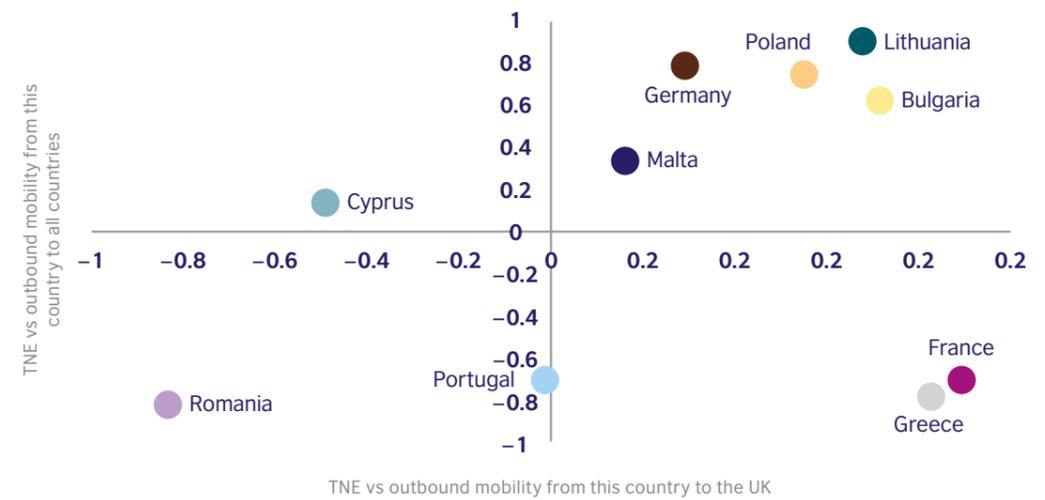
¹⁷ Prazeres, L. and Findlay, A. (2017) An audit of international student mobility to the UK. ESRC Centre for Population Change. https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/405433/1/2017_WP82_An_audit_of_international_student_mobility_to_the_UK.pdf

Table 2: Relationship between TNE students and international student mobility (ISM)

Country	Cross-annual rates of growth, 2008 to 2018			Correlation of UK TNE students in-country with:	
	UK TNE students in-country	Outbound students from this country to all countries	Outbound students from this country to the UK	Outbound students from this country to all countries	Outbound students from this country to the UK
Bulgaria	3%	3%	27%	0.78	0.67
Cyprus	11%	0%	1%	-0.50	0.13
France	8%	7%	-1%	0.95	-0.71
Germany	2%	4%	-1%	0.32	0.79
Greece	5%	3%	-5%	0.88	-0.74
Lithuania	13%	5%	11%	0.74	0.88
Malta	6%	1%	-1%	0.18	0.35
Poland	-9%	-1%	-2%	0.59	0.80
Portugal	4%	2%	0%	-0.03	-0.64
Romania	-5%	6%	29%	-0.86	-0.83
Spain	-1%	7%	2%	-0.40	0.01
World	7%	6%	2%	0.93	0.96

Source: HESA Aggregate offshore record and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Figure 13: How does UK TNE correlate with outbound mobility?



Source: HESA Aggregate offshore record and UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

5.2 Is TNE 'an inferior quality' of HE provision?

A common misconception about TNE relates to its parity of quality with home provision.¹⁸ An extensive body of research suggests that the quality of TNE provision is broadly equivalent to that of home provision.^{19,20,21} Evidence suggests that in many instances, because TNE is offered through smaller-scale provision, there is a personalised student experience, leading to superior quality outcomes in comparison with the home campus. Because of its early involvement in TNE provision, the UK HE sector has developed a rigorous and effective TNE quality assurance framework which is considered world leading²². Also, considering the large scale of the UK TNE market, over a period of more than 30 years there have been few cases of reported quality problems with UK TNE arrangements. Importantly, when there were such instances, the regulatory bodies and HEIs took action to reform the quality assurance guidelines to mitigate the risk of recurrence.

An often neglected contribution of UK TNE is its role as a capacity-building mechanism for diffusing quality improvements in HE systems, institutions and academic staff into TNE-importing countries. For example, the UK HEI quality assurance processes adopted by partner institutions act as examples of good practice that are then used for local courses and lead to broader improvements in quality standards in the domestic HE system.^{23,24} Also, compliance with UK TNE quality assurance helps academic and administrative staff, as the local partners, to gain valuable knowledge and experience of quality-assurance processes and HE quality standards.²⁵

In summary, the evidence suggests that UK TNE is not of inferior quality to home provision. Instead, it is subject to rigorous and effective quality assurance processes that minimise the risks for awarding institutions and generate positive impacts for the HE sectors, institutions and individuals in TNE-importing countries.

Often, TNE is offered through smaller scale provision which means a personalised student experience, leading to superior quality outcomes in comparison with the home campus.



¹⁸ Interestingly, this misconception is shared mostly by those who do not have direct TNE experience and involvement.

¹⁹ Mayer-Lantermann, K. (2020) 'Transnational education in the 21st century and its quality assurance from a German perspective', in Nickl, B., Popenici, S., and Blackler, S. (eds) *Transnational German Education and Comparative Education Systems*. Springer, pp. 29–41.

²⁰ Heffernan, T., Wilkins, S. and Butt, M. M. (2018) 'Transnational higher education: the importance of institutional reputation, trust and student-university identification in international partnerships', *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(2), pp. 227–240.

²¹ Bordogna, C. M. (2020) 'Are degree-awarding institutions doing enough to support the implementation of quality assurance in transnational higher education partnerships?', *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 24(3), pp. 371–386.

²² Tsiligiris, V. (2015) *Cross-border higher education and quality management*. PhD thesis. Birmingham City University.

²³ Trifiro, F. (2018) 'Inter-agency cooperation in the quality assurance of transnational education: challenges and opportunities', *Quality in Higher Education*, 24(2), pp. 136–153.

²⁴ British Council and DAAD (2014) *Impacts of Transnational Education on Host Countries: Academic, Cultural, Economic and Skills Impacts and Implications of Programme and Provider Mobility*, British Council. https://www2.daad.de/medien/hochschulen/projekte/studienangebote/2014_e003_tne_study_final_web.pdf

²⁵ Universities UK International (2018) *Transnational Education: Global Location, Local Innovation*. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/Transnational-education-.aspx>

²⁶ Ibid.

Conclusions and recommendations

6

Across the stakeholder interviews and student survey there is strong agreement that TNE's most significant impact is in meeting local labour market needs. In particular, programmes focus on skills gaps in specific places (cities, regions) and aim to produce graduates with the relevant high-level knowledge and skills to address these gaps.

Stakeholders and students provide perspectives on the impacts of TNE from different standpoints. For businesses, TNE programmes are seen to plug specialist knowledge and skills gaps which would not otherwise be addressed locally and to supply a pool of talent that helps local authorities to attract and retain employers. For partner HEIs, the relationship with quality UK providers develops and positions them as critical local providers in the talent supply chain. Meanwhile, students offer a more individual perspective. For them, the impact is related to fulfilling their career aspirations and equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to be successfully employed in the labour market.

The findings raise several questions, as well as highlighting some areas that would bear further investigation.

- The role of UK TNE in widening access to HE needs further research. This study shows that TNE programmes provide access to HE programmes which is not available locally. Equally, they enable mature students and those with family and work commitments to further their education. They deliver development opportunities for individual students and, arguably, fulfil a broader development role for local communities and regions. Respondents describe TNE as developing local talent pools, retaining talent locally and discouraging brain drain, as well as contributing to local knowledge economies by creating and circulating knowledge within the local area. The role of TNE in widening access – and its potential contribution to developing localities, regions and countries – is largely unexplored.

- This research found that 35 per cent of the TNE students surveyed were international to the country of TNE delivery. Furthermore, 79 per cent of them spoke two or more languages in addition to their mother tongue. A fifth of the surveyed students participated in student mobility opportunities in the UK. Also, UK TNE widens local partner HEIs' networks of international collaborators and supports their capacity building. Further research is needed to establish the impact of UK TNE on the internationalisation of HE by local partner HEIs and more broadly on the host city and country.
- The findings challenge some commonly held misconceptions about TNE. The first is that TNE acts as a substitute for full-time study in the UK, i.e. that programmes are effectively competing with student mobility to the UK. In this study, both the students' profiles and their responses suggest that, as a group, they have very different characteristics from those students who would choose to study full-time in the UK. The second misconception, held predominantly in the UK, is that TNE is inferior to courses delivered in the UK.²⁷ The perceptions of stakeholders and students in this study suggest that this is not true for them. Rather, TNE is seen as delivering high-quality programmes that are entirely fit for purpose.
- The findings show that the measurement of impact is mostly one-dimensional, focusing on student numbers and income. Yet the stakeholder and student perceptions point to the importance of some impacts not currently measured effectively. Consequently, much of the significant impact of programmes is neither visible nor recognised beyond those immediately involved.

There are gaps in the investigation because of the pandemic, which limited access to some crucial stakeholders such as local authorities, businesses, organisations and agencies, as well as some local HEIs. Once it becomes possible to do so, the findings will need to be verified across a statistically significant sample.

²⁷ This is despite TNE programmes having been included in the UK quality assurance framework since 2001.

Compared with UK-based programmes, the impact measures for TNE are relatively underdeveloped. Graduate outcomes are not systematically captured, but the participants point to informal tracking of graduates' progress and employment. Another impact area which should be explored further is strengthening of the reputation and profile of local partner HEIs. Interviewees placed great importance on feedback and support from employers and city authorities in measuring institutional success. While no examples were found of formal mechanisms or requirements to measure this type of impact, anecdotal evidence suggests that UK TNE partnerships are significant contributors.



Annex:

Case study of a UK university in Paris

The University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) is a unique institution with roots stretching back to the late 19th century. It was set up originally as a philanthropic institution by one of the first British-qualified English professors in France, Edith Williams. She was responding to the enormous interest in learning English among her French contacts. The Guild, as it was known, grew over the next few decades to the point where it was established by presidential decree as a true Franco-British academic and cultural collaboration, based in the Université de Paris but with support from a consortium of British universities, with the University of London playing the major part.

Date and status	Key activities	Audiences
1894 Guilde Franco-Anglaise	Teaching English	French students
1926 Collège Franco-Britannique of the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris	Teaching English	Young people and students with an interest in learning the English language and about British culture
1927 By decree of the President of France – foundation of the Institut Britannique de Paris Established under English law and charged with the management of a non-profit establishment of two sections – French and English – funded by Université de Paris, British universities and (principally) the University of London	A Franco-British study and cultural centre promoting academic relations between the two countries Teaching English and French as foreign languages Education provision through distance learning	French students and academics British students and academics Distance learners wishing to acquire a degree from the Université de Paris or the University of London
1939–45	The British Institute premises were closed but distance learning continued	
1944	The British Council, created in 1934, joined the British Institute and has worked in partnership with it ever since	The British Council was created in 1934 as a cultural institution aimed at countering the rise of fascism throughout Europe

Date and status	Key activities	Audiences
<p>1970</p> <p>The 1927 association was liquidated and the Institute placed under control of the University of London</p>	<p>With the dissolution of the then Université de Paris in 1970, the transfer of the Institute into the University of London was completed</p> <p>The French Department offered year-abroad courses for British undergraduates in modern languages from HE institutions across the UK</p> <p>It gradually developed its own independent degree in French culture studies in parallel to these year-abroad courses, welcoming cohorts of undergraduate students for full-time immersive study towards a BA over three years since the mid-1990s, while developing a suite of postgraduate programmes</p>	<p>UK undergraduate students from institutions across the UK and young faculty members with particular specialisms in French cinema, French theatre and contemporary French writing</p> <p>Through this period the Institute also published the journal Franco-British Studies, a key organ for comparative research, which organised a joint seminar with the Sorbonne</p>
<p>2005</p> <p>The British Institute renamed as The University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP)</p> <p>The English Department closed down</p>	<p>Some activities such as postgraduate programmes in translation were suspended and the British Council took on the teaching and examining of English</p> <p>The French Department continued to grow, offering a full range of BA, MA and PhD study under a consortium arrangement with Queen Mary University of London and Royal Holloway University of London</p>	<p>The audience at this point became primarily UK students learning about French culture, language and history</p> <p>Cohorts grew substantially and the department took on a number of early-career researchers, enabling subsequent diversification</p>
<p>Present day</p> <p>University of London Institute in Paris</p>	<p>A full university programme of activities including undergraduate and postgraduate courses, research and public engagement in French studies, international politics, cultural studies, urban culture and history, law and international relations</p> <p>Partnerships with Queen Mary University of London, King's College London, Goldsmiths, Thomas Jefferson University and HESAM Université</p> <p>Ongoing collaborations with other Paris-based universities</p>	<p>British academics and students interested in France and the francophone world</p> <p>European and international students looking for a UK qualification taught in Europe</p> <p>An academic community that appreciates the intercultural nature of a UK campus in the French HE environment</p>

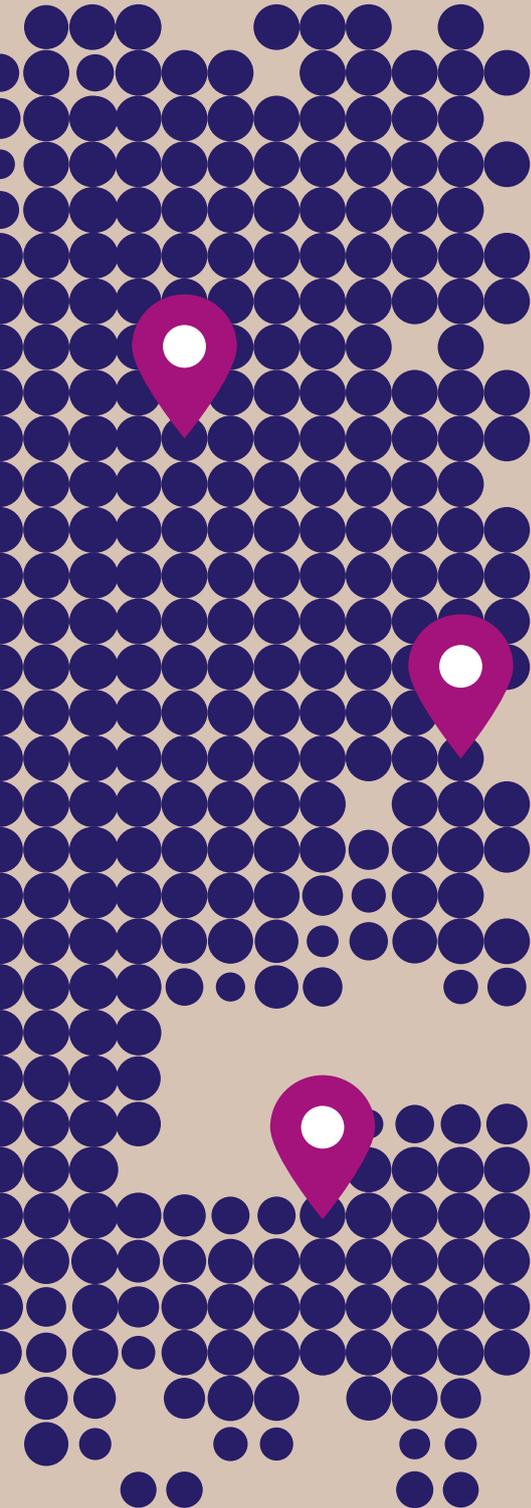
The British Institute carried on its work from 1927 until 2007 as a Franco-British academic collaboration working with two distinct audiences through its two departments – English students and academics interested in developing academic links into France and the Francophonie, and their French counterparts interested in developing their links with the UK and the anglophone world. The British Council was established in France in 1944 and its colocation and strong collaboration with the Institute added a strong cultural element. In 1970, the University of Paris was divided into 13 autonomous universities and the transfer of the British Institute into the care of the University of London, which had started a few years earlier, was finalised. The Institute became a Central Academic Body (or autonomous academic entity) within the central part of the University of London. The British Council and ULIP put up for sale the Sorbonne premises and took on its current location at Rue de Constantine in Les Invalides, which opened its doors in 1976. The building is jointly owned by the two organisations and to the present there remains a close collaboration. The British Council gradually took over some of the work of the English Department, which eventually closed in 2007, leaving only the French Department operating at that time.

For a number of years, ULIP catered primarily to British students studying French with the unique cultural and historic environment of Paris as their campus. In recent years, ULIP has diversified, offering an interdisciplinary undergraduate programme across French studies, international politics, history and cultural studies, and a postgraduate programme in urban studies, and also hosting postgraduate programmes in law and international relations from Queen Mary University of London. The Institute is a unique bilingual and bicultural academic community with an active research programme as well as a busy public research seminar series. The Institute has always been interested in transnationality in linguistics, intercultural studies and epistemological approaches. Being part of the UK HE system in France allows for a strong comparative approach and provides an alternative intellectual environment to both UK-located universities and French institutions in Paris. In this way, ULIP continues its historic mission as a Franco-British hub for academic collaboration between the two countries.

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