

This is the first of a long series of (more or less) long files. DO NOT PANIC. The work on the files will be guided and very often collective. So no one will be required to read everything if they don't feel like it. For more clarity, the documents are organised in sections. Some will be analysed in detail in class, others will be used for personal work at home and others will just be there for your information, curiosity or general knowledge.

The main point of giving you such hefty files is to provide you with as many ideas, examples and figures as possible on the various topics so that you can enrich your Mines essays, your X/ENS opinion pieces and your commentaries for the oral exams.

PART One – The Basics - See graphs in the long file online

STEM

SHAPE

University fees – Student loans – Student debt

Degrees – undergraduates – graduates – post-grads

The U.K.

GCSE

A levels

LEAs = Local Education Authorities

State schools / free schools & academies

Grammar schools

Public schools = independent, fee-paying schools

The Russell Group

UCAS

Universities UK (UUK)

The U.S.

Charter schools

Student loan forgiveness

Pell Grants

The admission process

SAT

The Ivy League – The Public Ivies

Community colleges – Liberal Arts Colleges

School boards

Affirmative action

DEI

PART Two – Equal Opportunities

Document 1 A – Why are girls still falling behind in maths?

[Graphic detail](#) | Number worries

The Economist, Jun 11th 2025

FOR DECADES a big story in education has been the ascent of girls. They now outperform boys in most subjects, leave school with better grades and are more likely to get a university degree. But one subject remains a problem: across much of the world, girls lag behind in mathematics. That pushes girls away from certain careers and drags down their future earnings.

5 A new study from France shows just how early the problem starts. Published on June 11th in *Nature*, a scientific journal, it tracked the performance of 2.6m children who took the EvalAide, a half-yearly battery of tests. That gave the researchers a consistent measure of academic progress over one year from the start of school (around age six).

10 There was no clear difference at the beginning of the school year: there were slightly more boys among both the top and bottom performers, and girls clustered in the middle (see chart 1). But after just four months a gender gap emerged. By the next year there were twice as many boys as girls in the top 5%. This trend held steady across state and private schools, and in every academic year between 2018 and 2021. The gender gap was wider among children from higher-income families and, curiously, was especially pronounced in families where both parents are scientists.

20 What happened? Pauline Martinot, the lead author and a medical doctor with a background in neurodevelopment and global health, says the divergence is not driven by ability but by anxiety.

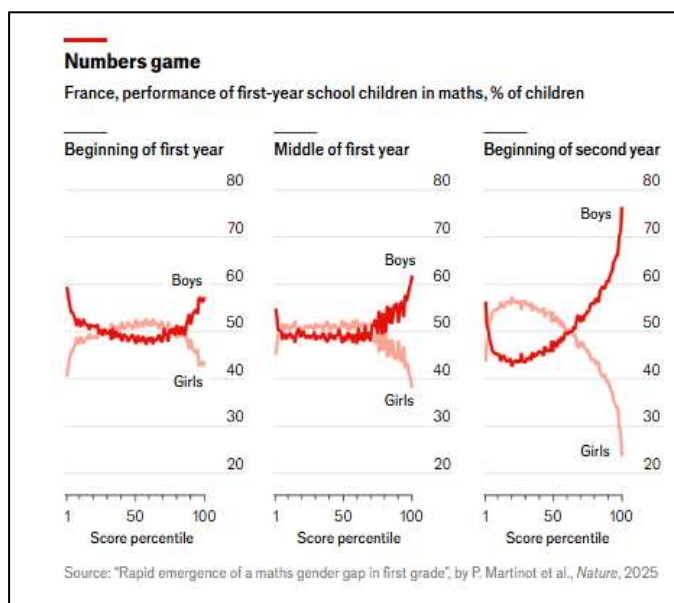
25 Maths, she says, is usually taught and tested competitively and under time pressure—conditions that girls have been taught to fear. Other studies back this up. Women and girls often perform worse on timed or competitive maths tests.

Stereotypes that boys are naturally better with numbers can make the problem worse, by undermining teachers' confidence in girls or girls' confidence in themselves. Such assumptions can come from parents, too. Dr Martinot suspects the effect is strongest in well-off families where parents may be more involved in their children's learning, and thus more likely to pass those views on.

30 The study is the first of its kind to show how quickly schooling introduces this divergence. And the findings have relevance beyond France. Of the 73 countries tracked by the OECD, a club of mostly rich countries, only 22 report better maths scores for girls than for boys.

35 Italy has the widest such gap in the rich world, which has prompted researchers there to look for solutions. One study in 2024 by economists at the University of Turin found that learning in small groups focused on solving problems together cut the gender gap by 40%. Crucially, girls' scores improved without hurting those of boys. Different testing might also help. Women and girls often perform better on maths tests when competitive or time pressures are removed.

40 Whether collaborative learning beats more traditional methods is a hot debate in education circles. But the new study's findings suggest that girls are not doomed to lag behind boys when it comes to numbers. Just four months of schooling can result in a striking gender gap. Using different methods, teachers might be able to close that gap in a similarly short amount of time. (536 words)



Document 1 B - Do Sports Explain the ‘Math Gender Gap’?

J. T. Young, The Wall Street Journal, September 8, 2025 (abridged)

A study of French schoolchildren published this summer in the journal *Nature* found girls fall behind boys in math dramatically early. After beginning formal schooling on equal footing, boys surged ahead within four months. By **second grade***, the gap was four times as wide.

The study’s authors offered many possible ways to close this “mathematical gender gap,” including “improving teacher training” and “encouraging teachers’ gender-fair ratings and active cooperative practices.” I can’t speak for France. But in the U.S., the solution is simple: sports.

There is no lower common denominator among boys and men than sports. Sports means numbers. While boys receive formal education in numbers, sports gives them a ready incentive, and a social imperative, to use them.

A football team requires 11 players, who wear uniforms with numbers on the back. Possession depends on gaining 10 yards. Points are scored in increments of 6, 3, 1 and occasionally 2. The distances for first downs, touchdowns and field goals are continuously calculated. Penalties are assessed in yards. The game is measured by time—quarters, time remaining, two-minute drills, time-outs, the play clock.

A baseball team needs nine players, who wear numbers. Positions in the field and lineup are given different numbers to differentiate their jobs for scoring purposes. The mind instantly sees a 6-4-3 double play; the No. 9 hitter’s batting prowess is immediately evident. Outs, balls, strikes and bases are numbered and carry strategic significance: a great two-strike hitter, a third out made at third base. Before the pitch clock, time was the only uncounted element in baseball.

Basketball is played by five; all wear numbers. It is scored in 1s, 2s and 3s. Players keep track of their number of fouls. Time of possession is crucial. Shot distances are constantly noted.

The better one understands a sport, the greater one’s appreciation of its numbers. Statistics exist for each game—all derived by mathematical calculations. Football’s yards per play and points per game. Baseball’s batting and earned run averages. Basketball players’ points and rebounds per game. All these observations apply to other sports too.

Even after their team participation passes, boys tend to remain invested in sports. Attachment grows more sophisticated, the numbers more complex. Eventually pools and fantasy leagues bring vicarious thrills when connection to the game becomes primarily about numbers, players effectively relegated to secondary status.

Everywhere there are boys there are sports, and everywhere there are sports there are numbers. Education pairs with inclination and passes into obsession. One feeds the other; the second reinforces the first. There is a purpose—numbers tick by unconsciously, building an edifice.

Perhaps the way we teach mathematics is somehow biased against girls. That’s something to be studied and rectified. But perhaps the explanation here is obvious and innocent, an obsession that leads to inclination and leaves a foundation. Just as sports’ bond continues to knit males together across generations.

(499 words)

Document 2 - An Elite N.Y.C. Public School Admitted 777 Students. Only 3 Were Black.

Matthew Haag, *The New York Times*, 14 July 2026 (abridged)

A disproportionately small number of Black and Hispanic students received admission offers to New York City's elite public high schools for the upcoming academic year, continuing a pattern of racial and ethnic gaps that has existed for years despite promises by elected officials to address the divide.

About 62 percent of the students in the city's **public schools*** are Black or Hispanic. But at its eight most prestigious **5 high schools**, about 10 percent of the students in the incoming **freshman class** are expected to be Black or Hispanic, roughly the same as last year. About 80 percent of the seats went to Asian and white students.

At Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, often considered the most selective of the city's specialized high schools, three of the 777 offers were made to Black students, and 21 were for Hispanic students, together representing a nearly one-third decline from the previous freshman class. One Black student was admitted to Staten Island Technical High **10 School**.

While only 5 percent of high school students attend a specialized school, the annual release of the admission results has stirred debate and scrutiny for decades, especially as the profile of students in those schools stands in stark contrast to the rest of the school system, the nation's largest. Gaining entrance to the schools has been perceived as a path out of poverty and a gateway to the nation's top colleges and, perhaps, a flourishing career.

15 The sole criterion for admission is a 114-question, three-hour exam known as the Specialized High School Admissions Test, a grueling assessment of students' mastery of math and English that rewards multistep problem-solving skills and time management. Test preparation companies offer middle schoolers years of practice and coaching.

Critics have called the one-day, high-stakes test racially discriminatory, saying it does not capture a student's intelligence or capabilities. Supporters say it is a fair, rigorous and meritocratic assessment.

20 The critics have included Mayor Zohran Mamdani, a graduate of the Bronx High School of Science, a specialized school, and the two previous mayors. Bill de Blasio called the admissions process a "monumental injustice," while his successor, Eric Adams, labeled it a "Jim Crow school system." [...]

"We know that a single test does not reflect the aptitude of students across the city," Mr. Mamdani said on Tuesday at a news conference on an unrelated issue. "We know that there is so much more work to be done, especially to address **25** the racial inequities that we've seen not just when we're talking about the disparities in admissions of one test, but across the system as a whole."

Efforts to reform the admissions process have been met with fierce resistance from **alumni* groups** and multimillion-dollar lobbying efforts. Eliminating or altering the entrance process would require action by the State Legislature, which approved the test-based admissions system for the specialized high schools in 1971.

30 Any changes would undoubtedly be scrutinized by the Trump administration, which has cracked down on diversity efforts in public schools and sought to cut federal funding over programs that promote **diversity, equity and inclusion**. [...]

Yiatin Chu, a public school parent and the co-founder of Parent Leaders for Accelerated Curriculum and Education, a group that has supported gifted and talented programs, said that the entrance exam was a "race-blind, income-blind **35** test."

Ms. Chu attended Bronx Science and her daughter will be a **sophomore*** next school year at Stuyvesant. She said the exam was a fair measurement that should remain. "These schools are rigorous and demanding, and students who go to these schools should be well-prepared to take that on," Ms. Chu said. "Why are we minimizing the effort that is put in for something that is important to them?" (613 words)

Document 3 - Inside a Gathering of America's Growing Home-School Movement

Emma Godlberg, The New York Times, July 27, 2025 (abridged)

[...] Many of them had decided to home-school because they worried about their children going into classrooms where they could absorb lessons their parents found objectionable: that the human species evolved instead of being created by God, for example. Or that America's founding fathers were fallible. Others wanted to give their children a level of one-on-one attention they did not feel would happen in larger classrooms. Some had flirted with the idea of home-schooling for years, before the Covid-19 pandemic pushed them into action.

Covid supercharged home-schooling. Survey data from the Census Bureau, collected in the 2022-2023 school year, showed that nearly 6 percent of America's school-age children were being home-schooled, compared with 2.8 percent before the pandemic in 2019. That's a change that crisscrosses geographic lines, including in left-leaning areas and districts with high-performing public schools.

All this has collided with a cultural moment in which influencers on the right are encouraging a traditional conception of marriage and family, where one income, earned by a man, should suffice, and a wife's role is to stay at home. This notion seems to have caught fire particularly in its most social-media friendly incarnation, where softly lit asparagus tarts and phonics lessons are appealing to certain members of a new generation, which also leads to newcomers finding home-schooling. [...]

For many civil rights and family law experts, the rising number of home-schoolers set off alarms. It can seem, to many, like yet another set of fractured realities being formed, mirroring the sort of dueling narratives that compete for airtime on social media or partisan news. [...]

It's not clear whether the Covid bump in home-schooling will keep building. But the groups organizing to regulate home-schooling have tended to be less politically powerful than those pushing for its growth, according to Ms. Bartholet.

At the Great Homeschool Conventions gathering, parents celebrated their sense of ascendance. "It's more mainstream than it's ever been," said Meghan Ashe, 39, a mother from Bentonville, Ark., who home-schools her two children.

Ms. Ashe is one of the relative newcomers to the community who wanted to have control over what her children, who are 10 and 6, learned during the school day. "Talk about evolution — that's pretty common in public schools, and you're not going to find that in a biblical worldview," said Ms. Ashe, who teaches her daughter the Biblical creation story.

Plenty of these home-schooling parents are themselves the product of public school or other traditional classrooms. Some never anticipated having interest in this movement. Take Susanna Pawling, 43, whose parents were both teachers at a Christian school and whose two sisters taught in public schools. When Ms. Pawling began entertaining the idea of home-schooling, family members were skeptical. She ignored them. [...]

There's a sense among many of these families that the home-schooling momentum could keep building, thanks partly to policy shifts at the state and federal level. In recent years at least a dozen states have created programs allowing families to use public funds to pay for educational expenses, which could sometimes include home-schooling. And Congress earlier this month approved the first national school voucher program, as part of the Republicans' sweeping domestic policy bill, though the program will be limited to states that opt in.

The Trump Administration has also been hearing proposals for policies that would encourage women to have more babies, as well as ideas intended to encourage parents to spend more time at home with their children. And some women at the convention said home-schooling added a new layer of fulfillment to that stay-at-home motherhood. [...]

(612 words)

PART Three – Education and Technology



Illustration: Bianca Bagnarelli

[Leaders](#) | Generation AI

Document 4 - 🎮 How AI is rewiring childhood

The Economist, Dec 4th 2025 (adapted)

STOCKINGS may contain more surprises than usual this year, as children open presents that can talk back. Toymakers in China have declared 2025 the year of artificial intelligence (AI) and are producing robots and 5 teddies that can teach, play and tell stories. Older children, meanwhile, are glued to viral AI videos and AI-enhanced games. At school, many are being taught with materials created with tools like ChatGPT. Some are even learning alongside chatbot-tutors.

10 In work and play, AI is rewiring childhood. It promises every child the kind of upbringing previously available only to the rich, with private tutors, personalised syllabuses and bespoke entertainment. Children can listen to songs composed about them, read 15 stories in which they star, play video games that adapt to their skill level and have an entourage of chatbot friends cheering them on. A childhood fit for a king could become universal.

It is a future filled with opportunities—and hidden 20 traps. (...) As AI changes childhood for better and for worse, society must rethink the business of growing up.

Being reared by robots has advantages. Tech firms are already showing how AI can enhance learning, especially where teachers and materials are scarce. 25 Literacy and language-learning have been boosted in early trials. The dream is that, with an AI tutor, children can be saved from classes pitched to the median, in which bright pupils are bored and dim ones are lost. (...)

Technology is creating new forms of fun, too. 30 Hollywood may dismiss AI videos as “slop”, but young people are devouring them and making their own. Video games are creating novel experiences, such as chatting to Darth Vader in “Fortnite”. Any child can meet their heroes (and shoot them).

35 There are well-publicised risks in letting children loose on an evolving technology. AI tutors may hallucinate wrong answers. Toys can go off the rails. Children can easily misuse AI, to cheat at homework or harass each other with “deepfake” videos. Chatbots can 40 coax vulnerable adolescents into harming themselves. Tech firms insist these stumbling blocks can be fixed; ChatGPT is only three years old.

Yet childhood may be disrupted most radically by things that AI does when it is behaving as intended. The 45 technology quickly learns what its master likes—and shows more of it. Social-media feeds have already created echo chambers where people see only views they agree with (or love to hate). AI threatens to strengthen these echo chambers and lock children into 50 them at an early age. The child who likes football may be told football stories by his teddy and given footballing examples by his AI tutor. Not only does this stamp out serendipity. A favourites-only diet means a child need never learn to tolerate something unfamiliar. 55 (...)

Other trends are pushing in the same direction. As birth rates crash, fewer children are growing up with

siblings to smooth their sharp edges.(...) Remote work means that people who grow up in a personalised, 60 asocial world can slip into jobs where they interact with colleagues only through screens—a chore they may soon delegate to an AI agent.

Some basic counter-measures are urgent. Parents should think twice before entrusting their child to a 65 word-regurgitation machine. Chatbots should have age restrictions that are properly enforced; governments should not give AI firms the leeway they gave social networks. Teachers are kidding themselves if they think essays written at home can any longer be trusted. In the 70 age of AI, more in-school assessment is essential.

The longer-term challenge is to think deeply about how to preserve the socialisation that AI could rub out

of children's lives. Schools, where much of childhood plays out, are the best place to do this. They should take 75 advantage of personalised tuition where it is proven to work. But they must also redouble efforts to teach things that a robot can't: to debate, to disagree and to get along with—perhaps even to appreciate—people who are not as sycophantic as a chatbot.

80 Schools should also enhance their role as centres of discovery. If AI is giving children more of what they want, it is more important that schools provide chances to meet people and encounter ideas that lie outside their experience. (...)

85 705 words

Document 5 - Despite the growth of some AI schools like Alpha, research doesn't show that AI tutors are better than human teachers

Gerald K. LeTendre, *The Conversation*, July 13 2026

Over the past decade, the AI-focused, for-profit Alpha School has grown from one campus in Austin, Texas, to a growing list of more than 15 schools across the country, including in major cities like New York and 5 San Francisco. Alpha School joins other AI-centric K-12 private schools, like Unbound Academy and the Khan Lab School, that parents can now choose for their children, paying anywhere from US\$40,000 to \$75,000 in some cases each year.

10 Some advocates of AI-driven education use slogans like "School is broken, and we're here to fix it."

MacKenzie Price, one of Alpha School's co-founders, has described her frustration with the "one-size-fits-all" model of schooling, in which all students 15 study the same material, but often learn at different speeds. Sal Khan, the founder of the online educational platform Khan Academy, has also argued that artificial intelligence could give every student an individual tutor that is responsive to their specific needs. And Bill Gates 20 is among the tech thought leaders who have speculated that AI will replace many teachers within the next decade.

The argument for more personalized education may be a good one in some cases. But it also risks creating a 25 false dichotomy where all AI programs are seen as responsive and motivating, and all classroom teaching is rote lecturing.

Alpha School replaces traditional, in-person instruction for K-12 students with personalized AI 30 tutoring that condenses reading, math and other subjects into a two-hour study period. The two-hour AI tutoring block is supplemented with in-person workshops and

what the school calls "coaches" or "guides," who are not necessarily licensed teachers. These sessions can focus 35 on nonacademic life skills, like public speaking and entrepreneurship, as well as art and physical education. When it comes to the AI portion of this education, it is clear that there are benefits to personalized tutoring. A major review published by the National Bureau of 40 Economic Research in 2020, for example, showed that many different kinds of tutoring provided by humans produced consistent learning gains across subjects and age ranges. (...)

So far, though, there is no clear evidence that AI or 45 other kinds of computer-based tutors are superior to human tutors, though in many cases they might be cheaper.

Instead of trying to replace teachers with AI, I think that a more promising strategy is to support teachers in 50 using AI to become better educators.

One-to-one tutoring with a human teacher, parent or paraprofessional has been shown to be very effective in raising student test scores and to overall improve student learning. "High-impact" tutoring that involves 55 regular, long-term sessions in small groups held within schools has been shown to be particularly effective.

As Isabelle Hau, the executive director of the Stanford Accelerator for Learning, writes, young students need to develop strong social skills, what she calls "relational 60 intelligence" to flourish in social settings.

To be effective, human tutoring needs to meet certain criteria. For example, tutors and their students should meet consistently, the tutors should be skilled and make

sure that what they are teaching is fully integrated with
65 the student's curriculum.

Relationship-building between tutors and students is also critical for getting students to stay more motivated and focused on their work at hand.

Can AI tutors replace human ones?

70 Computer-assisted instruction and intelligent tutoring systems have been around since the 1970s. (...)

However, extensive analysis of different studies found that while these systems increased student achievement, when compared with classroom instruction or students

75 who rely on textbooks or workbooks to study, there was no significant difference in learning between computer tutors and human tutors. (...)

But AI tutors could indeed be useful in some cases, if they are used to support human teachers in their work.

80 One 2024 study showed student improvement in middle schools in low-income areas when human tutors had access to AI tutoring support. And a 2026 study showed that when teachers use AI for lesson plans, experienced teachers tend to critically revise content to better link it
85 to the overall curriculum.

Instead of considering a future where AI tutors replace human teachers, I believe that we need to think about what kind of support and professional development can help teachers make the most of these
90 new and complicated tools.

(730 words)

Opinion

Document 6 - What elementary schools are slowly learning about screens

The Washington Post, August 3, 2026

By Sarah Schneider Kavanagh and Katie A. Danielson

Sarah Schneider Kavanagh is an associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education. Katie A. Danielson is an associate professor at the University of Portland School of Education.

Walk into a second-grade classroom today and it may seem like little has changed over the past few decades: Teachers still greet students at the door. Classrooms still have colorful rugs and educational posters on the walls.

But the picture book the children are listening to isn't being read by the teacher sitting beside them on the rug — it's playing on an interactive whiteboard. The book itself isn't even physically in the room. Instead, its pages (with added
5 animations) are projected on a screen while audio narrates the text. Later, children wear headphones while clicking through individualized reading lessons. After lunch, they each complete their own adaptive math activities on Chromebooks instead of gathering at tiny tables to solve problems together.

These changes happened so gradually (and then so suddenly during the pandemic) that many parents don't realize how different many aspects of elementary school have become. And it all happened with little public debate. Today,
10 nearly 80 percent of school districts issue kindergarteners, first-graders and second-graders devices or allow them to bring them from home.

Screens are no longer occasional classroom tools. They organize the school day. This isn't simply a story about technology. It's a story about what happens when the medium through which children learn reshapes learning itself.

Elementary school always taught more than reading and mathematics. Children learned how to wait for someone else's
15 idea to be expressed before sharing their own, to negotiate disagreements and explain their thinking. This was an essential aspect of growing up, it wasn't just a nice byproduct of being in a classroom. When the relational aspect of learning is removed, the conditions that allow these skills to grow are also removed.

Developmental psychologists have spent decades showing that children's thinking matures through interaction with other people, not just through exposure to information. In many classrooms today, however, children learn
20 individually through personalized software designed to maximize efficiency, and the individualized data it generates is shared with the teachers.

These technological changes in elementary classrooms might look like progress. Classrooms are quieter. Adaptive software promises individualized instruction at exactly the right level. To many, these are real benefits. But every decision involves trade-offs.

25 When stories are delivered through videos instead of being read aloud by the teacher, something changes about storytelling itself. When mathematics becomes a sequence of individual clicks rather than collective problem-solving, children lose opportunities to hear different ways of thinking.

Even if some technologies improve some learning outcomes under some conditions, is this the type of education young Americans need? Do we want classrooms organized by continuous digital engagement? Or do we want schools where children spend substantial portions of the day interacting and creating?

The skills that will matter most in an artificial-intelligence-powered future may be the ones computers can't cultivate: attention span, curiosity, judgment, empathy and collaboration. Attention span in particular is weakened when schools prioritize constant stimulation over intellectual endurance. As technology becomes more powerful, distinctly human capacities become more valuable, not less.

Norway, a country that gave all students iPads in 2016, has begun reversing course, following a decline in reading scores. Some U.S. school districts and states are doing the same. Adults are realizing that schools that don't give devices to children in early grades give them experiences they cannot obtain elsewhere.

Children don't need school to become more like the digital world. They are already immersed in that world for much of the time outside school hours. They need a place designed for other aims, such as conversation instead of consumption and collaboration instead of personalization. That isn't resisting the future; it's preparing children to be fully human in it. (616 words)

DOCUMENT 7 · 🎧 · “What worked and what didn't with a cellphone ban at a Kentucky school”

NPR, February 20, 2026.

Document 8 - 🧠 Students and AI cheating: “Everybody’s lost the ability to think for themselves”

BBC Newsnight, July 29 2025 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AgWYRt2aeRQ>

Document 9 - TÉMOIGNAGES. Triche avec l'IA au bac : les enseignants confrontés à l'usage croissant de l'Intelligence artificielle dans les évaluations des élèves

Article rédigé par Hugo Raynaud

La Dépêche du Midi, le 3 juin 2026

C'est une des craintes des enseignants toute l'année, mais encore plus particulièrement à l'approche du baccalauréat : la triche des élèves grâce à l'aide de l'IA. Les intelligences artificielles génératives, comme ChatGPT, sont de plus en plus utilisées par les lycéens pour s'aider, ou simplement pour faire à leur place les devoirs à la maison, en classe et même lors des épreuves du bac pour certains. Une problématique dont ont conscience les professeurs, mais qui reste, pour l'heure, difficilement détectable et quantifiable. Ce qui oblige les enseignants à s'adapter.

"Les élèves utilisent de façon très intensive l'intelligence artificielle générative", constate Tristan Brams, professeur de SES et secrétaire fédéral à la CFDT Éducation, avec des élèves qui utilisent "presque exclusivement" l'IA pour les devoirs effectués à la maison. Pour Amélie Hart, professeure d'histoire-géographie à Dijon et qui suit les questions d'IA pour le syndicat d'enseignants du SNES, la première conséquence pour elle a été de ne plus donner de devoirs à faire à la maison "à cause de ces problèmes de triche". Le contrôle continu tout au long de l'année correspond à 40 % de la note pour l'obtention du bac.

De plus en plus d'enseignants privilégient donc les travaux réalisés en classe, sous surveillance, ou les présentations

orales permettant de vérifier la maîtrise réelle d'un sujet. Car détecter l'utilisation de l'IA reste extrêmement compliqué. Les logiciels censés identifier des textes générés artificiellement convainquent peu les enseignants interrogés.

"Ces outils ne sont pas fiables à 100 %", souligne Tristan Brams.

Pour autant, tous rappellent que la triche n'est pas née avec ChatGPT. "La recopie des devoirs du voisin, ou le devoir fait par le grand frère, ça se pratiquait déjà abondamment", rappelle Pierre Priouret, professeur de mathématiques et responsable du SNES de Toulouse. Selon lui, l'IA n'a pas créé la triche mais en a changé l'échelle : "On est arrivé au stade industriel. C'est ça qui change." La solution passe alors par le dialogue et la vérification directe lorsqu'un doute existe. "Le moyen de vérifier, c'est de reposer la même question à l'élève à un moment où il ne s'y attend pas", explique l'enseignant de mathématiques.

Concernant le baccalauréat lui-même, les professeurs restent relativement confiants pour les épreuves écrites. Téléphones, montres connectées et objets numériques demeurent interdits et les surveillants d'épreuves font grandement attention. Mais certains s'inquiètent de l'apparition de nouveaux dispositifs de plus en plus difficiles à repérer. "Aujourd'hui, on a des écouteurs qui se mettent au creux de l'oreille que personne ne voit", alerte un enseignant. Amélie Hart évoque également

l'arrivée des lunettes connectées, qui compliquent encore davantage la surveillance.

"L'illusion de faire le travail"

Face à ces défis, les syndicats d'enseignants affichent une
55 forte méfiance, estimant que ces outils risquent de "court-circuiter les apprentissages" et de réduire les capacités de réflexion des élèves. Pour Florent Maugè, enseignant d'histoire-géographie à Toulouse, cette délégation à l'IA pose une difficulté majeure en matière de formation. Le professeur
60 explique que lorsque l'élève "se défausse sur l'intelligence générative pour faire son devoir", il ne se forme plus réellement. L'outil peut alors donner "l'illusion qu'on fait le travail mais qu'en fait on ne l'a pas fait", ce qui remet en cause la construction réelle des compétences.

65 "De toute façon, l'IA est là. On ne peut pas nier le monde tel qu'il est", estime Philippe Sierra, enseignant en classes préparatoires. Selon lui, l'enjeu n'est pas d'interdire l'IA mais d'apprendre à l'utiliser comme un outil sans lui déléguer entièrement le travail. "C'est un peu comme si vous alliez à la
70 salle de sport et que vous faisiez mouvoir la machine sans la mouvoir vous-même. Vous ne vous formez pas."

Tous s'accordent néanmoins sur le rôle de l'école qui doit désormais apprendre aux élèves à comprendre ces technologies autant qu'à s'en méfier. Car derrière la question
75 de la fraude au bac se cache une interrogation plus large : comment former des jeunes capables de penser par eux-mêmes dans un monde où les réponses sont accessibles en quelques secondes ?

PART Four – Higher Education and Geopolitics

Document 9 - 🇬🇧 - United Kingdom to rejoin Erasmus programme in 2027

FRANCE 24 English – December 17 2026

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wECmGvlpCW8>

Document 10 - The UK's Erasmus return is a step in the right direction

Times Higher Education, April 20, 2026 (adapted)

Francesco Billari *Francesco Billari is rector of Bocconi University, Milan.*

I spent a fundamental period of my academic career in the UK, at a university – Oxford – that embodies the value of attracting minds from all over the world. Yet the sense of closing doors and mounting instability caused by Brexit contributed significantly to my decision to return to Italy. Academics, more than workers in most other sectors, feel the impact of political signals.

5 But the UK's decision to rejoin the Erasmus+ exchange programme, reversing its post-Brexit decision to withdraw, sends a much more positive sign that post-Brexit Britain intends to retain and build on its European geography and identity. UK participation in the pan-European represents a solid step in the rebuilding of scientific and cultural ties between the UK and the European Union at a time when the continent needs as much unity as it can muster.

Since its inception, Erasmus has been an effective mechanism for creating a common European identity. It has built
10 trust between nations, helping millions develop habits of cooperation, pluralism, tolerance and understanding. And it has launched hundreds of thousands of innovation-producing transnational careers – not to mention transnational couples and families (the EU estimates that more than 1 million children have been born to people who met on the programme). To Erasmus alumni, Europe is a profound experience, not an abstract concept.

But that experience was shaken by the UK's withdrawal in a way that went far beyond the large declines in the
15 numbers of British exchange students in Europe and vice versa. For those working in universities, the wider negative effects were immediately visible. Despite the launch of the alternative Turing scheme, mobility became fragile, collaborations more expensive, relationships less automatic.

Repairing this mega-fracture matters for the EU but it perhaps matters even more for the UK. British universities have for centuries been central to the construction of knowledge on a global scale and we know that higher education and
20 research thrive in open contexts. Yet data on academic mobility after the 2016 referendum shows that I was far from the only European academic to regard the uncertainty generated by Brexit as detrimental to the UK's attractiveness.

The same was even more dramatically true for EU students. According to data from Oxford's Migration Observatory, the number of EU students at UK universities dropped almost 60 per cent post-Brexit. Previously, they amounted to a quarter of all enrolled students but by 2023-24 that had fallen to only 7 per cent.

25 That trend is unlikely to be significantly reversed by the UK's return to Erasmus (...). We must not treat it as a simple restoration of the previous status quo. The context has changed. The stakes are even higher.

In a globalised and chaotic world, competition for students and researchers is fierce. The ability to host transnational experiences within a relatively small and well-connected geography, studded with many excellent universities, is a competitive advantage for Europe. But to fully capitalise on it, international study must be integrated into curricula in a
30 way that creates opportunity for all, not just the lucky few who can afford it. This applies not just to the UK but to all of Europe. Erasmus must be at the heart of this drive.

The UK's return to Erasmus indicates a strong move in a positive direction: a Europe which, even amid differences, chooses to remain a space of open cooperation, especially in the places, the universities, that form the leaders of the future. 600 words



Document 11 - 17 Jun 2025

EU students in the UK after Brexit

The migration of EU students to the UK has fallen significantly after Brexit. This briefing note discusses how the numbers have changed, how trends vary by country of origin, and what EU students study in the UK, as well as where.

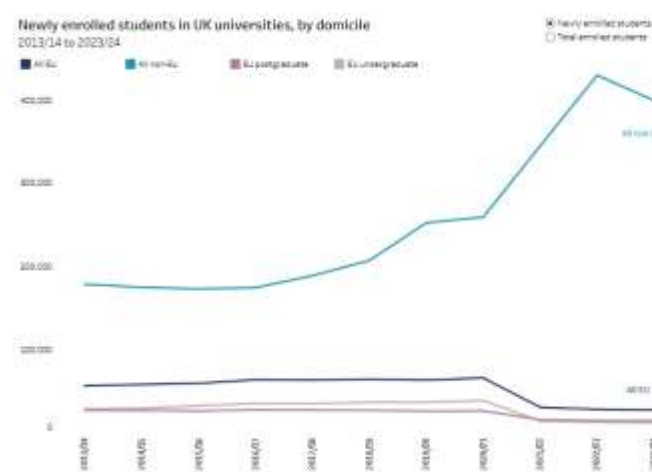
1. Key Points

- The number of EU students enrolling in a new course in British universities fell sharply after Brexit, declining by 57% between 2020/21 and 2023/24. Starting in 2021, students from the EU have had to pay significantly higher international fees.
- The decline in the number of EU students starting a new postgraduate course was less steep than for those starting a new undergraduate degree. Fees increased more for undergraduate courses, which were previously capped for EU students.
- In 2024, there were around 22,000 EU applications to undergraduate courses in the UK, 58% fewer than in 2020.
- In 2023/24, EU students made up under 7% of all new international students, compared to 25% a few years

ago. While EU student numbers fell, the number of new students from non-EU countries rose sharply, by 54% between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

- The number of new students from Romania and Poland fell particularly sharply after post-Brexit rules were implemented
- EU students are concentrated in London and Russell Group institutions.
- In 2023/24, the share of EU students was highest in mathematics, physical sciences, and veterinary sciences
- The financial impact of the end of free movement on UK universities has been limited. There are fewer EU students, but they now pay substantially higher fees, while overall international student numbers have risen sharply. A few universities have introduced scholarships to support students from the EU.

Figure 1



Document 12 - Au Royaume-Uni, la grande dépendance des universités à l'égard des étudiants étrangers

Le Monde, 18 janvier 2024

Le courriel envoyé courant décembre 2023 par l'un des dirigeants du département d'enseignement en informatique de l'université d'York, au Royaume-Uni, à ses collègues était direct : « *En réponse aux problèmes financiers actuels, l'université a décidé de réduire les notes demandées aux étudiants étrangers pour [l'admission dans] tous les cursus.* » **En clair, cette université, qui fait pourtant partie du prestigieux**

Russell Group, rassemblant les vingt-quatre meilleurs établissements de l'éducation supérieure du Royaume-Uni, a décidé d'accepter des étudiants étrangers de moins bon niveau.

Comme l'indique le message interne, révélé par le *Financial Times*, l'explication est purement financière : un étudiant britannique paie des frais universitaires de 9 250 livres sterling (près de 10 800 euros) par an, un

niveau qui est encadré par l'Etat et gelé depuis 2012 ; ceux qui viennent de l'international paient deux à trois fois plus cher, sans aucune limite imposée par les autorités. A 20 l'université d'York, les frais en bachelor s'élèvent par exemple à 21 950 livres sterling par an.

Dans le même temps, l'Etat britannique a fortement réduit son budget consacré aux universités. Le financement public par étudiant est au plus bas depuis 25 vingt-cinq ans. Les étudiants internationaux représentent donc la dernière manne disponible : ils apportent désormais 20 % des revenus des universités, un doublement en une décennie. « *Il y a un besoin urgent d'un débat national sur le financement des universités, 30 notamment l'équilibre entre les frais payés par les étudiants britanniques, les fonds publics, et les étudiants internationaux* », souligne Charley Robinson, chargé de l'international à Universities UK, qui représente les universités britanniques.

35 Dans ce contexte, le courriel interne de l'université d'York dit tout haut ce qui se murmure tout bas depuis quelques années : les universités britanniques, en grande difficulté financière, risquent de créer des diplômes à deux vitesses, avec des exigences plus élevées pour les 40 Britanniques.

En deux décennies, le nombre d'étudiants internationaux a plus que doublé au Royaume-Uni, à presque 700 000 aujourd'hui, soit le quart de tous les étudiants. Dans certaines universités, le pourcentage 45 dépasse allègrement la moitié : London School of Economics (66 % d'étudiants étrangers), University of the Arts London (54 %), Imperial College London (53 %), University College London (UCL, 52 %) ... Au niveau des masters, les deux tiers des étudiants sont désormais 50 internationaux. Le premier contingent vient de Chine, représentant environ le quart des étudiants étrangers. Les Indiens et les Nigériens sont aussi en forte hausse. **Seul le nombre d'Européens, qui doivent payer les frais internationaux depuis le Brexit (alors qu'ils étaient 55 limités aux frais britanniques auparavant), est en forte baisse.**

Ce système tourné vers le recrutement international, qui est certes la preuve éclatante de l'attractivité des universités britanniques, n'est-il pas en train d'aller trop 60 loin ?

Jo Johnson, ancien secrétaire d'Etat à l'éducation supérieure (et frère de Boris Johnson), a récemment tiré la sonnette d'alarme : « *la limite politique* » se rapproche. Le gouvernement du premier ministre, Rishi Sunak, s'agace 65 de voir ces étudiants grossir les statistiques de l'immigration, un sujet explosif outre-Manche. Quant aux universités elles-mêmes, avec des classes parfois entièrement composées d'étudiants étrangers, ne risquent-elles pas d'atteindre un certain déséquilibre ?

70 Coventry est une ville britannique qui a été presque rasée pendant la seconde guerre mondiale, bombardée intensément par l'armée allemande à cause de ses usines d'aviation. Reconstituée à la va-vite dans les années 1950, dominée par la circulation automobile, elle porte encore 75 les stigmates du conflit. Aujourd'hui, partout dans cette cité des Midlands, des bâtiments affichent en grandes lettres capitales : « *Logements étudiants* ». Des tours sont apparues, entièrement destinées aux étudiants étrangers. Le mal nommé « City Village » (une grande barre 80 d'immeubles sans charme) en fait partie.

Sur le panneau d'affichage à l'entrée, des photos ont été collées, souvenirs de petits événements organisés pour Pâques, Noël ou le couronnement du roi Charles III. Toutes montrent exclusivement des étudiants asiatiques. 85 Dans les couloirs, on parle mandarin, cantonais, indonésien... [...]

L'université de Coventry [...] fait partie de ces établissements moyens, au 571^e rang mondial dans le classement QS, qui fait référence. Mais elle a poussé 90 particulièrement loin la logique de l'internationalisation. En 2010, l'établissement a ouvert un campus de 4 500 étudiants... à Londres, à plus de 170 kilomètres de la ville des Midlands. « *Il a été créé dans le but explicite d'attirer les étudiants internationaux qui voulaient un 95 diplôme de Coventry, mais souhaitaient vivre l'expérience londonienne* », explique Ian Dunn, le recteur. L'université a désormais quatre campus à Londres.

Dans la même logique qu'une multinationale, elle a aussi ouvert des sites en Pologne, au Maroc, en Egypte... 100 Chacun offre un « diplôme de l'université de Coventry », mais sans que les étudiants aient besoin de mettre les pieds au Royaume-Uni, et à des prix beaucoup plus raisonnables. Comme pour une franchise, l'université supervise et garantit la qualité de l'enseignement. « *Il s'agit d'apporter 105 l'éducation là où elle est nécessaire* », explique M. Dunn. Il assure qu'il n'est pas question de baisser la qualité de l'enseignement ni les critères d'admission.

Reste que la logique de ce développement est financière. « *Il est désormais douteux que la survie des 110 universités britanniques soit possible sans les revenus des étudiants étrangers* », estime Richard Wells, chargé de la stratégie internationale de l'université de Coventry. Dans son établissement, les étudiants étrangers rapportent 47 % des revenus.

115 Cette dépendance est la conséquence d'une décision politique prise en 2012. **La décennie précédente, le nombre d'étudiants avait fortement augmenté, tandis que les financements ne suivaient pas. Le gouvernement de David Cameron avait alors décidé de 120 tripler les frais universitaires, alors limités à 3 000 livres sterling. La décision a provoqué une violente tempête politique et d'importantes manifestations.**

Depuis, aucun gouvernement n'ose toucher à la limite
125 de 9 250 livres sterling par année universitaire pour les
étudiants britanniques. En valeur réelle, ce gel depuis
douze ans représente une baisse d'un tiers. « *Ce n'est pas
un secret, les étudiants internationaux fournissent des
revenus vitaux* », souligne Ben Moore, de Russell Group.
130 Selon lui, un étudiant international « *subventionné* » un
Britannique à hauteur de 2 500 livres sterling par an.

Désormais, la pression financière s'immisce même
dans les tout meilleurs établissements. A UCL (neuvième
meilleur établissement mondial, selon le classement QS),
135 un professeur, qui requiert l'anonymat, raconte les
consignes venant de sa direction pour sélectionner les
étudiants. « *Pour chaque classe, on me donne un quota
d'étudiants étrangers. A moi, ensuite, de trouver les élèves
qui ont le niveau.* » Il a de la chance : la réputation d'UCL
140 la précède et il ne manque pas de candidats. « *Mais pour
ceux qui sont limités, de très bons élèves mais qui
pourraient ne pas être admis du côté britannique, on
trouve souvent plus d'arguments favorables pour les
internationaux.* »

145 A UCL, les frais pour les masters s'envolent jusqu'à
35 000 livres sterling l'année. [...]

Cette vague d'internationalisation serait-elle cependant
sur le point de refluer ? **Le gouvernement britannique,
soucieux de réduire l'immigration, a augmenté le coût
150 des visas en 2023 et vient d'imposer des restrictions
pour limiter le regroupement familial des étudiants en
master.** Selon le site Studyportals, qui aide les candidats
aux études à l'étranger à s'y retrouver, les demandes de
renseignements chutent : – 48 % en provenance du
155 Nigeria, – 34 % du Sri Lanka (ces deux pays sont par
ailleurs touchés par des crises économiques), – 22 % des
Emirats arabes unis...

« *Nous pensons que nous avons atteint un pic du
nombre d'étudiants internationaux en 2023, et nous
160 sommes de plus en plus inquiets pour le recrutement des
étudiants en 2024* », explique M^{me} Robinson,
d'Universities UK.

**Pour le gouvernement, cela représente un dilemme
difficile : soit mieux financer les universités, quitte à
165 augmenter les frais universitaires pour les
Britanniques, soit faciliter les visas. Un choix entre
deux bombes politiques qu'aucun des deux grands
partis n'ose discuter ouvertement, à moins d'un an des
élections législatives.**

Document 13 -Top UK universities increase their reliance on China for overseas recruitment

Data shows that two in five overseas students at Russell Group institutions last year were from China

The Financial Times, JAN 27 2026

Two in five overseas students at the UK's top-ranking
universities last year came from China, according to data
that underlines concern about the financial risks of relying
so heavily on a single recruitment market.

5 There were almost 105,000 Chinese students at Russell
Group universities in 2024-25, representing 42.5 per cent
of their international student population, according to FT
analysis of official data published on Tuesday.

This is a record-high proportion and almost five times the
10 figure for the rest of the university sector, where Chinese
students accounted for just 8.7 per cent of overseas
students.

Universities are under pressure to shore up their finances
by diversifying recruitment, as intensifying global
15 competition for international students and a softening
Chinese graduate jobs market threaten to damp demand for
UK degrees.

The data comes as Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer heads
to China to try to repair the UK's relationship with Beijing,
20 which has come under strain from allegations of political
espionage and delays in approving plans to build a "mega"
embassy in London.

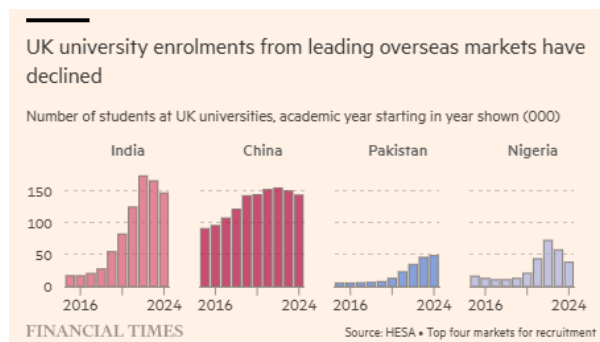
There is also growing tension over Beijing's influence on
British campuses after evidence emerged in November that
25 a campaign of intimidation by Chinese officials prevented
publication of research into alleged human rights
violations in Xinjiang.

UK academics have warned that universities' reliance on
30 Chinese fee income is fuelling self-censorship, amplifying
existing concerns about the risk of a diplomatic rift
destabilising the sector's finances.

In a statement, the Department for Education said: "Any
attempt by a foreign state to intimidate, harass or harm
35 individuals in the UK will not be tolerated, and we have
taken action to put the sector on firmer financial footing so
that it can face the challenges of the future."

The risks of over-reliance on a single country were
underscored by a collapse in recruitment from Nigeria, the
40 UK's third-largest market, where the number of new
students halved between 2022-23 and 2024-25 after it
experienced a currency crisis.

Despite pressure to diversify student intakes, universities
are restricting recruitment from Pakistan and Bangladesh
45 following the introduction of tighter visa rules and
pivoting towards countries such as China with higher
compliance rates.



Jamie Arrowsmith, director of Universities UK International, which represents the sector, said visa data suggested the “very challenging” conditions for recruiting 55 international students had continued over the past year. He added that upcoming changes to the UK’s immigration system would make diversifying recruitment to a wider range of countries even more challenging.

60 “We need a period of policy stability for universities and prospective international students,” he said. “But, fundamentally, this data highlights the need for a properly sustainable funding settlement for our universities.”

You can also listen to **How China is trying to silence UK academics - PODCAST**

How entangled are China and the UK universities sector? Amy Hawkins reports

The Guardian, Today in Focus, Wed 12 Nov, 2026

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/audio/2025/nov/12/how-china-is-trying-to-silence-uk-academics-podcast>

Document 14 - 🎧 How the Trump administration's new rules could affect international students



Heard on [Morning Edition](#), July 20, 2026 By [Elissa Nadworny](#), [Janet W. Lee](#)

The audio document has been uploaded onto Cahier de Prépa PC* (CdP)

Document 15 - International Students Remade a College. What’s Left When They’re Gone?

By [Alan Blinder](#), *The New York Times*, April 6, 2026

International students used to crowd Lewis University’s hallways, surrounding David Livingston, the school’s president, when he would stride through. The campus near Chicago is quieter now, months into the Trump administration’s campaign to curb the number of international students at American schools. Visa approvals have plunged and the number of international students has fallen at colleges from coast to coast, upending business models, 5 admissions playbooks and even course scheduling.

Few places have been as shaken as Lewis, a Catholic university of about 7,000.

And although many believe that Washington will eventually loosen its policies, the timeline is so unclear that administrators are bracing for turmoil through President Trump’s term, and perhaps well beyond.

In the fall of 2024, when Mr. Trump was elected, Lewis had 1,397 international students who accounted for nearly a 10 fifth of the university’s total enrollment. A year later, that number was down to 870. By this fall, it may drop below 500. “We didn’t anticipate this rapid of a change, or this severe of a change,” said the provost, Christopher Sindt. Despite plenty of interest in the university’s programs from abroad, Dr. Sindt said, U.S. officials were not issuing enough visas to match the demand.

The reduction was a drastic change from years past, when the number of student visas sometimes fluctuated, but only 15 slightly. The U.S. government's issuances of the predominant visa for international students dropped about 36 percent year-over-year just before the fall 2025 semester, according to a New York Times analysis of State Department data.

Some countries were hit harder than others. India had a decline of roughly two-thirds from 2024 to 2025. Visas for Iranians dropped 99 percent, from 1,118 to just 13. And Nigeria saw a decline of 57 percent over that same period.

"It's just been an awakening experience to see how fragile it can be," Dr. Sindt said.

20 Last year, a proposal from the Trump administration to universities suggested that excessive reliance on international students could threaten access for Americans. The document also asserted that students who were not "properly vetted" could impose "noxious values such as antisemitism and other anti-American values" on campuses.

Until Mr. Trump returned to power, universities historically saw international students as boons to their campuses and communities. Many paid full tuition, easing budget strains, and enriched campus cultures as they earned degrees in 25 fields propelling academic research. Roughly 30 years ago, the United States had about 344,000 international students. Except for a period around the pandemic, it has had more than 1 million since the 2015-16 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education, though the explosive growth softened during Mr. Trump's first term.

Some American schools that are among the leading destinations for international students, such as Columbia and the University of California system, have been top targets for Trump administration scrutiny. But international students also 30 routinely enroll at schools that attract little attention from Washington — places like Lewis, which is based in the Chicago suburb of Romeoville, and public universities like Wright State and Central Missouri.

Still, Dr. Livingston, Lewis's president since 2016, said he had no regrets about how much Lewis had done to bring students to America, even if, for now, industry officials expect more than usual to study in Britain and Australia. "We don't control the gateway," Dr. Livingston said, "but I think our belief is, over time, it's such a good thing for the globe 35 to have people that interact with each other, understand each other, learn in each other's cultures." (604 words)

Document 16

As U.S. Enrolls Fewer International Students, Universities in Asia Are Going the Other Direction

TIME

, by Miranda Jeyaretnam, Reporter, May 12, 2026 (extracts)

To read the entire article go [HERE](#)

American universities are beginning to see international student enrollment drop, coinciding with President Donald Trump's increasingly restrictive immigration policies, and institutions in Asia and Europe may stand to benefit.

5 Foreign student enrollment at U.S. universities for the 2026 spring semester fell by 20% from last spring, according to a new report by organizations including U.S.-based international education nonprofit NAFSA. The report, published on Monday, surveyed 149 U.S. schools. Around 10 62% of those institutions reported lower international student enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate programs compared to last year. At the graduate level, U.S. universities recorded an average fall of 24%. (...)

"As long as the Administration acts as if it is in a world full 15 of enemies, that is going to severely impact student numbers," says Simon Marginson, a professor of higher education at Oxford University and the founding director of the Center for Global Higher Education.

Some institutions across the U.S. could soon feel the impact 20 of fewer international students, who often pay full tuition, on their budgets and on the intellectual diversity of their programs, analysts say.

Meanwhile, universities in Asia and Europe are reaping the benefits. Around 82% of institutions in the Asia-Pacific 25 region—excluding Australia—and 47% of institutions in Europe surveyed saw growth in their undergraduate enrollment of international students, according to the new report. The survey included responses from institutions in Fiji, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Taiwan 30 for Asia-Pacific, and Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey for Europe.

"It would be overstating it to say the U.S. has become 35 unattractive in general—it is still the most sought after destination for international education—but the gap with other countries has narrowed," Marginson tells TIME. And, he adds, "the rise of educational destinations in East and Southeast Asia looks like an unstoppable trend." (...)

40 According to the survey, Australia, Canada, and the U.K. also saw declines in international student enrollment. All three countries and the U.S., colloquially called the "big four," have traditionally been considered the most attractive destinations for higher education in the world. But this spring, 44% of 45 Australian institutions, 69% of Canadian institutions, and

42% of British institutions recorded a drop in international student enrolments at the undergraduate level. Those declines were even more pronounced at the graduate level, with 67% of Australian institutions, 80% of Canadian institutions, and 50 65% of British institutions reporting lower enrollment numbers.

In these three countries, universities also pointed largely to restrictive government policies as the reason for their falling numbers. (...)

55 The downturn in international students going to the U.S. doesn't just affect budgets, Marginson says. It also means fewer high-caliber students, especially from China. That could impact research and innovation, especially in STEM, coming out of the U.S. as well as affect intellectual, cultural, 60 and language diversity on American campuses.

Many of those highly competitive, well-qualified prospective students are instead being welcomed onto campuses in Asia.

While the majority of Chinese students looking to study overseas still choose one of the "big four" destinations, a 65 growing number are choosing universities in other parts of Asia. (...)

East Asian and Southeast Asian countries are more convenient locations, says Marginson, and they're seen as culturally friendlier and significantly cheaper alternatives to 70 U.S. universities.

Although Monday's survey did not look at Chinese institutions, China is also increasingly seen as an attractive study destination. Most Chinese students still study at Chinese universities, which largely have lower fees and 75 strong academic reputations, especially in STEM. Last year, China surpassed the U.S. in output of critical technology research, including A.I., according to the Australian Strategic

Policy Institute, which looked at the top 10% most-cited scientific publications. Both the Chinese government and 80 firms are also pouring a huge amount of money into research and development.

Chinese universities have seen more students from other parts of Asia and Africa enroll. The number of international students at Chinese universities grew from a low of around 85 250,000 during the pandemic in 2021 to around 380,000 in the 2024-2025 academic year, according to the country's Ministry of Education. These students hailed from 191 countries, with Asian students accounting for around 61% and African students around 16% of the cohort.

90 Analysts have argued that China's growing political and economic influence worldwide through the Belt and Road Initiative has facilitated closer relationships with and a more positive reputation among Asian and African countries, leading to greater academic exchange. China has also pushed 95 to open itself up through more academic exchanges, new visa types, and promoting tourism. China's image, especially among younger generations, appears to have significantly improved in recent years, with some on social media adopting the "Chinamaxxing" trend.

100 Still, non-Mandarin speaking students may be turned off by the language barrier, he adds. Hong Kong is benefitting the most of all destinations from the shifts in higher education, Marginson tells TIME. Its universities have risen in global rankings, as have several in mainland China, and have 105 increased their enrollment caps for international students. It is also more accessible to English-speakers or those who want to study in English.

(853 words)

PART Five – Curriculum Designs

Document 17 - Every student must study both STEM and the arts and humanities

Times Higher Education, November 13, 2025, Updated March 3, 2026 by Hanifa Shah

Hanifa Shah is pro vice-chancellor for research, enterprise, engagement and STEAM at Birmingham City University.

The Russell Group* was right to insist, in the wake of the UK government's recent Post-16 Education and White Paper, that **humanities* graduates*** have an important role to play in fulfilling the industrial strategy.

In an article in *Times Higher Education*, the group's policy manager, Charlotte Hallahan, reported analysis revealing that 85 per cent of **non-STEM*** graduates from high-tariff, research-intensive universities enter one of the 5 government's eight priority sectors for growth within five years of completing their first **degrees***. As she noted, even high tech start-ups "not only need the scientists or engineers who make the technical breakthroughs, but a whole range of legal, creative, strategic and critical thinking skills – which **SHAPE** education provides."

But as human-machine synergies accelerate discovery, product development and social change, wouldn't it be better to have graduates whose expertise spanned both STEM and SHAPE disciplines? AI and other digital systems are set to 10 move from being mere tools to joining us as co-creators, analysts and even decision partners. This raises the stakes when it comes to ethical and security implications. The speed at which biosynthetic development takes place has created concerns about biosafety, for instance.

The more of ourselves we put into technological systems, the more exposed we become – cybercrime, for instance, costs the UK economy in excess of £30 billion a year. Having the technological knowledge is valuable but needs to be 15 coupled with critical thinking and wider social and ethical framing.

Multinational corporations such as Google have already begun to respond to these developments, launching in July a US-wide initiative to train workers and small businesses in AI. However, universities have the opportunity to prioritise wider talent creation, which will still serve business, innovation and the economy.

Such a workforce will also be more future-proof and responsive because the accelerated pace of technological change 20 is also likely to increase the rate at which skills, especially individual specialisms, become outdated. Modern graduates need multiple strings to their bows.

STEAM is the purposeful integration of science, technology, engineering, the arts and humanities and mathematics (I hold the view that the A stands for both arts and humanities). This is no mere fad but a very real and necessary evolution in how we understand and shape knowledge and, as a consequence, the creative and cultural industries.

25 By embedding interdisciplinary opportunities into degree pathways, students can move fluidly between analytical and imaginative modes of thinking, a skill set increasingly demanded by employers across sectors. Equipping them with wide-ranging knowledge and multiple skills – while also demonstrating the relationship between different disciplines – can spark new understanding and solutions to problems by helping them ask critical questions, consider ethical implications and bring meaning and context to innovation.

30 For example, in their **degree**, and then in the job market, an **engineering student** requires critical thinking more than ever. And an arts student now needs high levels of digital competence. The boundaries between disciplines have become increasingly porous. (...)

The transformative potential of STEAM is perhaps most evident in the realm of AI. Far from being just a technical tool for STEM, AI is also a cultural phenomenon. As we introduce students to the possibilities it affords, we must ground 35 their learning in ethical reasoning, human-centred design and societal impact by drawing on the arts and humanities – not least cultural studies and philosophy.

By making these connections visible and actionable through real-world projects, innovation labs and interdisciplinary teaching, we can create a more sustainable workforce that can transform society for the better. 615 words

DOCUMENT 19 · · · “UK government to bring technical training to 14-year-olds in schools”

Channel 4, 28 July 2026.

□ link: <https://youtu.be/GQDK4zVPlfM> (4 minutes: from 0:00 to 3:42)

Funding Crisis in higher education - STUDENT LOAN DEBT

THE WEEK

The explainer

Document XX - Why the UK's universities are in financial crisis

Spiralling costs and fewer international students are leaving universities facing an unprecedented funding crisis

By The Week UK, June 6, 2025

The government's immigration crackdown could increase the financial pressure on Britain's beleaguered higher education institutions, leaders in the sector have warned.

University bosses have said that government plans for reform of the higher education sector (details will not be made public until later this summer) raised "significant financial concerns", said The Independent.

How bad is the problem?

There have been warnings for years of a looming crisis in university funding.

In 2023, the Sunak-led Tory government introduced restrictions on overseas students such as a ban on bringing relatives, which, said PoliticsHome, has "resulted in many universities reporting a drop in applications from abroad". In the last academic year, a third of the UK's 150 or so higher education institutions had only enough funds to last for 100 days, with an increasing number facing "a material risk of closure" unless they dramatically cut costs or merge over the next few years.

It was against this backdrop that Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced an increase in tuition fees in England for the first time in eight years – from £9,250 per year, to £9,535 – in order to "bring stability to university finances".

Meanwhile, an Immigration White Paper, published in May by the Labour government, set out plans to introduce a levy on international student income and reduce the time that graduates can remain in the UK after completing their studies before landing a skilled job from two years to 18 months.

University leaders from the Russell Group warned that these proposals could make the UK "less competitive internationally", further hitting their finances. The latest annual health check of the sector by the Office for Students (OfS) found that 43% of universities are facing budget deficits.

How are universities funded?

The total income of UK higher education providers in 2022/23 was about £50 billion. Of this, some 52% came from tuition fees (43% of which were paid by international students); 14% came from research grants (from government bodies and charities); and 12% came from direct government funding. Other sources of income include donations and endowments.

Since higher education is devolved, the UK's different administrations have different funding models. In Scotland, home students' tuition fees are paid directly by

the government, meaning Scottish student numbers are capped, unlike in England; all Welsh undergraduates receive a minimum maintenance grant of £1,000 to help with living costs; and in Northern Ireland, fees are capped at £4,750.

Why are universities so cash-strapped?

The current financial challenges facing UK universities are broadly because of "funding reforms implemented in 2012 and the decreasing government support since then", said LSE Blogs.

Tuition fees had been frozen at £9,250 since 2017; if they had risen in line with inflation since 2012, they would have reached nearly £15,000 by now. This has caused a sharp real-terms drop in income; the last time universities' income was this low was when tuition fees were first introduced, in 1998.

At the same time, they have had to contend with inflation-driven rises in operational costs, staff salaries and pension payments. As a result, before the tuition fee hike was announced, they were making a loss of £2,500 on each domestic student, according to analysis by the Financial Times – so the sector has become dependent on fees from international students.

Essentially, said Richard Murphy on his TaxResearch blog, international students have been "massively subsidising" university losses due to the government "not allowing student tuition fees to go up", but there are now plans to limit them.

What issues does that raise?

The number of international students enrolling at UK universities has, over the past 20 years, risen sharply: in 2003, there were about 300,000 students from outside the UK on their books; by 2022/23, there were 758,855 – 26% of the student body. They can be charged much higher fees than UK students – up to £26,000 a year in tuition fees for undergraduate courses – and contributed £11.8 billion in fees in 2022/23.

However, the issue is politically contentious. Universities argue that foreign students prop them up, and that it's good to attract talent from around the world. Critics complain that education is used as a back door to economic migration; at least a third of foreign students settle in Britain, notably those from India, China and Nigeria. Rules designed to reduce this – banning most postgraduate students from bringing family members to live with them, for instance – have meant that student visa applications

dropped by 16% last year. And this has greatly affected university finances.

What effect is all this having?

For years, universities have been asked to do more with less. And with foreign students no longer fully plugging the gap, more than 90 UK universities have announced staff redundancies, course closures and other forms of restructuring. Others may be forced into mergers, or axing some degrees. Some may go bankrupt, and either have to be bailed out financially by the government, or close down.

Among academics, morale is reportedly at an all-time low. The prospect of further job losses follows years of falling pay, heavier workloads, often precarious working conditions and pension reductions – which have led to waves of strikes. There is likely to be further industrial action as redundancies and restructurings are announced. It is not just job losses that are a concern, said Murphy – students are "definitely suffering" too, as they will have less choice and worse staff teaching ratios "with no reduction of fees as a consequence".

Won't the fee hike help?

Not really. The Institute for Fiscal Studies calculates that the hike will raise £390 million a year for universities; but changes to employers' National Insurance announced in last autumn's Budget will likely cost them £372 million a year, leaving a net gain of just £18 million. Besides, it will only start in the 2025/26 academic year. It will, though, add to the debt loaded onto students in England. The government has stated that "longer-term funding plans for the higher education sector will be set out in due course", but that probably means waiting until public finances are stabilised.

What will the government do?

It could increase tuition fees further or link them to inflation. It could increase grants to universities through

more taxation. Inflation-linked fees and grant increases are essential, said Philip Augar in the Financial Times. Augar, who chaired a review of post-18 education for the Theresa May Tory government in 2018/19 said universities would have to be more "upfront about course employment outcomes" if students are paying more.

The government could also allow in more overseas fee-paying students or exclude international students from immigration statistics, "which is in line with the practice in the rest of Europe", said LSE. Or it could do some mixture of the above. The alternative is allowing higher education – one of Britain's world-leading sectors – to get poorer and smaller. Some would argue that we have too many universities. In 2006, 24.7% of UK 18-year-olds went to university; by 2024, that figure had risen to 36.4%. David Behan, chair of OfS, has suggested that the "golden age of higher education" is probably over, and that universities are likely to move towards far shorter courses that allow students to work and study simultaneously.

Some less illustrious universities could probably fail without serious repercussions. But many are anchor institutions in their towns and cities, often among the largest employers and contributors to the local economy. Any government, particularly a Labour one, would be keen to avoid such closures.

This means that, despite the uncertainty, it is unlikely any institution will simply be allowed to go under, said the Financial Times: "just like the banks – universities are too big to fail".

***The Week** is a weekly news magazine with editions in the United Kingdom and United States.*

The Week was founded in the United Kingdom by Jolyon Connell (formerly of the Sunday Telegraph) in 1995. Future Plc acquired Dennis Publishing and several of its titles including The Week in 2021

The U.S. Student Loan Debt Crisis Explained

Education Data Initiative, 14 July 2024

<https://educationdata.org/student-loan-debt-crisis>

Report Highlights. The student loan debt crisis affects **42.5 million** Americans; increasing debt and global hardship have prompted legislative action.

- Americans owe a total of **\$1.797 trillion** in federal and private student loan debt combined.
- Federal student loan debt alone totals **\$1.661 trillion**.
- **16.0%** of all American adults have outstanding undergraduate student debt.
- **11.3%** of student loan debt in repayment was delinquent as of March 2020*.
- **42.7 million** federal borrowers and up to *3.5 million* private borrowers owe student loan debt.



NPR, February 10 2026, Heard on [All Things Considered](#)

<https://www.npr.org/2026/02/10/nx-s1-5690186/student-loan-default-repayment>

Students face ‘ticking timebomb’ of debt and higher taxes

Exclusive: Analysis finds cost of higher education ‘falls overwhelmingly on the individual’

Richard Adams Education editor, *The Guardian*, Mon 10 Aug 2026

The government is piling mountains of debt and higher tax rates on young people heading to university, according to analysis into the “ticking timebomb” of costs faced by future students.

Hundreds of thousands of sixth formers will receive their A-level results on Thursday, with many expecting to continue on to higher education courses.

But Toby Whelton, author of the analysis for the Intergenerational Foundation, a thinktank, says those in England will face more extreme financial penalties than previous graduates.

Whelton said the cost of paying for university education has been shifted almost entirely on to current students, with the latest student loan package – known as plan 5 (which began in August 2023) – meaning young graduates will struggle to save for house deposits or pension contributions, delaying their key milestones.

“The burden of student loans has never been higher. By stealth and with minimal democratic scrutiny, successive governments have piled costs on to young graduates in the hope that nobody would notice,” said Whelton. “Plan 5 in particular has received far too little attention. It is a ticking timebomb, set to detonate as today’s students enter the workforce and confront repayment terms harsher than those faced by previous cohorts.”

The report by the Intergenerational Foundation details how successive governments since 2010 have increased the costs for students in England.

On top of repaying student loans at higher rates than previous generations, today’s graduates also face effective tax rates above 50% when their income reaches higher brackets, says the report, which describes this as “historically high and disproportionate”.

The analysis shows that amounts being repaid by today’s graduates in England are more than double those paid under plan 1, which was in place before the coalition government in 2012 raised annual undergraduate tuition fees from £3,375 to £9,000. Plan 2 ran from 2012 until 2023. “We estimate that average earners under plan 5 will repay £56,240 over their lifetime, compared with £25,700 under plan 1,” the report says.

Meanwhile, expected lifetime repayments for lower earners “have risen from £6,430 to £42,070”, expressed in 2026 prices.

The report also highlights how governments have whittled away at their contribution to higher education by steadily reducing the teaching grants paid to support universities while slashing subsidies for student loan repayments.

In 2015-16 the government’s combined contribution was equivalent to 46% of the total cost of a graduate’s education. But now just 8% of the cost will be met by the government.

“What was always intended to be a cost-sharing system, in which the cost of university would be shared between the individual and the exchequer, now falls overwhelmingly on the individual,” the report notes.

The foundation wants the government to rebalance the costs by cutting the student loan repayment rate from 9% to 5% for both plan 2 and plan 5 graduates, saying it would be “the fairest and most effective way” to restore the government’s contribution.

Lucy Powell, the new education secretary, has said that reviewing student loans is “very much at the top of my in-tray” as criticism has piled up from student groups, campaigners and MPs over the changes to loan repayments.

A Department for Education (DfE) spokesperson said: “We know the system we inherited is broken and unfair, and some graduates feel the weight of this more strongly.

Sixth formers will soon find out their A-level results, with many discovering whether they have the grades for their first-choice courses.

Prof Alan Smithers, of the University of Buckingham, is forecasting a small increase in top grades this year, because of the rising popularity of maths. “These subjects are among the highest awarders of A* and A grades,” Smithers said. “This points to a further rise in top grades. We cannot be sure, but it is my best guess.” 657 words

