

Foreign students: the relationship between study paths and success

For the time being, official statistics on foreign students, mainly based on nationality, mix groups of students with very different personal paths.

As such, this paper offers a more detailed study of the different types of student mobility that exist at the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole (UT1 Capitole).

The first part of this study will be devoted to the statistical tools available for studying student mobility through the presentation of numbers and data on foreign students enrolled at UT1 Capitole, in initial training, as well as on their journey before arrival at the university. This study is based on administrative data from APOGEE and data provided by the Joint European and International Relations Service of UT1 Capitole and the European Law School.

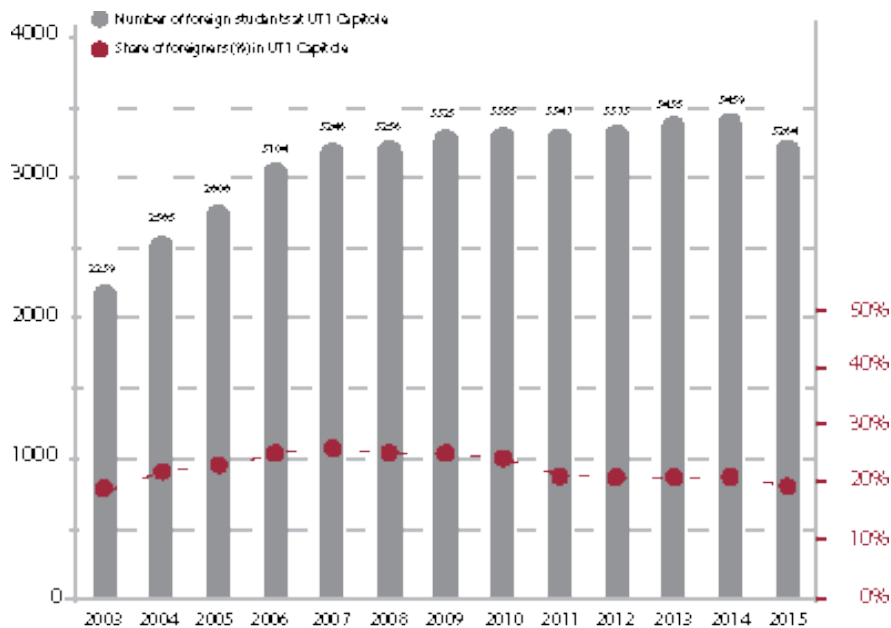
The second part of the article will discuss the career path, within the institution, of students in international mobility enrolled at UT1 Capitole. This study is based on the analysis of longitudinal data, between 2003 and 2015, on students' administrative enrolment and end-of-year examination results.

Profile of foreign students at UT1 Capitole

Student mobility around the world is constantly increasing, and according to UNESCO, France has been among the top five host countries for many years. However, the presence of foreign students on French soil is very diverse, with students being particularly attracted to the Paris region. Nevertheless, the city of Toulouse, and in particular UT1 Capitole, is one of the sites that welcomes many foreign students. While at the national level, foreign students represent 12% of the total number of students enrolled (all institutions combined - Campus France figures), within UT1 Capitole, there were 3,347 foreign students enrolled for the year 2011/2012 (in initial training, all courses combined - calculation based on the student's nationality), equating to 21% of the students enrolled that year at the university

. Over the past twelve years, the number of foreign student enrolments has increased steadily from 2,239 in 2003 to 3,264 in 2015, although the share of foreign students in the total number of students enrolled in initial training has declined since 2010.

● Number of foreign students at UT1 Capitole, ● Share of foreigners (%) in UT1 Capitole



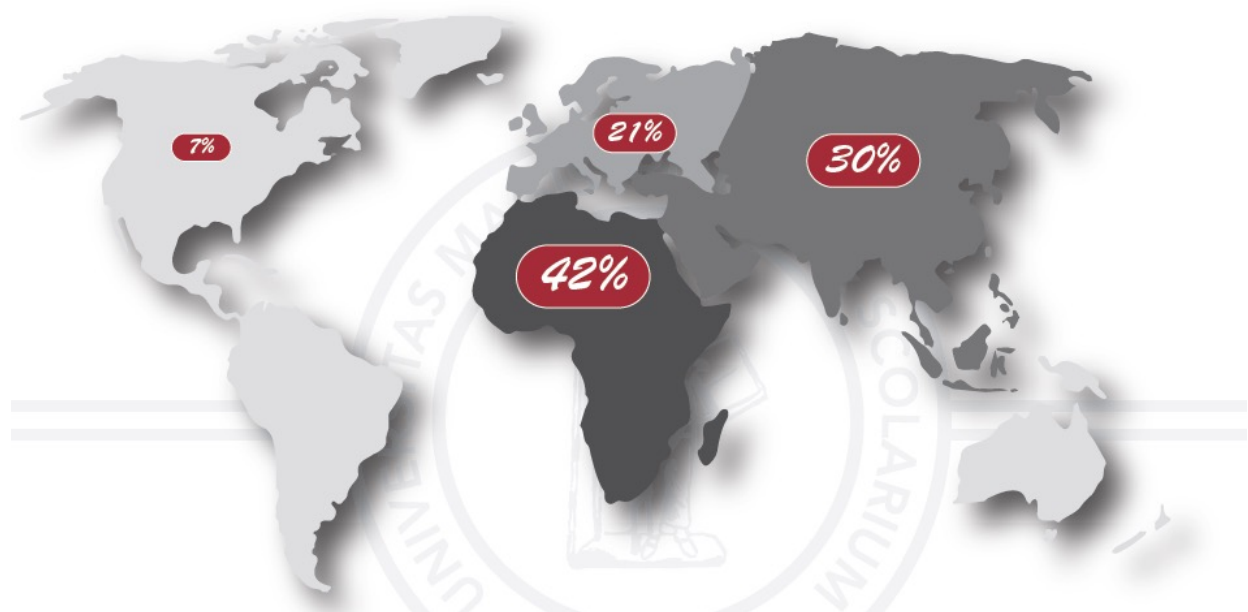
Geographic mobility

Four out of ten foreign students at UT1 Capitole are of African nationality. More specifically, 20% of foreign students are from North Africa, 13% from West Africa, 5% from East Africa and 4% from Central Africa.

Asia is the second best represented continent: three out of ten foreign students are of Asian nationality. They are mainly students from Southeast Asia (15%) and East Asia (12%).

Next in line are students of European nationality. About one in five students is of European nationality, mainly from the European Union.








Compared to the national level, students of Asian nationality are over-represented in UT1 Capitole while African and European students are represented in similar proportions (at the national level, in 2010/2011, there were 17% Asian students, 39% African students and 24% European students - Campus France figures).



From the country's point of view, students of Vietnamese, Chinese and Moroccan nationality are the most represented. Indeed, each of these three nationalities represents just over one in ten

foreign students enrolled in UT1 Capitole. At the national level, Morocco and China are the two main countries of origin of foreign students. They are followed by Algeria, Tunisia and Italy. The hosting of Vietnamese students is therefore a specific feature of the university. It is the result of the collaboration that has been established with the universities of Vietnam for training courses relocated to the cities of Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi.

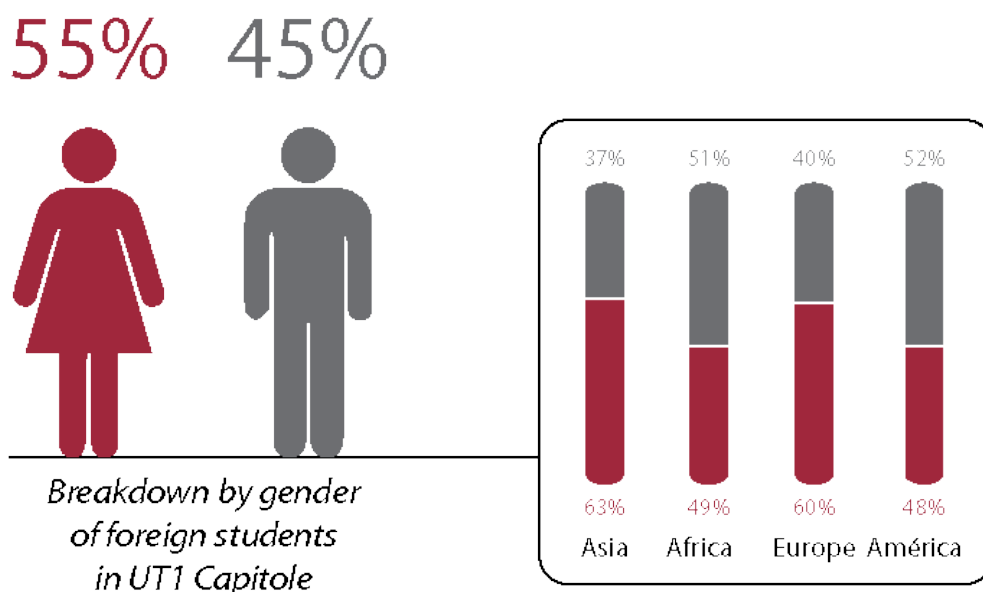
Country of origin, Number of students 2011/2012, Share, Change/2006

Country of origin	Number of students 2011/2012	Share	Change /2006
 VietNam	442	13%	+350% ↗
 China	402	12%	+31% ↗
 Morocco	382	11%	-36% ↘
 Sénégal	152	5%	-22% ↘
 Algérie	143	4%	+35% ↗
 Côte d'Ivoire	110	3%	-30% ↘
 Tunisia	105	3%	-33% ↘

The share of European and American students has increased slightly in recent years and that of African students has decreased slightly. But as at the national level, the growth in the number of foreign students present at UT1 Capitole is mainly due to the large number of foreign students from Asia. These Asian students have increased in number at UT1 Capitole, from 313 in 2003 to 1,035 students enrolled in 2011. Asian students even surpassed the number of students from the European Union in 2007-2008. Since 2011, their number has been decreasing steadily but remains very high (867 in 2015/2016).

Breakdown by gender

The breakdown by gender observed among foreign students enrolled in UT1 Capitole (55% female students for 45% male students) reveals disparities according to nationality. While students from Africa or America retain a certain equality of representation between men and women (52% male and 48% female), foreign students from European or Asian countries are more likely to be women (more than 60% female and less than 40% male).



Breakdown by level

Half of the foreign students enrolled in 2011/2012 were on a Bachelor's degree programme and one third on a Master's degree programme. One in ten foreign students enrolled in PhD studies. These proportions are about the same at the national level. Compared to their French counterparts at the university, proportionally, there were more foreign students enrolled on Master's degrees and PhDs.

Enrolment cycle

	Foreigners	French
Bachelor's	51%	58%*
Master's	34%*	30%
PhD	11%*	3%
Other	4%	9%*

*significant statistical relationship at the 1% threshold

Breakdown by Component

About one third of foreign students enrolled in 2011/2012 were studying law and one third were studying economics. Compared to their French counterparts, proportionally, there were more foreign students than their counterparts enrolled on Economics and Computer Science and much less so in Law.

Enrolment component

	Foreigners	French
LAW	32%	62%*
TSE	35%*	11%
A&C	13%	12%
TSM	11%	12%
IT	9%*	3%

*significant statistical relationship at the 1% threshold

Data provided by APOGEE, regarding all students (foreign and then French) enrolled in UT1 in full-time education in 2011/2012

If we look at each continent, African students enrol in Law (mainly on Bachelor's degrees but also with a significant proportion of PhD students), Computer Science (on Master's degrees) or Economic and Social Management (on Bachelor's degrees), while Asian students are mainly attracted to UT1 Capitole by courses in economics at Bachelor's level. European students, on the other hand, mainly enrol in Law, on a Bachelor's degree courses.

The different types of study placements in France

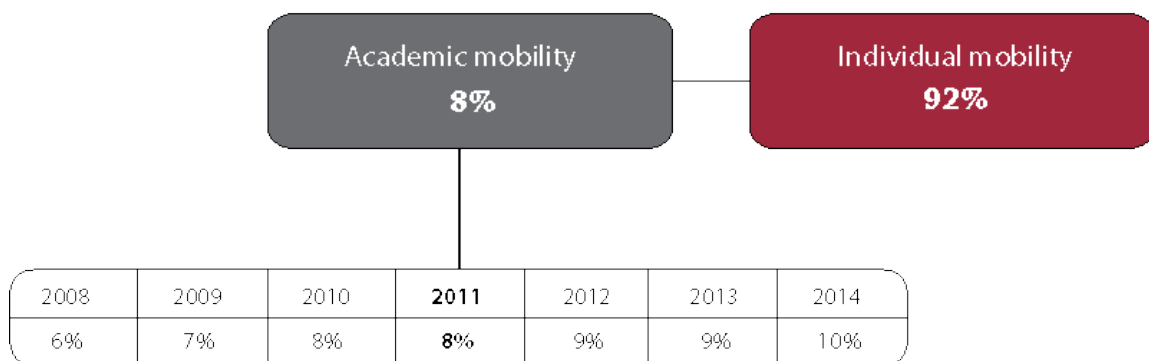
Individual or academic mobility opportunities

While the number of exchange programmes has increased considerably over the years, it can be noted that the proportion of students pursuing academic mobility opportunities remains quite low in terms of quantity. Indeed, of the 3,347 foreign students enrolled in 2011/2012, only 282 of them were accepted through exchange programmes. Even if their proportion increases from year to year, students pursuing academic mobility opportunities represent less than 10% of foreign students enrolled in UT1 Capitole. The length of their stay at the University of Toulouse 1 Capitole varies according to the exchange programs. Half of them will be present throughout the academic year and the other half on only one of the two semesters (more precisely, in 2011/2012, 53% of students on academic mobility opportunities will be present throughout the year, 28.5% will be present only in semester 1 and 18.5% in semester 2 only).

Academic mobility at UT1 Capitole concerns mainly European students (they represent more than 70% of these students). They enrol almost exclusively in Law or Economics in one year of the third year of a Bachelor's degree. Finally, of all European students, more than one in three is hosted at UT1 Capitole by an academic program.

The rest of the students pursuing academic mobility opportunities at UT1 Capitole are mainly Asian students who enrol either in the third-year of Bachelor's degree in Economic and Social Management or in a French language preparation program, a prerequisite often required of these students to access the rest of the French curriculum.

Proportion of individual and academic mobility opportunities in 2011/2012



Registration in France for studies abroad

The enrolment of foreign students in French universities covers several aspects of mobility. Firstly, there is the distinction between individual and academic mobility. Secondly, there is foreign student's unnecessary presence in France, depending on the training they have chosen. Whether they are enrolled on courses leading to a qualification abroad, on dual degrees with courses delivered in 2011/2012 abroad or as distance learning, some foreign students follow a course at UT1 Capitole which does not require a (regular) presence on French territory. These students represent 16% of foreigners enrolled in initial training in 2011/2012.



Percentage of foreign students enrolled in training that do not require their regular presence in France

A link with French studies before arrival at the university

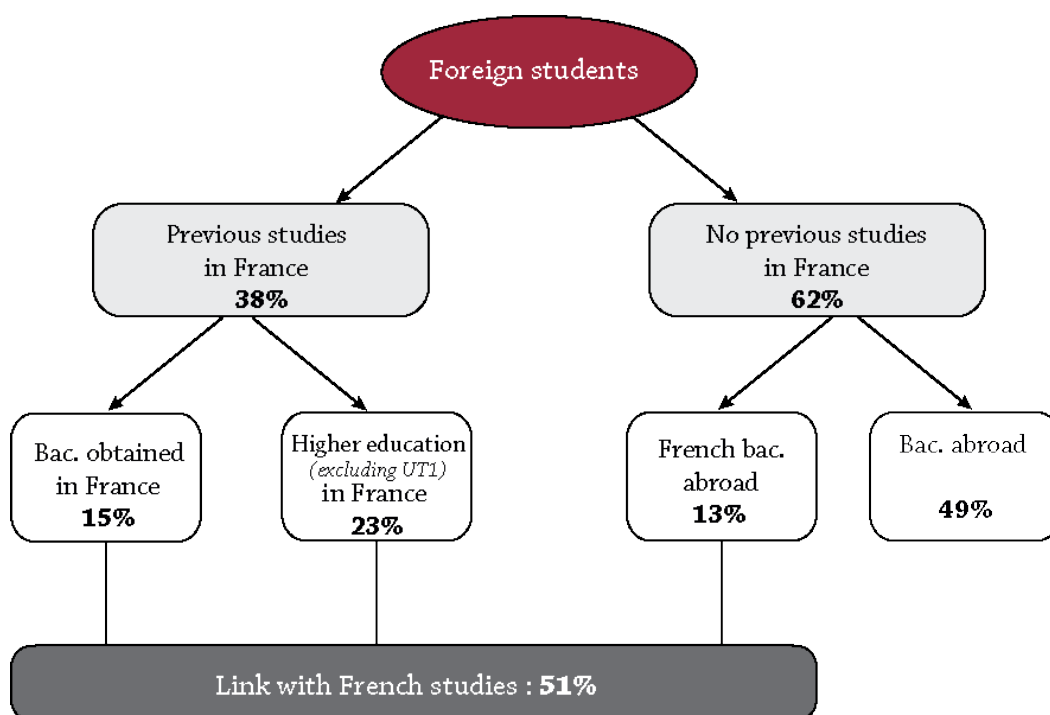
A new aspect of foreign student mobility can be distinguished by their previous academic background in France, before their arrival at UT1 Capitole.

Indeed, foreign students who start their higher education with a UT1 Capitole enrolment represent 62% of the total number of students. However, among these young people, 13% obtained a French baccalaureate abroad and therefore already had a link with French studies.

In addition, nearly four out of ten foreign students have already been enrolled in a course of study in France before they arrived at UT1 Capitole: some have completed some or all of their secondary education in France and have a Bachelor's degree (15%) while others have begun higher education at another university in France, before they enrolled at UT1 Capitole (23%).

Holders of a French baccalaureate (obtained in France or abroad) then represent 28% of foreign students. This level is higher than the national level, which has 20% of baccalaureate holders among foreign students for the same year (Source MESR).

All in all, it can be seen that more than half of the foreign students already have a link with French studies.



Data provided by APOGEE, regarding foreign students enrolled in UT1 Capitole in full-time education delivered in France in 2011/2012

Students who have obtained their baccalaureate in France are mainly African or European students (although the share of baccalaureate obtained in France represents only 19% of the

baccalaureate for each of these nationality groups). They are more significantly enrolled in Law and Economic and Social Management and at first-year and second-year Bachelor levels.

Studies in the university before enrolment in 2011/2012

Another aspect of foreign student mobility concerns their status as first-time entrants to the university. Indeed, we note that at the beginning of the academic year, only 44% of foreign students enrol for the first time at the university. This means that more than half of the foreign students have already experienced studying at the university. These students first enrolled at the university a year or two ago (29% of students) or three years or more ago (27% of students).

Foreign student paths and success at university

While the vast majority of students on academic mobility do not return (and will therefore only be present for one year) to the university, students on individual mobility may spend long periods of time at the university, which may last for five years or more. Is this length of stay related to the continuation of studies or not on all levels of study, to more or less rapid pathways to success, or even a combination of the two?

In the next section, we use a broad period (12 years, between 2003 and 2015) to characterize the different study paths (for students enrolled in the university in 2011/2012, following a training course in France and leaving the university in 2015/2016).

Variable lengths of stay at the university

Short-term stays (enrolment for one or two years at the university) are the most frequent among foreign students (42% of them, 10% of whom are pursuing academic mobility opportunities).

Medium-term stays (3 or 4 years) account for a quarter of the university's foreign students and long-term stays (5 years or more) are undertaken out by nearly a third of the students.



Entering the university at Bachelor's level

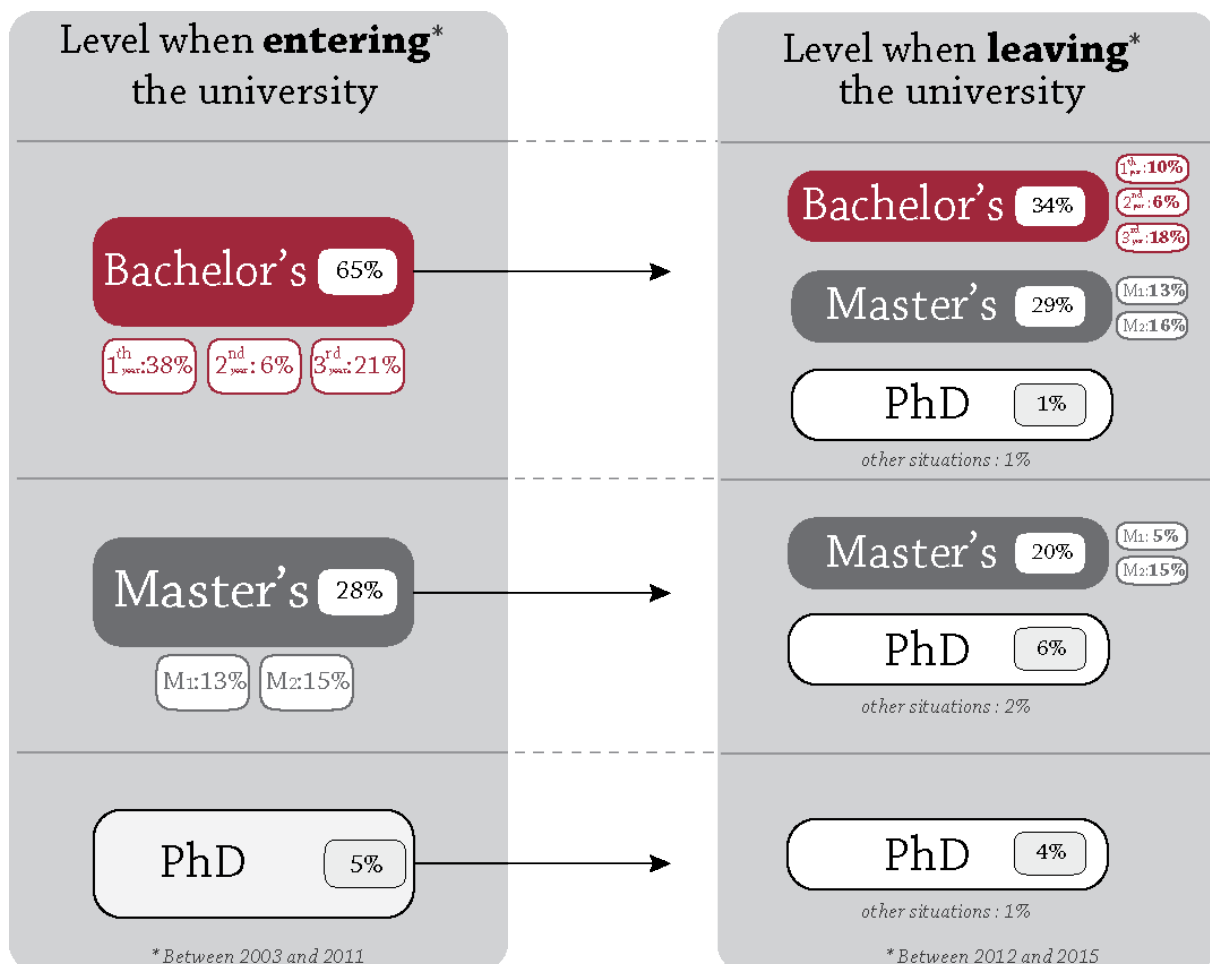
Two thirds of the foreign students enrolled in the university in 2011/2012 started their studies at the university (in 2011 or earlier) at Bachelor's level.

One third of the students completed only one Bachelor's degree during their stay at the institution. For students pursuing individual mobility opportunities, it can be seen that leaving the university at Bachelor's level is often due to failure in their last year of study (mainly in year 1, often after several attempts).

Students who continue their studies after a Bachelor's degree by starting a Master's degree in the university represent 29% of foreign students. Three-quarters of them leave the institution with success. This is either the validation of their Master's degree or the validation of the first year of their Master's degree.

However, the number of students who completed their entire Bachelor-Master programme without repeating a year is rather low (less than a third of students who have followed a three-year Bachelor's degree and a two-year Master's degree).

A very small minority of students complete the entire Bachelor's-Master's-PhD path at the university (1% of those enrolled).



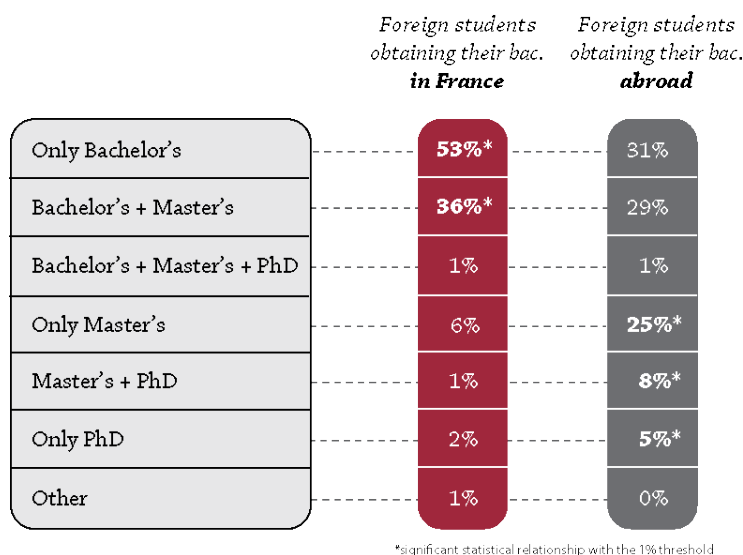
Just over a quarter of international students enter the university at Master's level. Those who then left the institution at Master's level also represent 20% of the students enrolled. Half of them only complete one year (mainly second-year Master's students) and leave the institution after having succeeded. The others validate their Master (first-year Master's and second-year Master's) in two years.

Students pursuing a Master's degree at a PhD level represent 6% of foreign students enrolled in 2011/2012. It may be noted, however, that PhD students at the beginning of their thesis in 2011 have more often completed this Master's year in the university beforehand than students who are at the end of their thesis in 2011 and who entered the university directly at a PhD level.

Lastly, foreign students who arrive at the university directly on a PhD course represent 5% of foreign students enrolled in 2011/2012.

Different study paths for students pursuing post-baccalaureate mobility opportunities

Another difference emerges: students who have obtained their baccalaureate in France are significantly more likely to take a Bachelor's degree course only (short or medium term) or a Bachelor's and Master's degree course; while students who have obtained their Bachelor's degree abroad are more markedly pursuing Master's degrees or PhDs.



Increased success for students pursuing post-baccalaureate mobility opportunities

Like French students, foreign students have more difficulties in the end-of-year exams at first-year Bachelor's level (less than 40% pass - number of admissions/number of enrolments), then at second-year Bachelor's level (61% pass) and first-year Master's level (58% pass). Like French counterparts, the success rate in the examinations of foreign students is also different according to the subject studied (Economic and Social Management: 52% success rate, all levels combined; Law and Computer Science: 60%; Economics: 64%; Institute of Business Administration: 72%).

If we now look at success by geographical area of origin, we see that success in end-of-year exams seems less significant for African students. But these are students who are more often enrolled in first-year Bachelor's level and in a subject where success is the least important.

Conversely, for the same level of study and the same subject studied, foreign students who already have a link with French studies before they arrived at the university are less likely to succeed than foreign students who have no link with French studies.

We can assume that the choice of a stay abroad for a foreign student with no link to French studies is partly conditioned on a high academic level before his arrival in France and advantageous social conditions.

Finally, it can be noted that students who spend a short period of time (one to two years) in the institution are either students who are studying for a Master's degree, which they mostly validate, or students who are studying for a Bachelor's degree, which they do not validate, unless they are pursuing a mobility opportunity from one university to another.

Students who carry out a medium-term stay (three to five years) in the university are more often students who are pursuing a Bachelor's degree, than holders of a foreign baccalaureate validate more often than holders of a baccalaureate obtained in France.

Lastly, there are many students who spend a long period of time (more than 5 years) at the university and are students who, after validating their Bachelor's degree, continue their studies up to a Master's degree or even a PhD.

We can therefore see that foreign students have very varied backgrounds within the university. However, certain groups with similar characteristics are clearly distinguishable and the simple indication of foreign nationality no longer seems relevant to characterise them.