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INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

New Frontiers: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad

A 2-year analysis of key destinations and fields of study

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Institute of International Education (IIE)

May 2013

Opening Minds to the World®



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This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.

Survey carried out in collaboration with the following *Project Atlas*[®] Partners:

Australian Education International (AEI)

British Council

CampusFrance

Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE)

China Scholarship Council (CSC)

The Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation, Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education

Education in Ireland

Fundación Universidad.es

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO)

Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, Department of Higher Education

Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC)

New Zealand Ministry of Education

Swedish Institute

With thanks to Peggy Blumenthal and Mykhaylo Bonovskyy at IIE for their contributions to this study

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Executive Summary

In an increasingly globalized world, investing in international education is a growing priority for individuals and countries alike. Students seek out experiences that will shape their careers while nations vie for the world's most talented minds to contribute to research, innovation and economic growth. International education and intercultural competencies are increasingly more valued by employers ranging from multinational corporations to the public sector. Recognizing the need for connecting with global peers, students around the world are more mobile today than ever before. They also have opportunities to participate in a wide array of educational activities abroad, ranging from brief educational study tours to obtaining full degrees overseas that can span a student's entire higher education career.

American students, whose international activity still consists largely of short-term *for-credit* study abroad, are also increasingly pursuing full degree programs outside of the U.S. In a global economy, professional, financial, and academic incentives continue to motivate Americans to pursue degrees abroad.

The current report presents findings from a survey conducted for the second year by the Institute of International Education (IIE) and its *Project Atlas*® partner organizations around the world on U.S. students pursuing full degrees abroad at the postsecondary level, their academic level, and chosen field of study. While data on the number of U.S. students who study abroad and are awarded academic credit at their U.S. home institution has been available through the *Open Doors*® *Report on International Educational Exchange* since 1985, the current report offers data that complements *Open Doors* and helps to complete the picture of outbound postsecondary mobility in the United States. The responding countries include the top host countries of U.S. students who study abroad, and other host countries in *Project Atlas*.

Key Findings

- In 2011/12, there were over 46,500 U.S. students enrolled in academic degree programs in the fourteen countries represented in this study.
- From 2010/11 to 2011/12, there was a five percent increase in the number of American students pursuing full degrees abroad.
- The number of students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs and those pursuing master's degrees are approximately the same (accounting for 42 percent each). Students pursuing doctoral degrees comprise 16 percent.
- Nearly 68 percent (31,953) of U.S students who pursue degrees overseas do so in Anglophone countries.
- The top destination of U.S. degree-seeking students abroad is the United Kingdom, which in 2010/11 hosted 6,085 undergraduate and 10,660 graduate students.
- The top fields for degree study by U.S. students abroad are the humanities, social sciences, and physical and life sciences. Field preferences vary by level of study and host country.

- Taken together, data from the latest *Open Doors Study Abroad Survey*¹ and from this study show that there are approximately 320,000 American postsecondary students pursuing various education experiences abroad: over 273,000 in study abroad and 46,500 in degree study.

These findings and country-level analysis will be of interest to policy makers and education institutions in the U.S. and abroad. The comprehensive picture of U.S. students abroad can better enable overseas institutions to attract U.S. students to their campuses and allow U.S. campuses to better advise their students on overseas study options. This report also provides critical information for college and career counselors in high schools across the U.S., particularly on top destinations for American students and what fields are currently most popular in degree programs abroad. Finally in the search for global talent, employers in the public and private sector will find an expanding pool of internationally-trained and credentialed U.S. students who bring diverse perspectives to the global workplace.

¹ *Open Doors 2012: Report on International Educational Exchange*. New York, NY: Institute of International Education. The annual *Open Doors Study Abroad Survey* collects data on U.S. students who study abroad for credit awarded by their home institutions in the U.S.

U.S. Degree Mobility in the Global Context

The field of international higher education in the 21st century is seeing the emergence of new patterns of student mobility. Student mobility flows are no longer defined solely by historical trajectories from the global South to the global North and from East to West. To the contrary, emerging host countries are creating incentives for students to study in non-traditional destinations, redrawing the map of global student mobility. The most notable example of this is China, which continues to be the largest sending country and is also now the third largest host of international students, having hosted over 292,000 international students in degree-and non-degree programs in 2011 (*Project Atlas*). As the appeal of international education grows, host countries will continue to develop more diverse, demand-driven and competitive opportunities for international students.

Study abroad for credit at U.S. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) continues to be the most popular international activity of American students who study in another country. In the last 20 years, the number of U.S. students participating in such study abroad programs more than tripled to reach 273,023 in 2010/11, according to the *Open Doors 2012 Report*. The most common timeframe for which American students study abroad is short-term study abroad (summer, January term or eight weeks or less during the school year), which accounts for 58.1 percent of the 320,000 total for 2010/11. Mid-length programs (one semester, one quarter or two quarters) account for 38 percent for study abroad. Study abroad for one calendar or academic year are the least common timeframes, comprising 0.1 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively.

Owing to the growing global market of higher education and a variety of push-pull factors, students today have more options than ever before to pursue education opportunities outside of their home country. This is the case for students from the United States as well. The increasing value of international experience in the labor market is one reason why American students choose to pursue higher education degree credentials abroad. Other reasons include the cost of higher education in the United States and continued marketing to American students about education abroad options.

The data included in the current analysis varies somewhat from country to country (i.e. some countries report data for an academic year and others report statistics as a “snapshot” in time). However, it is the most comprehensive and timely information available to date, supplementing UNESCO’s Global Education Digest Report, which collects data on students studying outside of their home country for a year or more, but not necessarily in degree programs.²

This report enumerates U.S. students pursuing degree programs around the world and includes findings on level and field of study for the countries that are able to provide this data. Also included is a section on the internationalization strategies of various host countries that might play a role in attracting U.S. students for degree study. The appendices include detailed definitions of degree-seeking students and data collection methodology. Where possible, data comparisons are drawn from last year’s pilot study conducted by IIE and entitled *U.S. Students in Overseas Degree Programs: Key Destinations and Fields of Study*.

² For more information on UNESCO definitions, see UOE Data Collection on Education Systems, Volume 1. Manual: Concepts, definitions and classifications. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/UISQuestionnaires/Pages/default.aspx>.

U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad

Where do they go?

Data on U.S. students enrolled in degree programs abroad was collected by IIE from May – December 2012. IIE is the U.S. partner and Secretariat for *Project Atlas*, a global network of 27 country and research partners collaborating on data collection and research on student mobility and internationalization of higher education. The survey was sent to *Project Atlas* country partners, including top host and sending countries around the world. Data on U.S. degree students was received for fourteen countries representing four regions: Asia, Europe, Oceania and North America. Responding countries range from the largest host of U.S. degree-seeking students (the United Kingdom) to countries that host a modest number of U.S. degree students.

- Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, the number of U.S. students pursuing full degrees abroad rose by five percent to a total of 46,500.
- China saw the largest percentage increase, while the U.K. saw the largest increase in absolute numbers and was once again the top host for U.S. degree students.
- Japan and Malaysia had the largest percentage declines. However, this does not necessarily signify a trend and may be a temporary fluctuation. For Japan, the decline is related to the March 2011 natural disasters that also reduced the number of U.S. students going to Japan for short-term study abroad. In Malaysia, the number of U.S. students pursuing degrees abroad was small to begin with.

Table 1: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, by Host Country, 2010/11 and 2011/12

Country	2010/11	2011/12	Percent Change
United Kingdom	16,185	16,745	3.5
Canada	9,310	9,280	-0.3
France	4,358	4,449	2.1
Germany	3,704	4,057	9.5
New Zealand	1,839	2,467	34.1
Australia	2,570	2,498	-2.8
China	1,666	2,184	31.1
Netherlands	1,500	1,650	10
Ireland	915	991	8.3
Spain	1,036	951	-8.2
Sweden	460	540	17.4
Japan	560	505	-9.8
Denmark	142	154	8.5
Malaysia	158	100	-36.7
Total	44,403	46,571	5.2

The number of U.S. students pursuing degrees in Western European countries increased by nearly five percent from 2010/11 to 2011/12. Among European host countries, the largest increase of U.S. degree students was in the United Kingdom, which attracted 560 more U.S. students in 2011, a 3.5 percent growth from the previous year. The largest percentage increase from 2010 to 2011 was in Sweden (17 percent). Spain showed the largest decline, down 8.5 percent. In North America, U.S. degree students going to study in Canada remained relatively steady with only a marginal decline from 2010/11 to 2011/12.

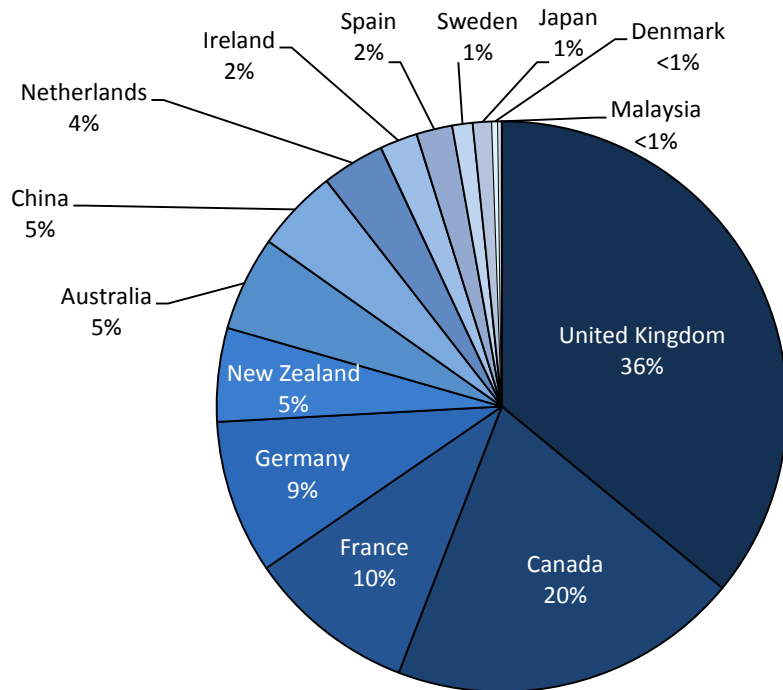
Over 68 percent of U.S. students pursue their degrees in Anglophone countries (including Canada), a four percent decline from the previous year. Non-Anglophone Western Europe represents the second largest host region of U.S. degree students (25 percent), after Anglophone countries.

In Asia, China has seen the largest total and percentage increase of U.S. degree students from 2010/11 to 2011/12, having added 518 students in just one year. From a relatively low baseline number, this is a notable increase, which may signal that U.S. degree students in China will continue to rise in the foreseeable future. The increase of students seen in China is more than the total number of U.S. students pursuing degrees in Japan. Over the last year, Asia saw declines in American students pursuing degrees both in Japan and in Malaysia.

What does the market share look like?

Between 2010/11 and 2011/12, the most notable shift in market share was for Asia which saw the largest percentage increase because of gains in China. Figure 1 illustrates the relative market share of U.S. degree students by host country.

Figure 1: Market Share of Countries Hosting U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad



While some U.S. students may be pursuing academic degrees in additional countries and regions, the countries participating in this study represent the top destinations that host U.S. degree students abroad. Most of the countries included in this report are also leading hosts of U.S. students participating in study abroad programs for credit at home institutions in the U.S.³

What degrees do U.S. students pursue abroad?

Comprehensive data on U.S. students pursuing degrees abroad is not readily available for all countries and information on level and field of study can be especially challenging to retrieve. The survey asked respondents to report the total number of students from the United States enrolled in the following levels of study: undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees.⁴ Eleven respondents submitted data on level of study: Australia, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain and United Kingdom,⁵ representing 74 percent (34,365) of all U.S. degree students covered by the survey.⁶

Although not all countries were able to provide detailed data, the information in Table 2 presents a detailed view of how many U.S. degree students study in each country that was able to provide this data, at what academic level, and in which fields of study. This figure also allows for comparisons across the countries represented. For instance, Germany has the highest percentage of its U.S. students pursuing master’s degrees, and the United Kingdom has the most doctoral degree students from the U.S. both in percentage and in total number.

Table 2: U.S. Students Pursing Degrees Abroad, by Country and Level of Study, 2011/12

Country	Undergraduate		Master's		Doctoral		Total
United Kingdom	6,085	36.3%	6,750	40.3%	3,910	23.4%	16,745
Germany	853	21.0%	2,873	70.8%	331	8.2%	4,057
France	1,967	59.6%	1,146	34.7%	187	5.7%	3,300
Australia	1,003	40.2%	1,114	44.6%	381	15.3%	2,498
New Zealand	2,089	84.7%	145	5.9%	233	9.4%	2,467
China	1,028	47.1%	917	42.0%	239	10.9%	2,184
Ireland	488	49.2%	294	29.7%	209	21.1%	991
Spain	497	52.3%	454	47.7%	0	0.0%	951
Netherlands	246	43.4%	321	56.6%	0	0.0%	567
Japan	222	44.0%	196	38.8%	87	17.2%	505
Malaysia	54	54.0%	30	30.0%	16	16.0%	100
Total	14,532	42.3%	14,240	41.4%	5,593	16.3%	34,365

³ The exception is Italy, which is the second largest host of U.S. study abroad students for credit at U.S. home institution, as reported in *Open Doors*. All other top host countries are represented in this survey of degree study abroad.

⁴ See Appendix B for definitions.

⁵ The United Kingdom does not classify graduate level programs as “master’s” and “doctoral” but as “postgraduate taught” and “postgraduate research” degrees. The majority of doctoral students are enrolled in the postgraduate research programs, and the one year master’s degree students are enrolled in the postgraduate taught programs.

⁶ France, Netherlands and Spain submitted partial data. See Appendix C for details on each country’s data definitions.

In the eleven countries that provided data on level of study, 42 percent (14,532) of students are enrolled in undergraduate degree programs, 42 percent (14,240) in master’s degree programs, and 16 percent (5,593) in doctoral degree programs. In Japan, one of the six countries that reported data on students enrolled in public and private HEIs, there were significantly more undergraduate and master’s students enrolled in private HEIs than public HEIs. This trend was the opposite at the U.S. doctoral level students in Japan.

What fields of study do U.S. degree students pursue abroad?

The survey asked for information on the following fields of study: agriculture, business and management, education, engineering, fine and applied arts, health professions, humanities, mathematics and computer sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and other/unspecified.⁷ These fields of study categories are used in the *Open Doors Study Abroad Survey* to collect data on U.S. students who study abroad for credit.

Nine out of eleven countries that submitted data on academic level of study also reported field of study data. These countries include: Australia, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and represent 66 percent (30,925) of all U.S. degree students reported in the survey. Malaysia reported data on field of study too but did not provide breakdowns by academic level.

Table 3 shows fields of study that U.S. students pursue in degree programs abroad. By far, the most popular disciplines at all levels of study are humanities and social sciences.

Table 3: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, by Field of Study, 2011/12⁸

Field of Study	Students	Percent of Total
Humanities	8,223	26.6%
Social Sciences	6,417	20.8%
Physical and Life Sciences	3,117	10.1%
Other/Unspecified	3,109	10.1%
Business and Management	3,072	9.9%
Fine and Applied Arts	2,107	6.8%
Health Professions	1,840	5.9%
Engineering	1,137	3.7%
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	847	2.7%
Education	659	2.1%
Agriculture	397	1.3%
Total	30,925	100%

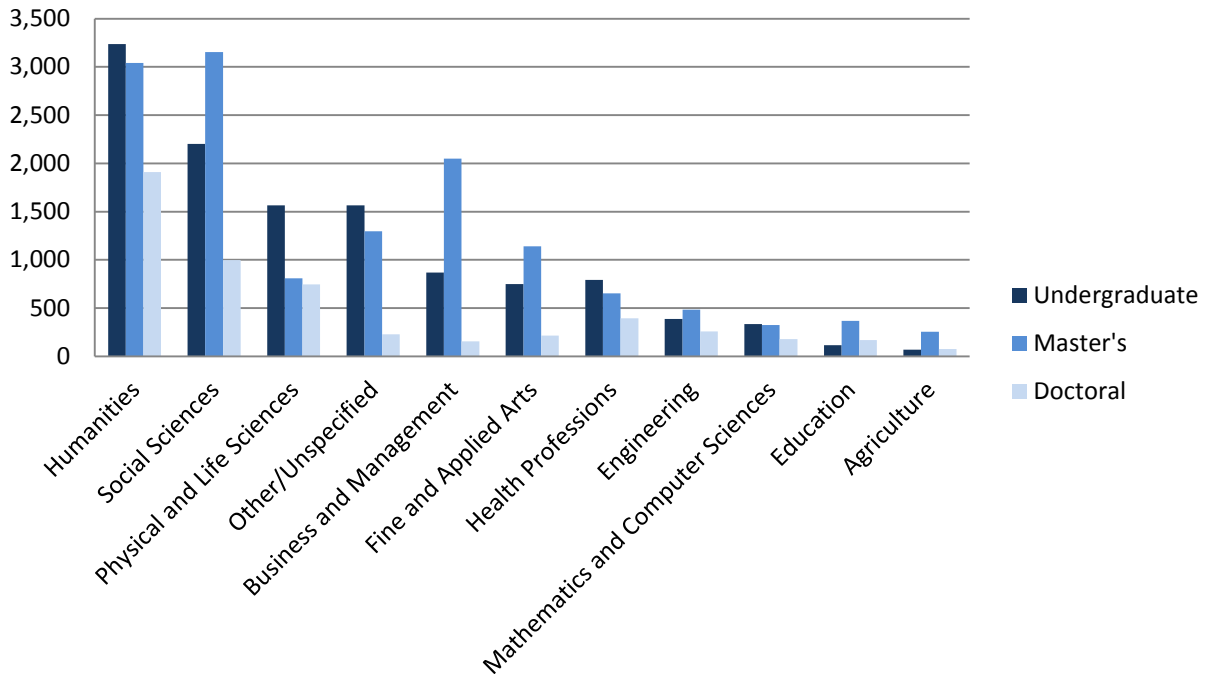
Figure 2 illustrates how fields of study vary by level of study. For example, the number of students who study business and management varies by level of study, with more students studying business and management for master’s degrees than at the doctoral level. In the case of physical sciences, there are

⁷ See Appendix B for further definitions.

⁸ This total (30,925) includes seven countries that reported the number of students by fields of study. These countries are Australia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Japan, Malaysia and the UK.

more students studying for undergraduate and doctoral degrees than for master's degrees. At the country level, the largest number of U.S. students pursuing degrees in the humanities and social sciences are in the United Kingdom. For those who study in China – a host country that saw the highest increase of U.S. degree students from 2010/11 to 2011/12 – physical and life sciences are the top fields of study, with the highest concentration at the Bachelor's level. (See Appendix A for country-level data for 2011/12).

Figure 2: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, by Field of Study and Level, 2011/12



Field of study comparison: 2010/11 to 2011/12

Table 4 includes data from five countries that reported field of study information for both 2010/11 and 2011/12. These countries are Australia, France, Ireland, Japan, and United Kingdom. This table shows the change in enrollment of U.S. degree students by field of study from 2010/11 to 2011/12. Among these five countries, agriculture saw the steepest percentage increase (however from a relatively low baseline). The largest increase in number of students was in the social sciences, with a 900 student increase in one year. These percentage and number increases are most prominent in the United Kingdom, wherein agriculture saw a 193 percent increase and the number of U.S. students pursuing degrees in social sciences rose by 440 students in 2011/12. The field of humanities also saw gains from 2010/11 to 2011/12. (See Appendix A for country-level data for 2011/12). For all countries reporting data, no field of study saw a significant decline, although education had the largest percentage decrease.

Table 4: U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, Percent Change by Field of Study, 2010/11 to 2011/12⁹

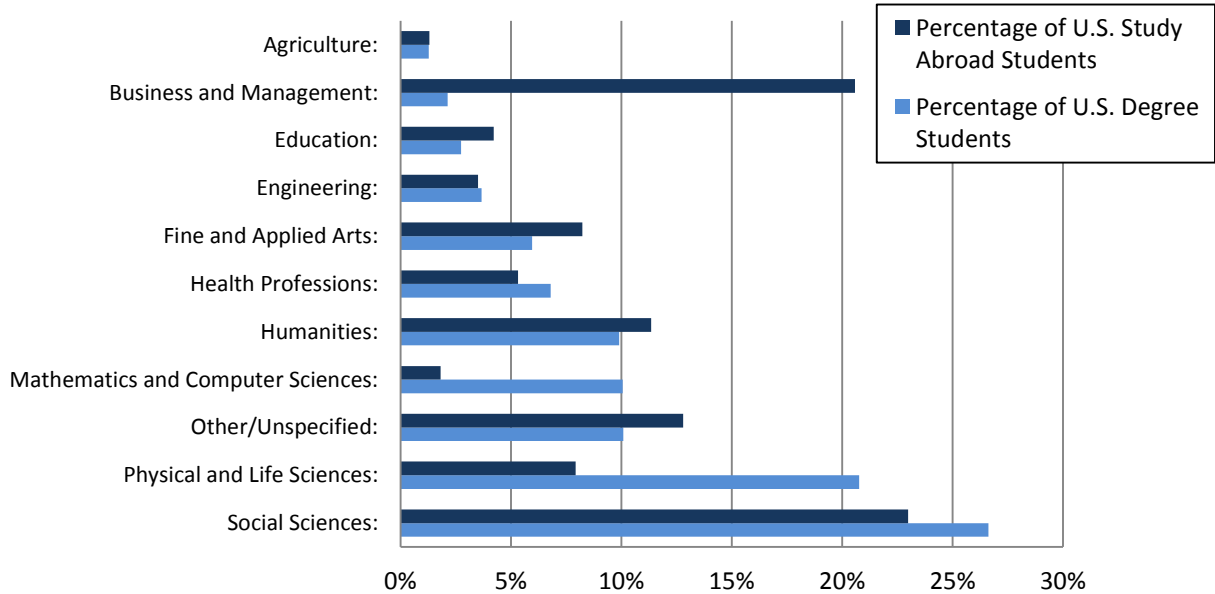
Field of Study	2010/11	2011/12	Percent Change
Humanities	6,994	8,189	17.1%
Social Sciences	4,272	6,356	48.8%
Physical and Life Sciences	2,147	3,117	45.2%
Other/Unspecified	2,187	3,090	41.3%
Business and Management	2,335	3,072	31.6%
Fine and Applied Arts	1,854	2,107	13.6%
Health Professions	1,302	1,838	41.2%
Engineering	564	1,130	100.4%
Mathematics and Computer Sciences	611	833	36.3%
Education	570	653	14.6%
Agriculture	170	397	133.5%
Total	23,006	30,782	-

U.S. degree students and U.S. study abroad students: a comparison by fields of study

A comparison of the fields of study that U.S. degree students pursue abroad versus the fields of study of American students who go abroad for shorter periods of time (through study abroad programs) reveals some interesting differences. Figure 3 includes the latest *Open Doors* data on fields of study of U.S. students who study abroad for credit and compares it to data on U.S. students who pursue degrees abroad. While 21 percent of students who studied abroad for credit at their U.S. home institution in 2010/11 majored in business and management, a lower proportion (10 percent) of U.S. students in degree programs are in this field. A larger percentage of students pursue degrees abroad in humanities than do students in study abroad programs. The majority of U.S. students in overseas degree programs are studying in the fields of humanities, social sciences, and business and management (57 percent), while the fields of physical sciences, health professions, mathematics and computer science, and engineering make up 23 percent. Proportionally, more students of education participate in study abroad programs than the number of U.S. students who pursue overseas degrees in the field of education. This is not surprising since students of education who want to teach in the U.S. often need to be credentialed locally to pursue teaching careers in the U.S.

⁹ This includes five countries that reported the number of students by fields of study in 2010 and 2011. These countries are Australia, France, Ireland, Japan, and the UK.

Figure 3: Field of Study of U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad Versus U.S. Study Abroad, 2011/12



The next section of this report discusses internationalization strategies adopted by key host countries to attract U.S. and other international students. It is likely that these recruitment strategies are in part responsible for U.S. students' increasing interest in obtaining a foreign degree or credential.

Internationalization Strategies and Policies

Over the last few decades, many countries have experienced considerable growth in international student enrollments. Additionally, many traditional and emerging host countries are seeing an increase in the number of international students they host both for short-term study abroad and full degree programs.

National and institutional internationalization strategies to recruit top global talent often look similar from the outset. By far, the most ubiquitous policy across host countries is providing incoming students with scholarships for study, research, and professional development. Traditional hosts, including Australia and countries in Western Europe, continue to offer scholarships to international students. New Zealand and France, for example, offer highly subsidized degree study programs and low tuition fees for international students at the same rate as for domestic students. In Germany, both tuition and all living expenses are covered for many international students. In recent years, emerging hosts have also committed scholarship funds to attract international students. The Chinese government now offers competitive scholarships to prospective students, granting upwards of \$6,367 (40,000 Yuan) in stipend plus a tuition waiver for international students who study in China. To implement this policy in China, universities have been entrusted to recruit students and grant government scholarships to international students, along with nationally administered scholarships through the China Scholarship Council.¹⁰

In addition to scholarships and reduced tuition incentives, many countries also have unique policies to attract international students. Canada, for example, allows international students to work off-campus and extend the length of their post-graduation work permit. Ireland aims to integrate international students with domestic students and add significant value to career outcomes of all students who study in Ireland. France supports international students as they acclimate to a new environment and provides assistance with securing university housing and health insurance. These pull factors from abroad as well as push factors such as the increasingly prohibitive cost of higher education in the U.S. make foreign degrees increasingly attractive to U.S. students.

Access to degree programs in English is another key factor that drives U.S. students to pursue degrees abroad. While Anglophone countries host the most U.S. degree students, many American students are pursuing English-taught degrees in countries where English is not the official language. Non-Anglophone European countries as well as Asian countries continue to expand the number of course offerings and full degree programs taught in English. According to a 2011 IIE briefing report by Megan Brenn-White and Edwin van Rest, the number of English-taught Master's programs in Europe reached 3,543¹¹ (not including the United Kingdom and Ireland). Based on a search in March 2013 on MastersPortal.edu, an online resource of graduate degree programs in Europe, there are over 5,720 listings of English-taught Master's degree programs in Europe (not including the UK and Ireland).

The U.S. is identified as a prospective key sending country,¹² so recruiting U.S. students into degree programs will likely continue to be part of internationalization strategies for both top and emerging host countries.

¹⁰ China Scholarship Council, www.csc.edu.cn/laihua/scholarshipdetailen.aspx.

¹¹ Brenn-White, M. & Rest, E. (2012). *English Taught Master's Degrees in Europe: New findings on supply and demand*.

¹² See Gutierrez, R., Bhandari, R., & Obst, D. (2008). *Exploring Host Country Capacity for Increasing U.S. Study Abroad*.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The information presented in this report complements IIE's annual *Open Doors* survey to provide a more complete picture of outbound student mobility in the United States. While the majority of students from the U.S. who study overseas do so on short-term programs for credit at their home institutions (as reported in *Open Doors*), another subset of students enroll in full degree programs overseas. Approximately 320,000 students from the U.S. either have a study abroad experience or obtain their postsecondary degrees abroad. This scale of educational engagement has policy implications for America's secondary and postsecondary education sector as well as for countries that are interested in attracting more U.S. students to their higher education sector. This is the second year of this data collection effort and while trend analysis is not yet possible, this study identifies some vectors that are likely to continue to affect outcomes in the future. The five percent increase from 2010/11 to 2011/12 of U.S. students pursuing degrees suggests that the phenomenon of U.S. students pursuing degrees abroad will likely continue to grow. Some countries may see fluctuations from year to year and many will likely continue to gain market share proportional to investment into internationalizing their higher education sectors.

Based on the findings in this report, the following are some key policy implications to be considered by U.S. and international HEIs:

- There is considerable room for growth in U.S. students pursuing degree programs overseas. Currently, there are nearly six times as many American students participating in study abroad programs for credit at the U.S. home campus (273,000) as there are U.S. students enrolled in overseas degree programs (46,500). Most host countries report a strong desire to expand their hosting of degree students from the U.S.
- The majority of American students are going to Anglophone countries to pursue degrees. However, many are also choosing to study in non-Anglophone countries, especially those that offer degrees taught in English. France and Germany are among the top five hosts of U.S. degree students, with one year master's programs taught in English being especially popular. China is also becoming an increasingly popular destination for U.S. students to pursue degrees, partly owing to the rise in the number of degree offerings taught in English.
- Nearly 58 percent of U.S. students pursuing degrees abroad do so in the humanities, social sciences, and business and management. Students in the fields of engineering, physical sciences, and health professions make up 19.6 percent of U.S. students who pursue degrees abroad. More graduate than undergraduate students from the U.S. are enrolled in overseas degree programs in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), particularly at the master's level. This indicates that a significant number of Americans are pursuing degrees abroad in highly specialized fields.

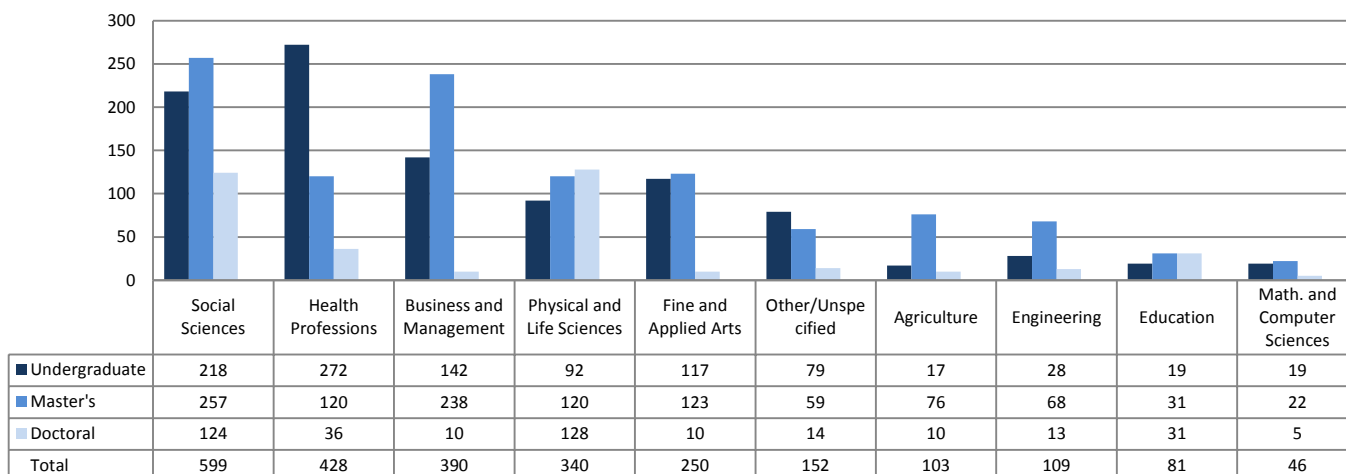
More research is needed to understand the motivations of American students who enroll in degree programs abroad, the types of foreign institutions and programs that are most attractive to U.S. students, and the academic experience of American students pursuing degrees abroad. In addition to the data presented in this report, more information will allow for an expansive qualitative and quantitative analysis of U.S. degree students. This will inform not only the trends of American students studying overseas but also the changing landscape of global student mobility.

Appendix A: Country-Level Data

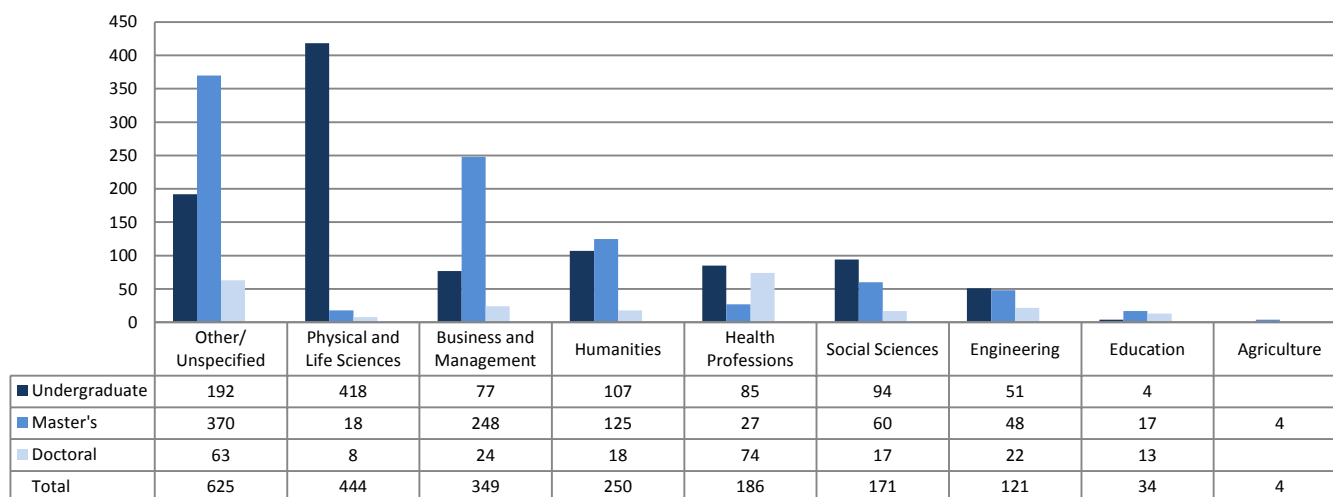
The following data tables include country-level data for the eight countries that reported data on field and level of study. In Australia and Ireland, for example, the largest number of undergraduate U.S. degree students study in the health professions, while most U.S. master's degree students in Australia pursue degrees in social sciences and business and management. In Ireland, the top field of study for U.S. master's degree students is humanities. This data demonstrates that while many countries mirror the overall trends of the most popular fields of study, each country is a unique case study that reflects historical patterns in mobility. The data also provides a window to better understand how national policies on internationalization impact the number of international students who come to a given country, what they choose to study, and at what point in their academic career.

U.S. Students Pursuing Degrees Abroad, by Country, Level and Field of Study, 2011/12

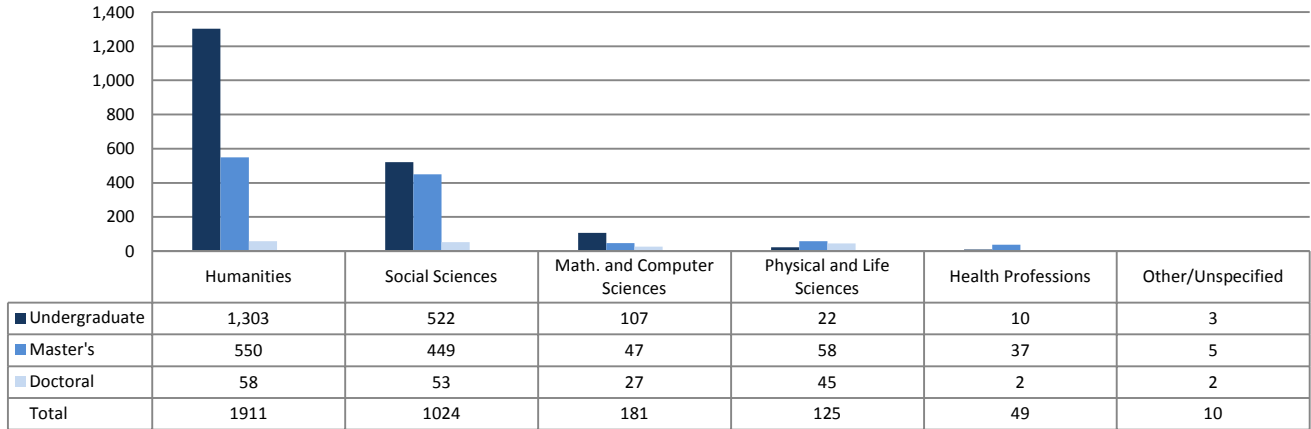
Australia



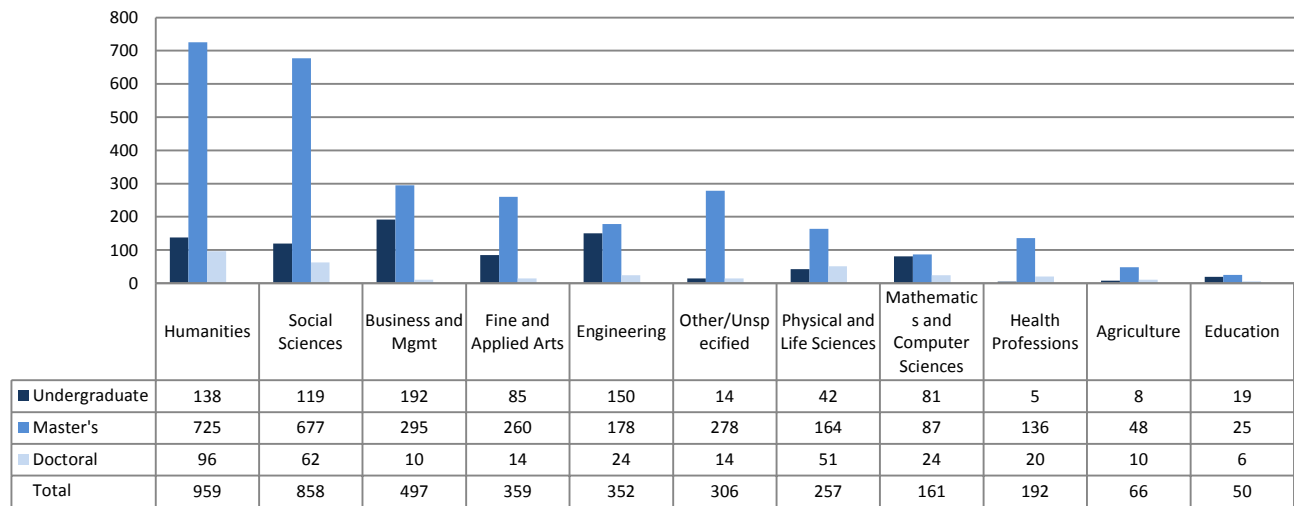
China



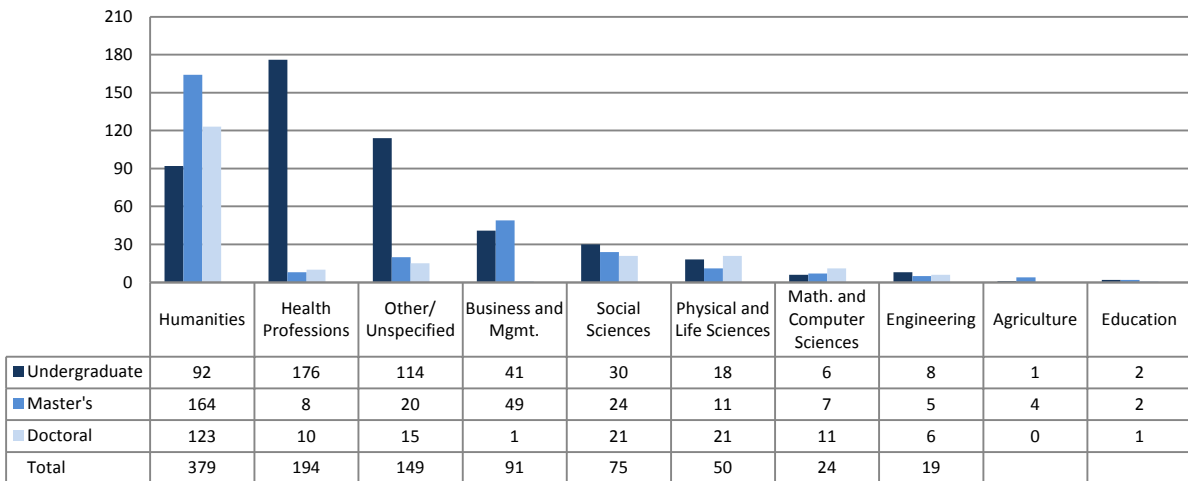
France



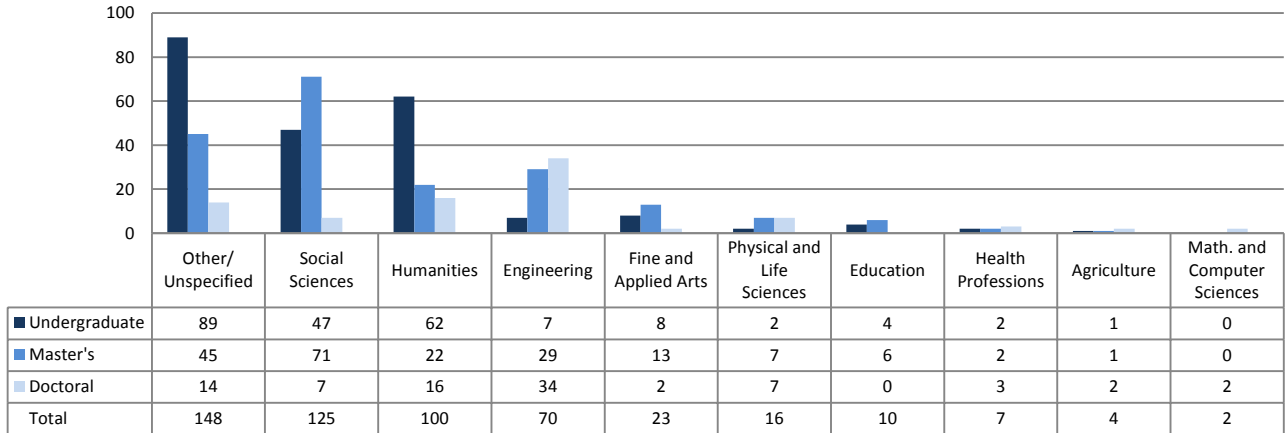
Germany



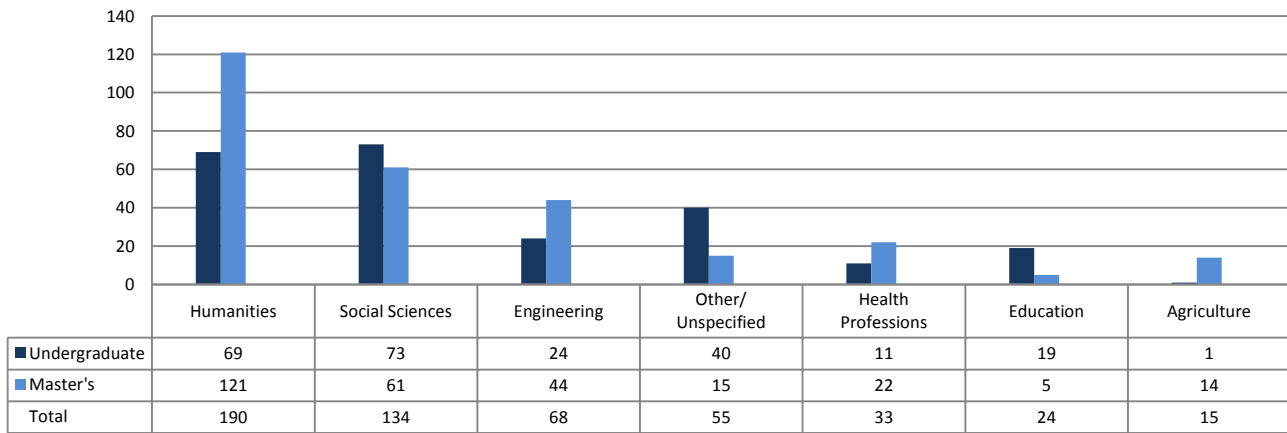
Ireland



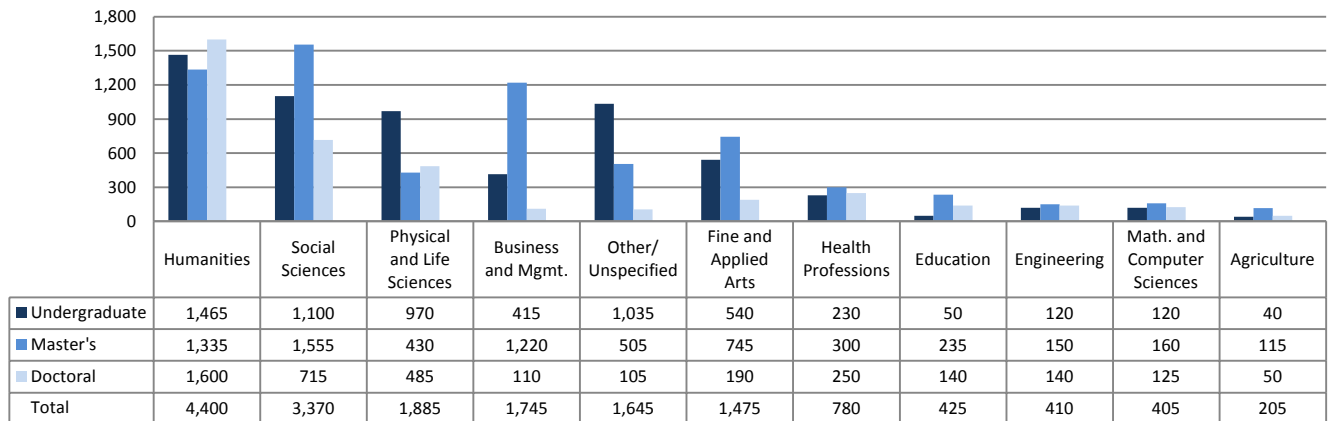
Japan



Netherlands



United Kingdom



Appendix B: Methodology

This report is based on a survey conducted by the Institute of International Education in collaboration with *Project Atlas*[®] country partners who supplied data on students from the United States enrolled in degree programs in their respective countries. The purpose of this survey is to compare shifts since the initial survey conducted in 2011 and close the information gap on the number of students from the U.S. who choose to pursue full degree programs overseas. A six-question survey was sent to all *Project Atlas* partners in May 2012 and data was collected through December 2012 with follow up correspondence through April 2013. Fourteen out of 20 country partners were able to provide data. Of these, 11 respondents provided data on level of study, and nine provided detailed information on field of study.

The definitions for level of study and field of study used in the survey are the same as in the annual *Open Doors* Study Abroad Survey to allow for comparison and aggregation of data. Survey respondents were able to submit data based on their own classification system, though most respondents supplied data based on the definitions provided in the survey. Among the exceptions are the United Kingdom, which classifies its graduate programs as “taught” and “research” programs. For Germany, the data for U.S. students is the sum of Bildungsinländer (foreign students with a German higher education qualification) and Bildungsausländer (foreign students with no German higher education qualification). The data for Spain and New Zealand includes degree students as well as exchange and study abroad students, respectively.

Although the classification for fields of study is not the same in all countries, the survey asked respondents to provide data as close as possible to the given definitions for the purpose of data comparison. For the countries where level or field of study data submitted was different, the data was reclassified to conform to the definitions outlined in the survey.

Respondents were asked to provide the most-current available data based on their academic year and data-collection cycle. Japan and Canada reported “snapshot” data, which measures the total number of international students enrolled in degree programs in a given day or month.

The survey was administered only to *Project Atlas* partners, all of whom were asked to access the relevant data that is collected either by their agency or by a national-level agency in their country. IIE is grateful for the support and participation of all partners in this project, without whom this report would not be possible.

This data collection effort poses several challenges owing to country-specific definitions and varied data availability. In addition to variation in field of study definitions, some countries reported partial data. Several countries also reported data that includes a combined count of full degree students and study abroad or exchange students. The data and comparative analysis of this report reflects an ongoing exercise to more fully enumerate U.S. students pursuing full degree programs outside of the United States. It also offers a comprehensive overview of country-specific definitions on degree and other types of study.

Appendix C: Definitions

Degree Student: A student who has been admitted to, and is enrolled at, an educational institution in a status designed to lead to a degree.¹³

The definition of ‘degree student’ has different terminology around the world (Australia, for example, uses the term ‘qualification’ rather than ‘degree’). For the purposes of collecting comprehensive data, the respondents to the survey for this study were asked to provide a definition of ‘degree’ if different from the definition provided in the survey, as well as country-specific definitions for level and field of study, if different from the definition provided in the survey.

Exchange: a program involving reciprocal movement of participants, whether faculty, students, staff, or community members between institutions or countries.¹⁴

U.S. Study Abroad: U.S. students (citizens and permanent residents) enrolled for a degree (and/or General Education students at community colleges) at U.S. higher education institutions who receive academic credit at their home institution in the U.S. for study abroad, regardless of who sponsored the program (home institution or another institution/organization), or who awarded the initial credit.

Study abroad programs are categorized based on duration of study:

Short-term study abroad programs: summer programs or programs of eight weeks or less

Mid-length study abroad programs: semester or quarter programs

Long-term study abroad programs: an academic or calendar year

Level of Study

Degree students: Students studying toward a degree awarded by an institution in the host country.

Undergraduate Degree: B.A., B.S.

Master's Degree: M.A., M.S., and graduate-level professional degrees, such as M.B.A.

Doctoral Degree: Ph.D., M.D., and other doctoral-level professional degrees.

Degree data from Australia includes the following subcategories: Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree, Bachelor Degree, and Diploma for Bachelor's degree and graduate certificate, graduate diploma, Master's (research), and Master's (coursework) as Master's degree.

The United Kingdom does not classify graduate level programs as “master’s” and “doctoral” but as “postgraduate taught” and “postgraduate research” degrees. The majority of doctoral students are enrolled in the postgraduate research programs and the one year master’s degree students are enrolled in the postgraduate taught programs. The data was reclassified as such for the purposes of data analysis.

The data provided by France for level of study is not available for all higher education institutions. Reported data is for only French universities only. The total number of U.S. degree students in French

¹³ Definition from Forum on Education Abroad Glossary, <http://www.forumea.org/UnderstandingtheUSEducationalSystem.cfm>

¹⁴ Definition from Forum on Education Abroad Glossary, <http://www.forumea.org/EducationAbroadProgramFeaturesandTypes.cfm>

universities is 3,300 while the total number of U.S. degree students in all higher education in France is 4,449.

Field of Study

Definitions for field of study were provided in the survey tool using *Open Doors* classification. Five countries provided some or all of their own field of study classifications.

Open Doors fields of study

Agriculture: agriculture, agricultural operations and related sciences; natural resources and conservation

Business and Management: business, management, marketing and related support services; personal and culinary services; tourism and related courses

Education: all education-related fields of study

Engineering: engineering; engineering technologies/technicians; transportation and materials moving; construction trades; mechanic and repair technologies/technicians; precision production

Fine and Applied Arts: visual and performing arts; music; architecture and related services

Health Professions: all health-related fields of study

Humanities: foreign languages, literatures and linguistics; English language and literature/letters; theology and religious vocations; philosophy and religious studies

Mathematics and Computer Sciences: computer and information sciences and support services; mathematics and statistics

Physical and Life Sciences: biological and biomedical sciences; physical sciences; science technologies/technicians

Social Sciences: social sciences; psychology; public administration and social service professions; parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies; area, ethnic, cultural and gender studies; history; security and protective services

Other: liberal arts and sciences and general studies; communication, journalism and related programs; legal professions and studies; multi/interdisciplinary studies; family and consumer sciences/human sciences/communications technologies/technicians and support services; library sciences; residency programs.

Country Specific Fields of Study

Australia

The fields of study defined in this report as Social Sciences, Humanities and Others are classified as Society and Culture in the Australian education system. The equivalent definition of Society and Culture can fit either in the Humanities or Social Science classification. For the purpose of comparative analysis, the number of U.S. degree students in the Society and Culture field has been classified in this report as Social Sciences.

Fine and Applied Arts includes Creative Arts, Architecture and Building.

The Other category includes Dual Qualification, Mixed Field Programs.

China

China reports U.S. degree students studying History, Liberal Arts (Language Studies) and Philosophy. For the purpose of comparative analysis, this has been reclassified as Humanities.

Health Science includes Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture.

France

The fields of study in France do not coincide with the *Open Doors* definitions. Fields of study reported include only Health Professions, Humanities, Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Physical and Life Sciences, Social Sciences, and Other/Unspecified. Data on "Other" refers to Sports studies.

Malaysia

Students studying Manufacturing & Construction are reported in Engineering.

Netherlands

Economics, Behavior & Society in the Dutch education system are reclassified as Social Sciences in this report.

The Other category includes 'Foundation and Services.'

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