Education Information: Placement Students

Summary

1. This Education Information provides a brief summary about the HEFCE Report Attainment in Higher Education: Erasmus and Placement Students, this EI focuses on the placement students.

Background

2. The QAA Outcomes of Institutional Audit – Work-based and placement learning, and employability highlighted the importance of support for placement students whilst they are on placement as well as the need for clear and consistent policies for careers guidance. For more information see EI/08/018: http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/EI%20Employability.pdf

Placements

3. First degree placement courses (sometimes referred to as ‘sandwich’ courses) also involve a component where the student spends some time away from solely academic work. They typically involve an extra period of work experience that falls between two periods of academic study. During this placement, the student goes on work experience with an employer in an industry relevant to their degree studies, whether in the UK or abroad. The work experience normally takes place in the third year of their degree studies, and is recognised in their qualification.

4. There are also placement courses that involve one or more periods of work experience lasting less than a year. There will often be more than one period during the course, in different years.

Characteristics of placement students

5. Of the 203,275 students who started a full-time first degree course in 2002-03 and went on to gain a first degree within five years, 8 per cent did a placement.

6. The overwhelming majority of entrants who did a placement in the UK (92 per cent) did so for a whole academic year.

7. Of those who undertook a placement year, four out of five studied business, science or engineering.

8. Students were more likely to be male with just 45 per cent of the placement year students being female compared to the average for all entrants in the cohort of 56 per cent.

9. 7 per cent of those who did a year placement were aged over 20 when they started their course, compared to the average (14 per cent) of all entrants in the cohort.

10. They were more likely to be from an ethnic minority. The proportion of UK domiciled students who came from non-White ethnic groups was 17 per cent for placement year students compared to an average of 14 per cent across all students in the cohort.

11. Placement students were more likely to be from lower socio-economic classes. 70 per cent of the placement year students came from socio-economic classes 1-3 (managerial, professional and intermediate occupations). The proportion across all young students in the cohort was 74 per cent.

Numbers of placement students

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2002/03 Work Placement Mobility:Numbers | **England** | **Scotland** | **Wales** | **N Ireland** | **Total** |
| Placement year | *13,130* | *195* | *305* | *1,195* | *14,825* |
| Shorter Placement | 1,125 | 105 | 35 | 0 | 1,265 |

Degree outcomes

9. They had a better profile of degree results. 71 per cent of placement students received a first or an upper second-class degree compared to 60 per cent of other students from four- year courses.

Graduate destinations

10. Placement students were more likely to be employed six months after graduating and to have higher salaries than the average.

Erasmus Work Placements

11. In recent years the Erasmus programme of studying abroad has been expanded to include work placements in Europe. With opportunities in 31 European countries and some grants available this is a growing area of student mobility, see table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Work Placement Mobility: Numbers | **England** | **Scotland** | **Wales** | **N Ireland** | **Total** |
| 2007/08 Outgoing statistics | 2,320 | 233 | 41 | 132 | 2,726 |
| 2008/09 Outgoing Statistics | *2,801* | *293* | *122* | *190* | *3,406* |

**Further information at:**

Attainment in Higher Education: Erasmus and Placement Students (HEFCE): http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09\_44/09\_44.pdf

NUS Education Information: Outcomes of Institutional Audit – Work-based and placement learning:

http://resource.nusonline.co.uk/media/resource/EI%20Employability.pdf

Erasmus Work Placements Guide (British Council):

http://www.britishcouncil.org/work\_placements\_guide.pdf