

# Studying abroad: Only an increase in individual employability skills or a step towards Global Thinking?

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## Content

- What are employability skills?
- Employability skills and international students
- Skills – gained and expected
- What do international students do one or two years after graduation?

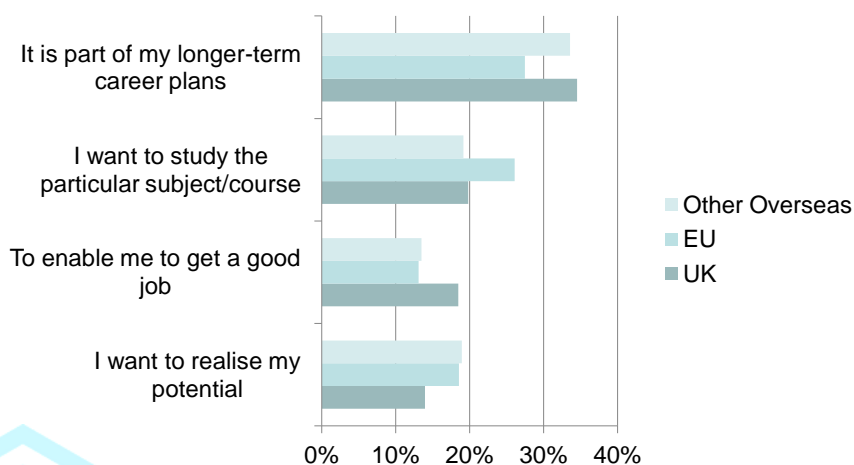


## Examples for employability skills

- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Self Motivation
- Creativity
- Team work skills
- Time management skills
- Awareness of one's own strength and weaknesses



## Selected main reasons for applying to enter HE



## The data base – the Futuretrack survey

National longitudinal survey of UK undergraduate students

Online survey of all full-time 2005-6 UCAS applicants including EU and overseas applicants

Four waves:

1<sup>st</sup> wave: during application process in summer- early autumn 2006

2<sup>nd</sup> wave: after completion of one year in summer- early autumn 2007

3<sup>rd</sup> wave: last year in HE – Spring 2009(for three year courses) and 2010 (for four year courses)

4<sup>th</sup> wave: 3 or 2 years after graduation (depending on the time of graduation) - Winter 2012

The following analyses are based mainly on weighted data of the fourth wave (n = 17,075, 11 % are from other European countries and 6 % are other international students)



## Employability skills

- Skills and abilities **to find** employment as well as skills and abilities **to remain** in employment and progress within the workplace
- Responsibility with individual but there is an increase of pressure on the HEI to promote employability skills
- Acquisition of employability skills neither starts nor finishes with a student's time in HE.



## Employability skills of international students

- Study in a different context from home students (adaptation to UK HE system)
- Studying abroad as an 'employability advantage'
- Transferability of skills gained in the UK to the labour markets in home country or different country



## Selected employability skills: cultural awareness and expression

- benefit of studying in a different country.
- cultural awareness and expression can be further divided in:
  - internationally oriented substantive knowledge;
  - empathy or intercultural competence, and
  - approval in terms of favorable attitudes or valuations of things abroad



## Selected employability skills: Global competences and perspectives

- perceptual understanding
- ability to develop international interpersonal relationships
- ability to act as a cultural mediator
- cross-cultural awareness, choices

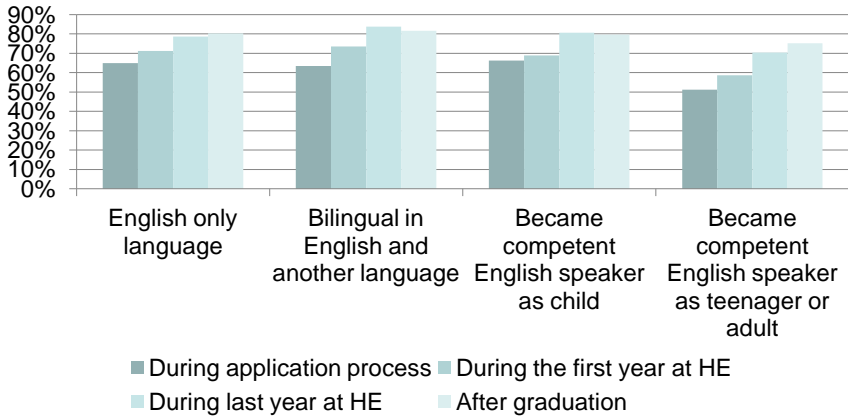


## Selected employability skills: English language skills

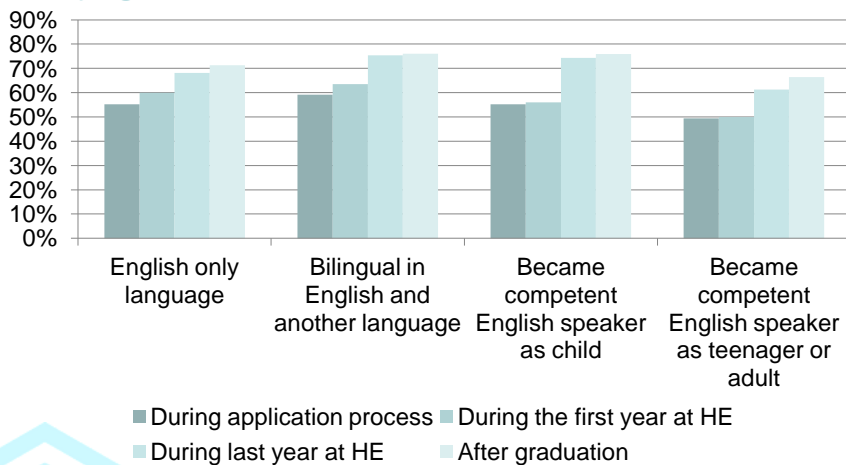
- English language is 'lingua franca' in the business world
- Four modalities of English language skills
- Different level of skills on entry to UK HEIs.



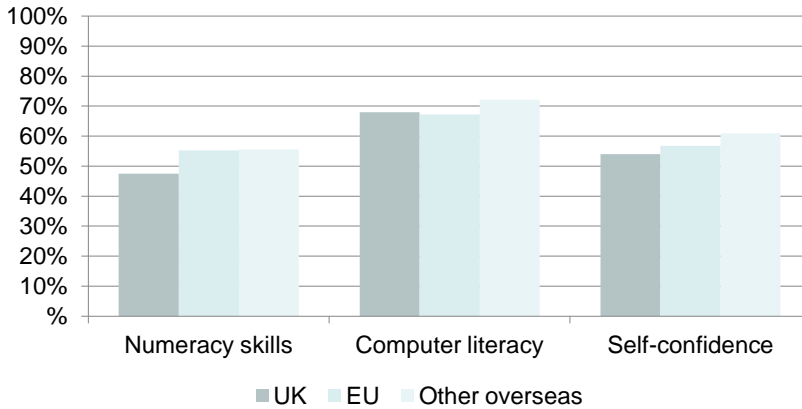
## Proportion of students with excellent or very good written communication skills



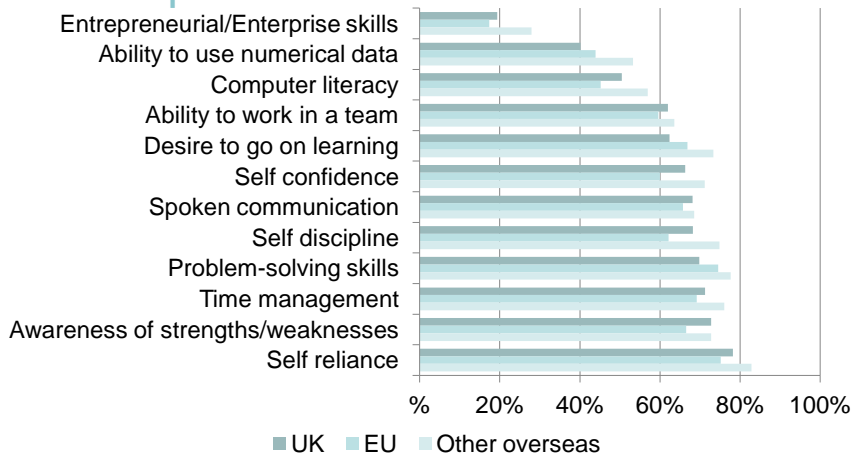
## Proportion of students with excellent or very good spoken communication skills



## Proportion of students with excellent or very good other skills in their final year



## Selected skills developed very much or quite a lot on HE course

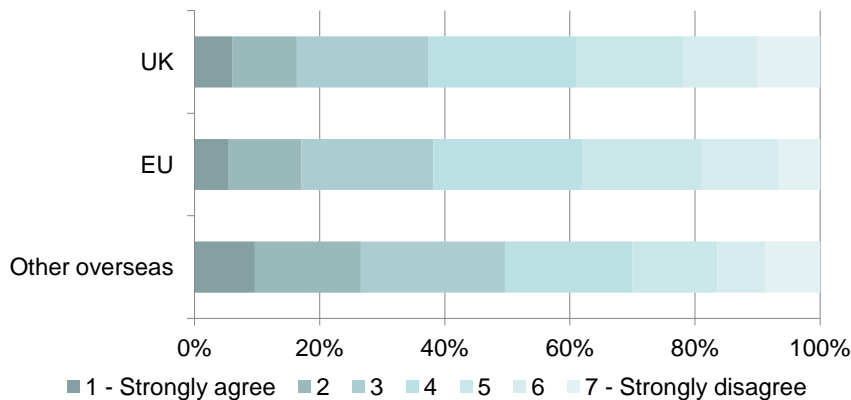


## What are the kind of skills employers look for ?

Skills employers look for	UK	EU	Other overseas
Good work ethic	32%	30%	30%
Communication skills	29%	23%	34%
Team work skills	24%	27%	29%
Ability / Competence	18%	25%	18%
Self motivation	20%	23%	13%
Experience	13%	9%	11%
Self confidence	13%	9%	10%
Analytical skills	7%	4%	10%
Leadership skills	5%	6%	9%
Creativity	6%	9%	5%



## It will be easy for me to get the kind of job I want when I graduate





## Location after graduation

		Location of graduates in Winter 2011-12			Row percentages
		UK	European country	International country	Total
Nationality	UK graduates	94%	2%	4%	100%
	Other European graduates	49%	42%	8%	100%
	Other international graduates	41%	13%	47%	100%
	Total	86%	7%	7%	100%



## UK graduates in other countries

- “[it gives me] *the opportunity to use my languages*”  
(Female, Highest Tariff University, Languages, living in Spain)
- “*I wanted to live in Rome*”  
(Female, Highest Tariff University, Interdisciplinary subject, living in Italy)
- “*I could not obtain the job I wanted in the UK*”  
(Male, Lower Tariff University, Subject allied to Medicine, living in China)
- “*It widened the market and allowed me to look for work somewhere other than recession ridden England!*”  
(Female, High Tariff University, Social Studies, living in Spain)

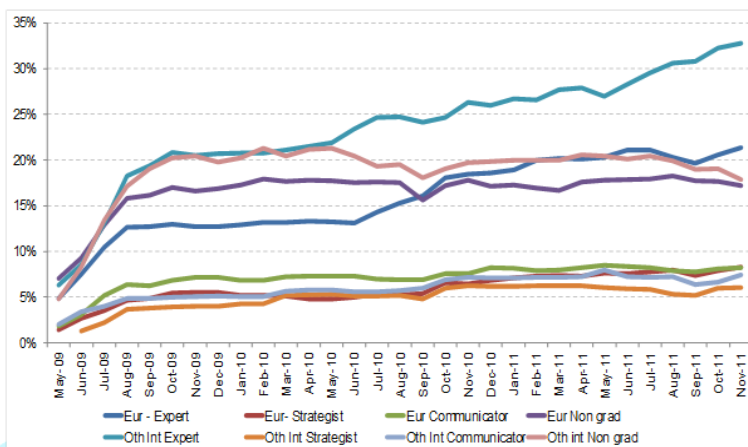


## European and other international graduates

- *“Although I speak fluent English, French and Greek, Dutch is also a top requirement for finding a job in Belgium. Therefore, I had to accept what I was offered.”* (Born in Greece, applied to UCAS from France, Female graduate of Business and Administration studies, now living in Belgium).
- *“The employer is able to sponsor my work permit visa to stay in the UK”* (Born in China, applied from Singapore, female, interdisciplinary studies, now living in the UK).
- *“I wanted to travel but didn't have enough money, so it's a good way to travel and earn”* (No information available about country of birth, applied from Austria, Female, social science, now living in China).



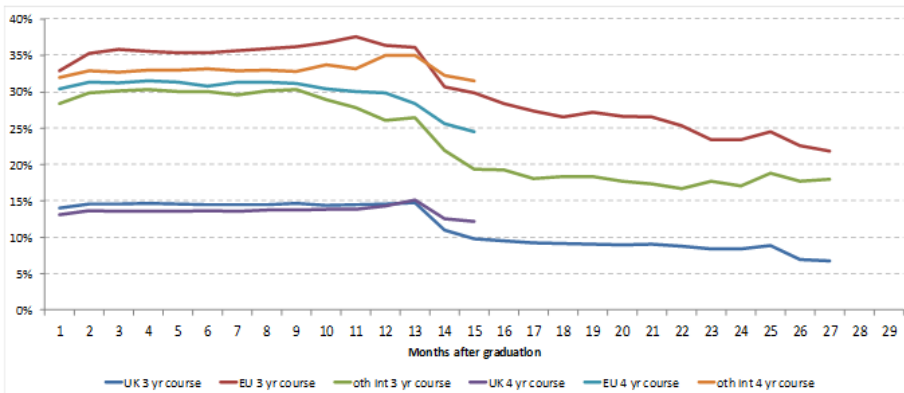
## Employment history of international graduates



## Why did you take up current job?



## Further Study



## Summary

- Skill gain in many employability skills
- Perception of employability skills differs according to origin.
- Pathways differ between UK home students and European / other international students



For further information and all reports  
see

[www.hecsu.ac.uk](http://www.hecsu.ac.uk)

[www.warwick.ac.uk/go/futuretrack](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/go/futuretrack)

PIs of the Futuretrack projects are Prof Kate Purcell and Prof Peter Elias

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Contents of this presentations will be published here:

Behle, H. and Atfield, G. (2013, in press): Employability, Key Skills and graduate attributes. In Kandiko C. and M. Weyers: The Global Student Experience: An International and Comparative Analysis. Routledge Press:International Higher Education series.

