

METADATA FOR OTHER POLICY RELEVANT INDICATORS

Internationally mobile students

This metadata file serves to calculate the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) indicator for reporting below:

CESA-UIS indicator mapping		
CESA Strategic Objective (SO)	CESA indicator	CESA indicators for reporting as per the agreement between UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the African Union
SO 9	9.4 Inbound mobility ratio	9.4 Inbound mobility rate
SO 9	9.5 Outbound mobility ratio	9.5 Outbound mobility ratio

Definition

Internationally mobile students are individuals who have physically crossed an international border between two countries with the objective to participate in educational activities in the country of destination, where the country of destination of a given student is different from their country of origin.

The country of origin of a tertiary student is the country in which they gained their upper secondary qualifications. This can also be referred to as the country of prior education. Where countries are unable to operationalise this definition, it is recommended that they use the country of usual or permanent residence to determine the country of origin. Where this too is not possible and no other suitable measure exists, the country of citizenship may be used – but only as a last resort.

Any transfer between different education systems which does not involve the physical crossing of an international border is not considered as **international student mobility**. *In particular, the following are not forms of international student mobility:*

- distance learning programmes provided by institutions based in another country to students based in their country or origin;
- programmes offered by foreign-based institutions in the country of origin leading to foreign degrees.

Internationally mobile students may be attributed to either the country of destination, as inbound internationally mobile students, or to the country of origin as outbound mobile students.

Inbound mobility rate

Definition

Number of students from abroad studying in a given country, expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country.

Purpose

To measure the mobility of students across countries for academic reasons.

Calculation method

Number of internationally mobile students enrolled in all levels of tertiary education (ISCED 5 to ISCED 8) in a given country, in a given academic year, expressed as percentage of the total tertiary enrolment in the same academic year.

$$IMR_{5t8,t} = \frac{E_{5t8\ foreign,t}}{E_{5t8,t}}$$

where:

$IMR_{5t8,t}$ = Inbound mobility rate in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) in academic year t

$E_{5t8\ foreign,t}$ = Number of inbound internationally mobile students enrolled in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) in a given country, in academic year t

$E_{5t8,t}$ = Total enrolment in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8) in the specific country, in academic year t

Interpretation

A high percentage of inbound mobility rate indicates a high degree of participation of students from abroad, and a strong capacity of the host country's education system to attract international mobile students.

Type of data source

Administrative registries, including national (Higher) Education Management Information Systems; and surveys.

Disaggregation

By sex and ISCED level.

Data required

Enrolment in tertiary institutions by country of origin.

Data sources

UIS survey of formal education and the joint UNESCO-OECD-EUROSTAT (UOE) survey.

Quality assurance

Inbound mobility rate should be based on enrolment at all levels of tertiary education and types of institutions, covering ISCED levels 5 to 8 in all public and private institutions.

The UIS sets standards, develops questionnaires and quality control protocols for country data reporting, and maintains the global database on the structure of education and enrolment data in tertiary education by students' country of origin and sex.

Limitations and comments

Several considerations may affect the accuracy of the indicator. For example, inbound mobility rate may not properly capture mobile students enrolled in foreign university campuses operating in the reporting country. Furthermore, the criteria used to define mobile students may vary from one country to another, which may affect the cross-country comparability of this indicator.

Outbound mobility ratio

Definition

Number of students from a given country studying abroad, expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country.

Purpose

To measure the mobility of students across countries for academic reasons.

Calculation method

Number of students from a given country studying abroad, expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrolment in that country.

$$OMR_{5t8,t} = \frac{E_{5t8 \text{ foreign},t}}{E_{5t8,t}}$$

where:

$OMR_{5t8,t}$ = Outbound mobility ratio in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8), in academic year t

$E_{5t8 \text{ foreign},t}$ = Number of internationally outbound mobile students from a given country enrolled in tertiary education abroad in academic year t

$E_{5t8,t}$ = Total enrolment in tertiary education in the specific country, in academic year t

Interpretation

A high outbound mobility ratio indicates a high outflow of students from the specific country for study purposes, which may reflect a low retention capacity of students by the national tertiary education system.

Type of data source

Administrative registries, including national (Higher) Education Management Information Systems; and surveys.

Disaggregation

By sex, ISCED level, region or continent of destination.

Data required

Enrolment in tertiary institutions of national students studying abroad, total enrolment in tertiary education.

Data sources

UIS survey of formal education and the joint UNESCO-OECD-EUROSTAT (UOE) survey.

Quality assurance

Outbound mobility ratio should be based on enrolment in all levels of tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 to 8) and types of institutions (public and private).

The UIS sets standards, develops questionnaires and quality control protocols for country data reporting, and maintains the global database on the structure of education and enrolment data in tertiary education by students' country of origin and sex.

Limitations and comments

A comprehensive enumeration of outbound mobile students may be challenging task if there is no systemic mechanism to track outbound students by country of destination, or if the host countries (universities abroad) do not report data on the international students by country of origin.

Furthermore, the criteria used to define mobile students may vary from one country to another, which may affect the cross-country comparability of this indicator.

Net flow of internationally mobile students

Definition

Number of inbound internationally mobile students minus the corresponding number of outbound internationally mobile students.

Purpose

To measure the net flow of students' mobility across countries for academic reasons.

Calculation method

$$NFIMS_{5t8,t} = IIMS_{5t8,t} - OIMS_{5t8,t}$$

where:

$NFIMS_{5t8,t}$ = Net flow of internationally mobile students in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8), in academic year t

$IIMS_{5t8,t}$ = Inbound internationally mobile students in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8), in academic year t

$OIMS_{5t8,t}$ = Outbound internationally mobile students in tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8), in academic year t

Interpretation

The indicator describes the extent of the internationalization of higher education. Positive values of the indicator express higher inflow of students from abroad, while negative values depict the opposite.

Type of data source

Administrative registries, including national (Higher) Education Management Information Systems; and surveys.

Disaggregation

By sex and ISCED level.

Data required

Inbound and outbound internationally mobile students in tertiary education.

Data sources

UIS survey of formal education and the joint UNESCO-OECD-EUROSTAT (UOE) survey.

Quality assurance

Inbound and outbound international students' mobility indicators should be calculated based on accurate and comprehensive enrolment data from all types of tertiary education institutions, including public and private.

The UIS sets standards, develops questionnaires and quality control protocols for country data reporting, and maintains the global database on the structure of education and enrolment data in tertiary education by students' country of origin and sex.

Limitations and comments

The accuracy of this indicator may be affected by several considerations. For example, a comprehensive enumeration of outbound mobile students may be challenging task if there is no systemic mechanism to track outbound students by country of destination, or if the host countries (universities abroad) do not report data on the international students by country of origin. Furthermore, the criteria used to define mobile students may vary from one country to another, which may affect the cross-country comparability of this indicator