

Mobility Monitoring

Facts & Figures on Swiss Higher Education Mobility

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movetia

Austausch und Mobilität
Echanges et mobilité
Scambi e mobilità
Exchange and mobility

Although mobility to and from Europe is guaranteed with the Swiss programme, the additional potential has not been exhausted

This monitoring report shows how mobility activities have developed at Swiss higher education institutions over recent years and investigates the effects of the current non-association with Erasmus+.

The continuity of Swiss mobility within Europe was guaranteed after 2014, but the end of the association with Erasmus+ has led to a slowdown in growth, and in some areas the figures have slumped. Universities of Applied Sciences and of Teacher Education have been hit the hardest.

A growing number of required partner agreements between Swiss and European higher education institutions indicate that the programme maintenance is complex for Swiss institutions. This has had an effect on mobility trends since 2014. Mobility levels per agreement have stayed the same or fallen.

The aim of the Swiss-European Mobility Programme SEMP is to offer a replacement for the Erasmus+ mobility activities in higher education. There is no substitute for the other Erasmus+ activities, especially in the area of multilateral cooperation such as *European Universities* or *Erasmus without paper*. Swiss institutions cannot participate.

Internationalisation as a response to the challenges of globalisation

A significant objective of the internationalisation of education is to improve the quality of teaching and research and better prepare students for life and work in a globalised world. In this context, student and researcher mobility is a key internationalisation measure. Stays abroad help students and researchers to acquire the necessary international, intercultural, specialist and personal skills and boost university graduates' employability.

The international cooperation for the promotion of higher education mobility is supported by two political strategies at national and international level. One of these is the Swiss *Exchange and Mobility* strategy of the Confederation and the cantons (November 2017). Its goal is that "all young people will participate in an exchange and mobility activity lasting for an extended period of time at least once during their course of education". The other is the Bologna Process for the realisation of a European Higher Education Area, whose objective is that at least 20 % of graduates in the European Higher Education Area will have studied or acquired practical experience abroad by 2020.

Internationalisation is embedded at institutional level in Switzerland. It is a strategic objective at 70 % of higher education institutions. Internationalisation is not a goal in itself for higher education institutions, but a means of improving the quality of teaching and research, promoting innovation and enhancing the visibility, competitiveness and reputation of the institution in Switzerland and abroad. Student and researcher mobility and interinstitutional cooperation have been defined as the main activities for implementing the strategic objectives.

The European programmes for education and research, including Erasmus+, are key instruments which support collaboration in the European Higher Education Area. Since 2014, Switzerland has no longer been associated with Erasmus+. Even though the Swiss programme replaces individual Erasmus+ measures in the area of mobility, there is no compensation for strategic offerings of Erasmus+. This limits the internationalisation options of the Swiss higher education institutions significantly.

Erasmus as the motor for internationalisation

Internationalisation



Continuity and expansion of the European programmes – Switzerland only partially involved

Over the last 30 years, the European programmes for education and research – in particular the Erasmus programme but also the Marie Curie fellowships – have enabled a more strategic approach to internationalisation. The programmes define shared reference frameworks for the participating countries, secure continuity of financing and give new impetus to the internationalisation and realisation of the European Higher Education Area.

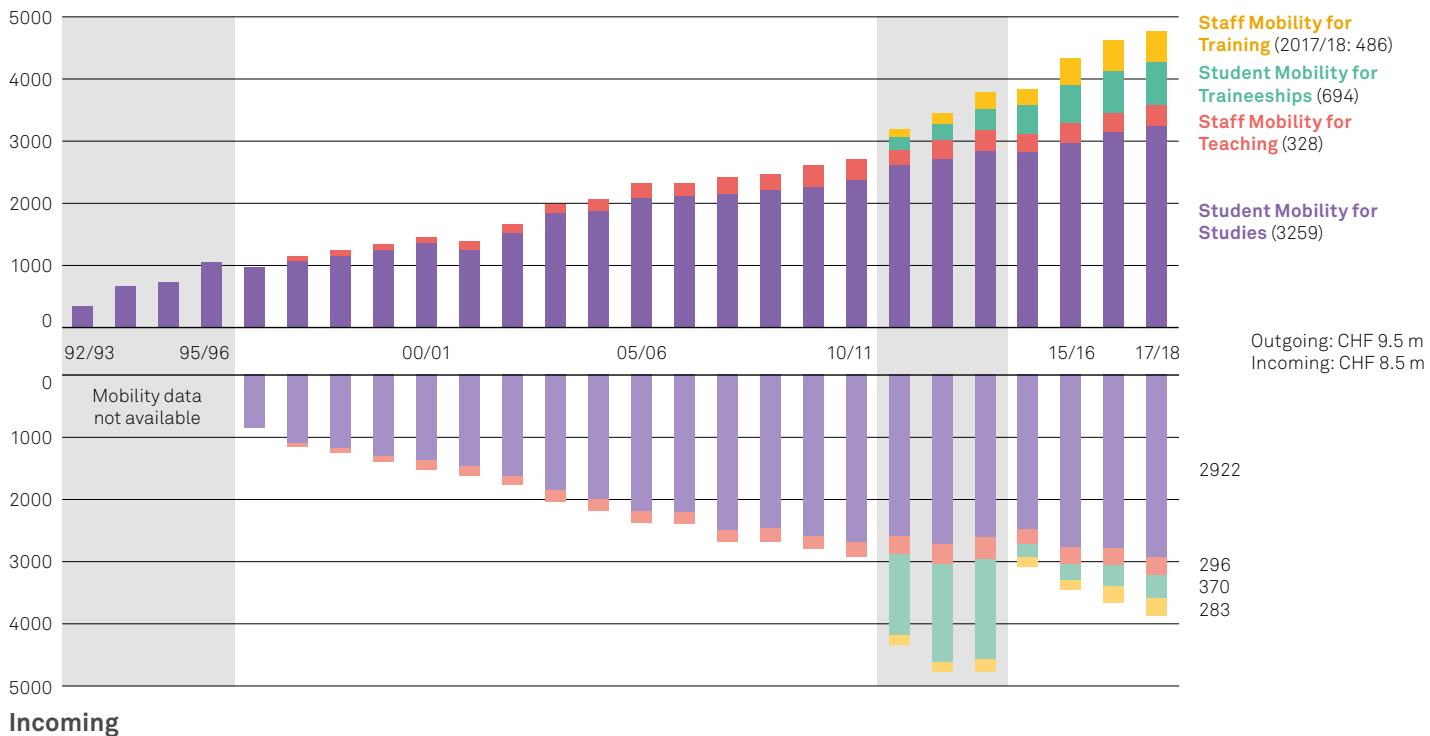
Today, the programme for education cooperation is called Erasmus+ and includes 34 Programme Countries in Europe. In addition to a broad range of mobility activities for destinations in Europe and the rest of the world, Erasmus+ also supports measures to eliminate obstacles to mobility, such as free online language courses as preparation for stays abroad, and to digitalise mobility administration (*Erasmus without paper*). Since 2014, the promotion of international cooperation between higher education institutions in the form of partnerships, cooperation and alliances has played an increasingly important role on the path to achieving comprehensive internationalisation, and the support instruments of Erasmus+ have been expanded continually. The most recent initiative is *European Universities*, under which strategic cooperation between higher education institutions is revolutionising the quality and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

Switzerland first took part in the European education programme in 1992. Since then, it has been an associated Programme Country twice. Switzerland's association came to an end in 2014, and the Swiss-European Mobility Programme was promptly set up for the promotion of mobility of students and higher education institution staff. Although the SEMP guarantees the European mobility into and out of Switzerland, Swiss institutions are completely excluded from participation in and active further development of the other strategic measures.

The SEMP is part of the Swiss programme for Erasmus+, which supports European cooperation not just in higher education but also in vocational, school and adult education and in extracurricular youth work.

Trends in Swiss mobility

Outgoing



Incoming

The substantial growth during the association was brought to a halt in 2014

The Swiss-European Mobility Programme was set up as a replacement for the mobility activities of Erasmus+, but it does not cover the entire spectrum of activities and services that Erasmus+ offers. In other words, it only compensates in part for an association with the programme. This has effects on the development of the mobility activities, which is most evident in the incoming traineeships. They make a contribution to the network between the Swiss education institutions and economy.

Furthermore, a parallel Swiss programme means a different financing system: since no payments are made to the joint European fund set up to finance Erasmus+ from Switzerland, associated countries cannot provide financial support for mobility activities with destinations in Switzerland. As a result, the SEMP must promote mobility out of and into Switzerland, i.e. outgoing mobility from Switzerland to one of the 34 Erasmus+ Programme Countries (Budget Call 2017: CHF 9.5 m) and incoming mobility to Switzerland (Budget Call 2017: CHF 8.5 mio). This double funding is the only way that the exchange with Europe, which is founded on mutuality, can be maintained.

The Swiss-European Mobility Programme today

Student Mobility for Studies



Classic semester /
year abroad



6 months*



35 ECTS**



CHF 1800/semester*



Quality assured through
interinstitutional agreements
between institutions

Staff Mobility for Teaching



Teaching assignment
at a partner institution



4 days*



CHF 313 for travel costs plus
CHF 170/day for the stay*



Quality assured through
interinstitutional agreements
between institutions

Student Mobility for Traineeships



Traineeship abroad
2-12 months



5 months*



CHF 420/month*

Staff Mobility for Training



Trainings,
job-shadowings,
courses, etc.



4 days*



CHF 337 for travel costs
plus CHF 170/day
for the stay*

* Average data outgoing mobility Call 2017

** Data on anticipated ECTS from 16 out of 38 SEMP institutions

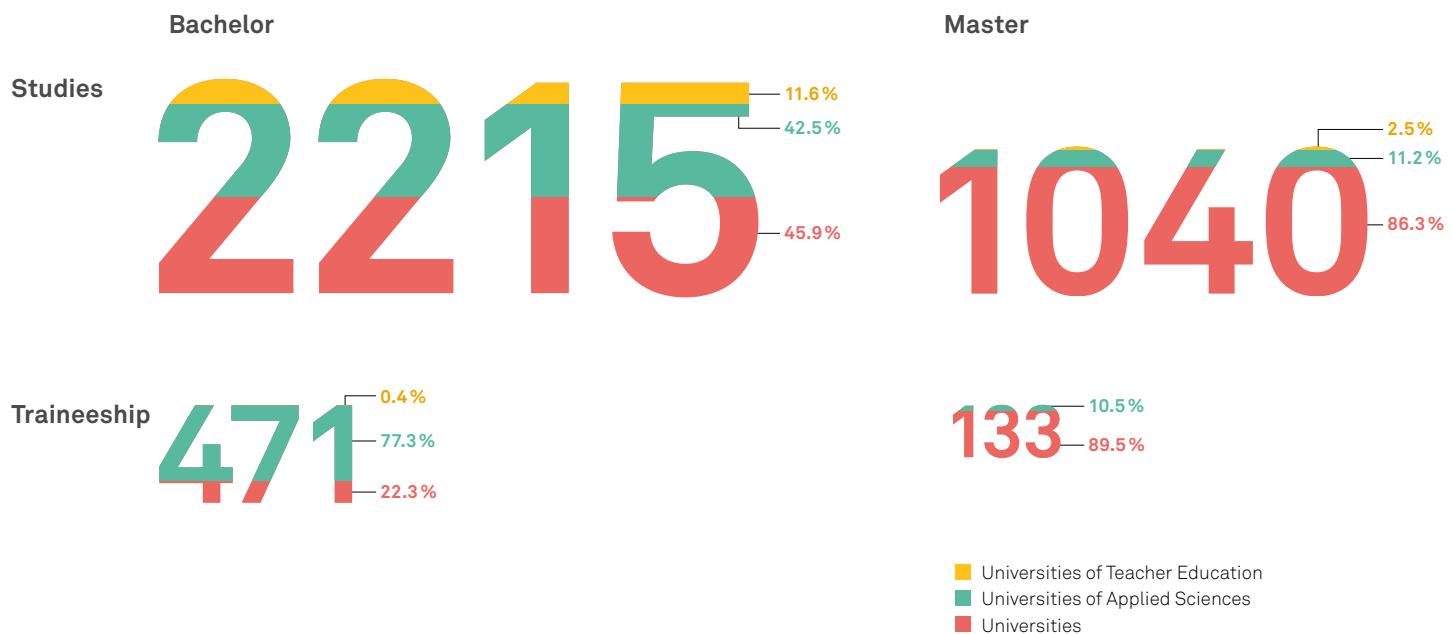
Four different types of international experience under the SEMP

Since 2011, a total of four types of mobility have been supported by the SEMP: two for students and two for higher education institution staff. Students can acquire credits at partner institutions abroad by studying there for a semester or a year or by doing a traineeship of at least two months at a public organisation or private company. Lecturers have the opportunity to teach at a partner institution and all higher education institution staff can take specialist further training courses. Financial support will definitely be provided for travel costs and the costs of the stay.

The SEMP is open to all tertiary-level educational institutions. 12 Universities, 8 Universities of Applied Sciences, 11 Universities of Teacher Education, 4 Colleges of Higher Education and 5 accredited institutions are currently taking part in the programme. In the 2017 academic year, these institutions together implemented mobility activities with a total duration of 1,864 years or 680,263 days. To put it differently, 3,935 students and 814 higher education institution employees travelled an average distance of 1,910 km to experience studying or working abroad at 1,301 host institutions in 493 cities in 33 Programme Countries.

Fifty-eight percent of all Swiss mobility activities currently take place in Europe. They are realised and promoted almost exclusively via the SEMP. With a budget of CHF 22 million for the academic year 2020/21, the Swiss-European Mobility Programme is the most important such programme implemented at national level.

Mobility by level of study and type of mobility



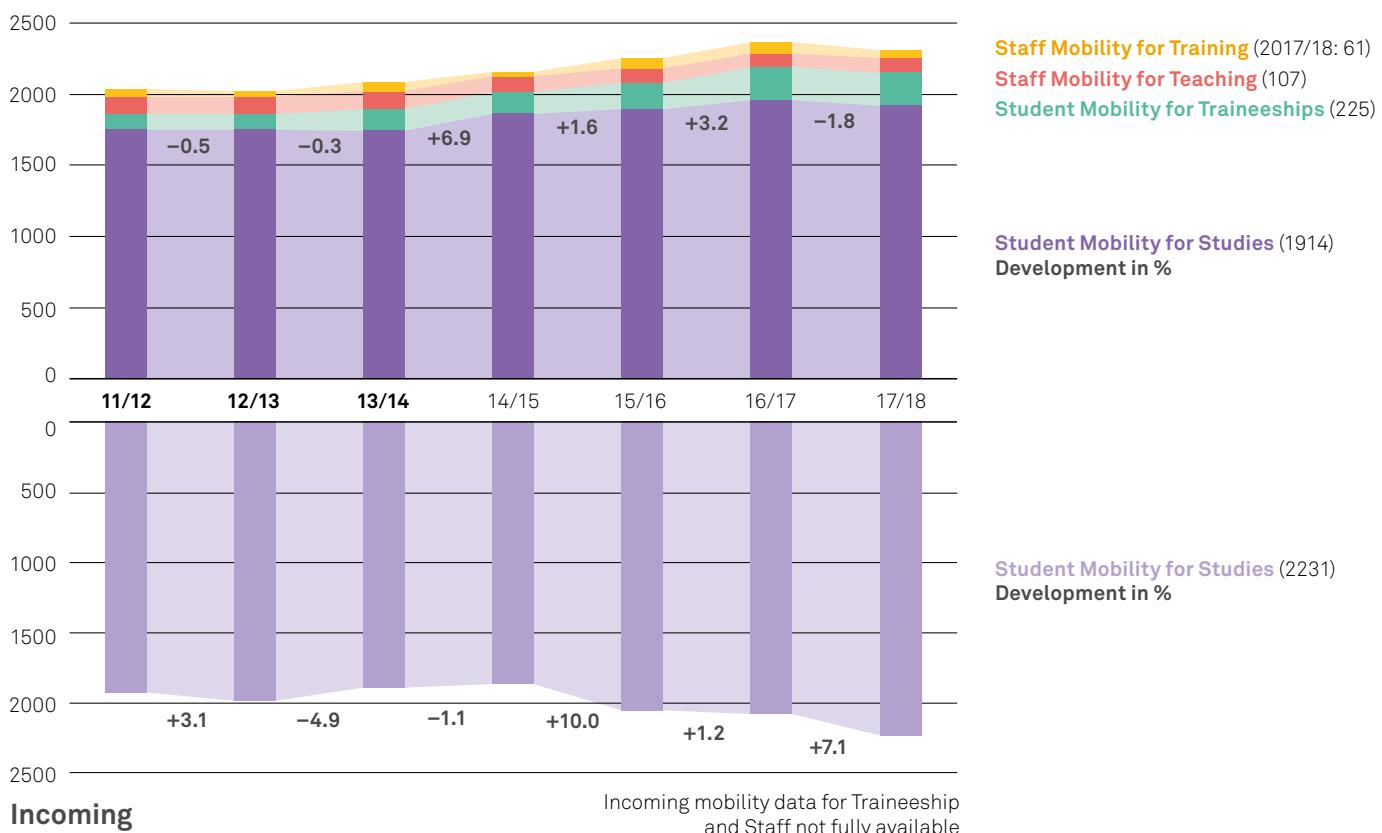
Mobility highest at Universities; Universities of Applied Sciences leading the way with traineeships

In absolute figures, most student mobility activities are realised by the Universities, although at Bachelor's level it is the Universities of Applied Sciences that report the highest mobility rates, as measured by graduates. Stays abroad for student traineeships are particularly prevalent at Universities of Applied Sciences.

The SEMP is implemented by recognised Universities, Universities of Applied Sciences, Universities of Teacher Education, Colleges of Higher Education and 5 accredited tertiary-level institutions. Since there are key differences between the types of institution with regard to mobility activities, it is worth explaining the trends individually and in more detail on the following pages. The mobility figures for the participating consortium and the Colleges of Higher Education are not taken into account in this monitoring report, as too few mobility activities are realised, proportionally speaking, to warrant their inclusion.

Universities

Outgoing



Great fluctuation against a backdrop of uncertain conditions

- After the association with Erasmus+ came to an end in 2014, Universities were the only type of higher education institution to report growth in outgoing student mobility. It can be assumed that this is a result of longstanding internationalisation efforts and consolidated partnerships between universities and foreign institutions. This positive result was followed by a reversal: in 2017/18, the figures dropped again.
- For incoming mobility, the decline of -1% for Universities in 2014 was smaller than that reported by the Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education. The incoming figures are generally highest for Universities, with 77 % of all incoming mobility in Switzerland consisting of students doing a study semester at a University.
- Relatively little use is made of the traineeship opportunities and mobility services for higher education institution staff.

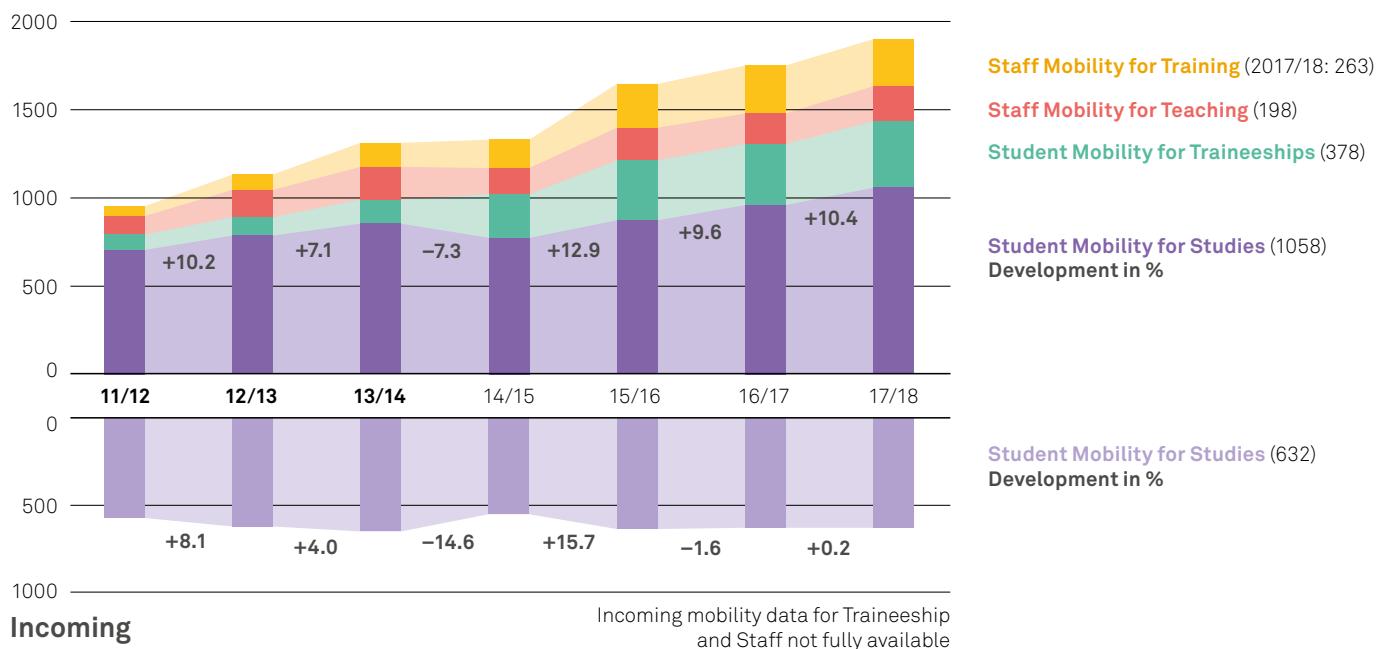


Breakdown by level of study reveals fluctuations and points to slow growth

- In 2013/14 and 2014/15, the mobility of outgoing Master's students was responsible for the positive development of the Universities. The last two academic years, however, have been marked by stagnation.
- As a result of the annual fluctuations at the Bachelor's level (outgoing), only 4.5% growth has been achieved since 2011/12.
- The last two years of incoming Bachelor's students have made up for the negative trend of the preceding years. Over the past seven years, growth has averaged just 4.4%.
- The academic year 2015/16 was very successful for the Universities, with an increase of 18.8% at the Master's level (incoming).

Universities of Applied Sciences

Outgoing

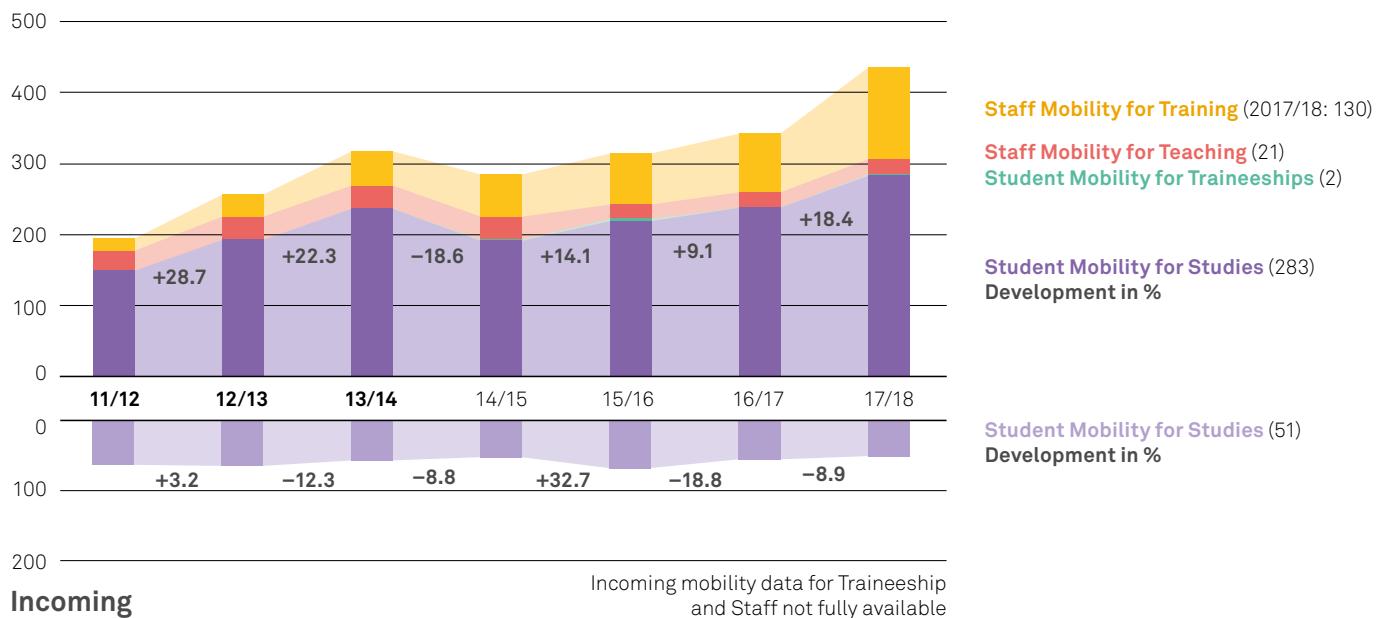


Mobility figures only recovered from the slump of 2014 after two academic years

- The Universities of Applied Sciences report considerably more outgoing than incoming student mobility.
- The end of the association with Erasmus+ interrupted the strong annual growth in outgoing student mobility seen in the years 2011 to 2013. The figures only returned to 2013 levels in the year 2015/16, after which growth began to increase again.
- The Universities of Applied Sciences harbour considerable potential for growth. If the slump had not occurred in 2014, the mobility figures for Universities of Applied Sciences in the area of student mobility for studies would in all likelihood have been 10% higher.
- The incoming figures dropped sharply in 2014, and since then they have been hovering at around 630. To this day, the level is still lower than it was in 2013.
- Overall, extensive use is made of the traineeship mobility and staff mobility opportunities.

Universities of Teacher Education

Outgoing



Staff Mobility for Training (2017/18: 130)

Staff Mobility for Teaching (21)

Student Mobility for Traineeships (2)

Student Mobility for Studies (283)

Development in %

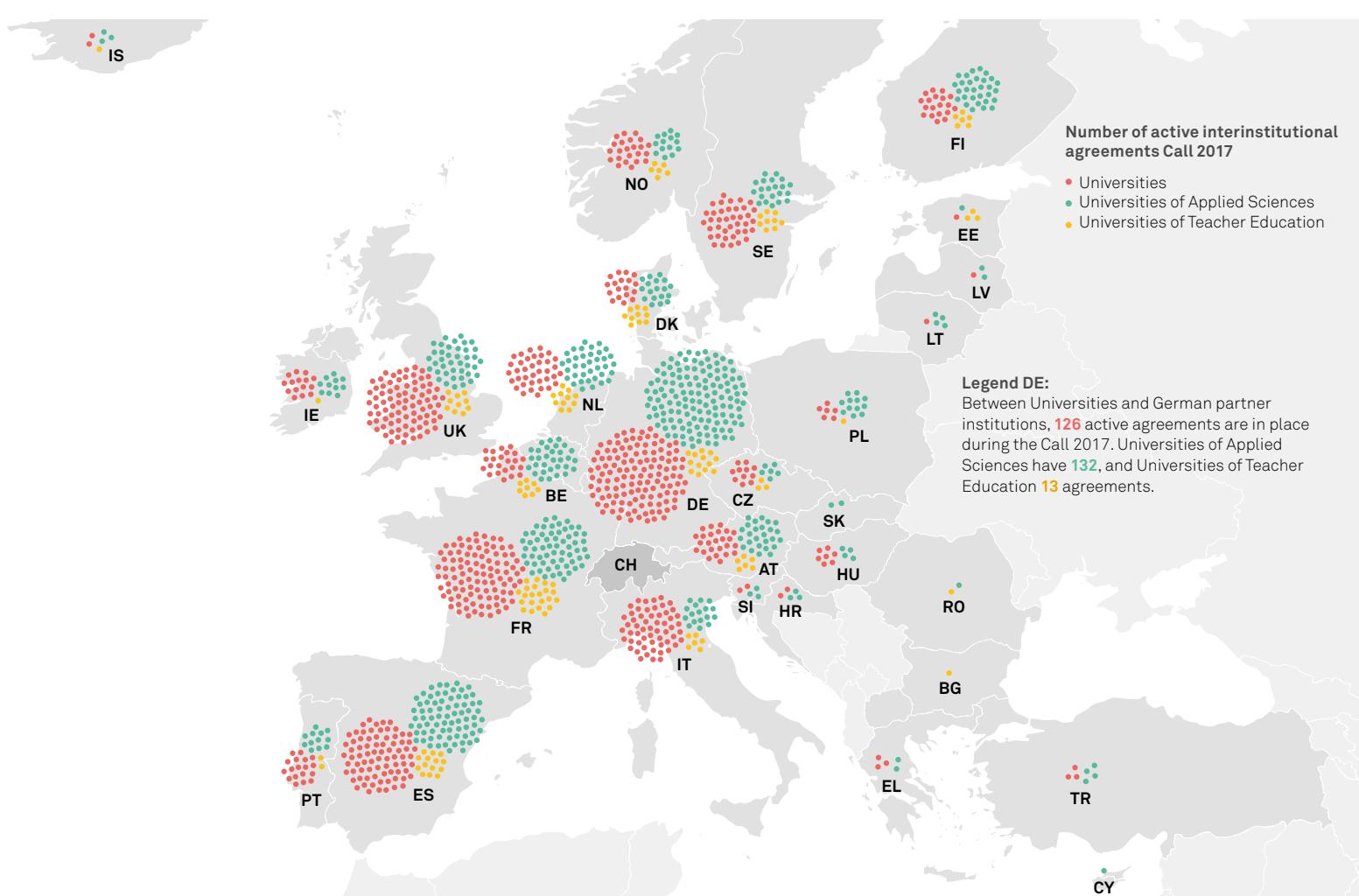
Student Mobility for Studies (51)

Development in %

Universities of Teacher Education hit hardest by the non-association

- The end of the association brought the period of strong growth that lasted from 2011 to 2014 to an abrupt halt. Outgoing student mobility fell by 18.6%, and mobility levels only recovered to 2013 levels after three academic years.
- Without the slump of 2014, the mobility figures for Universities of Teacher Education would probably have doubled by now.
- The Universities of Teacher Education organise considerably more outgoing than incoming student mobility.
- Despite a brief upturn in 2015/16, incoming mobility has declined overall. The mobility figures are yet to recover.
- In relative terms, very good use is made of the further training offering for higher education institution staff.

Partner agreements



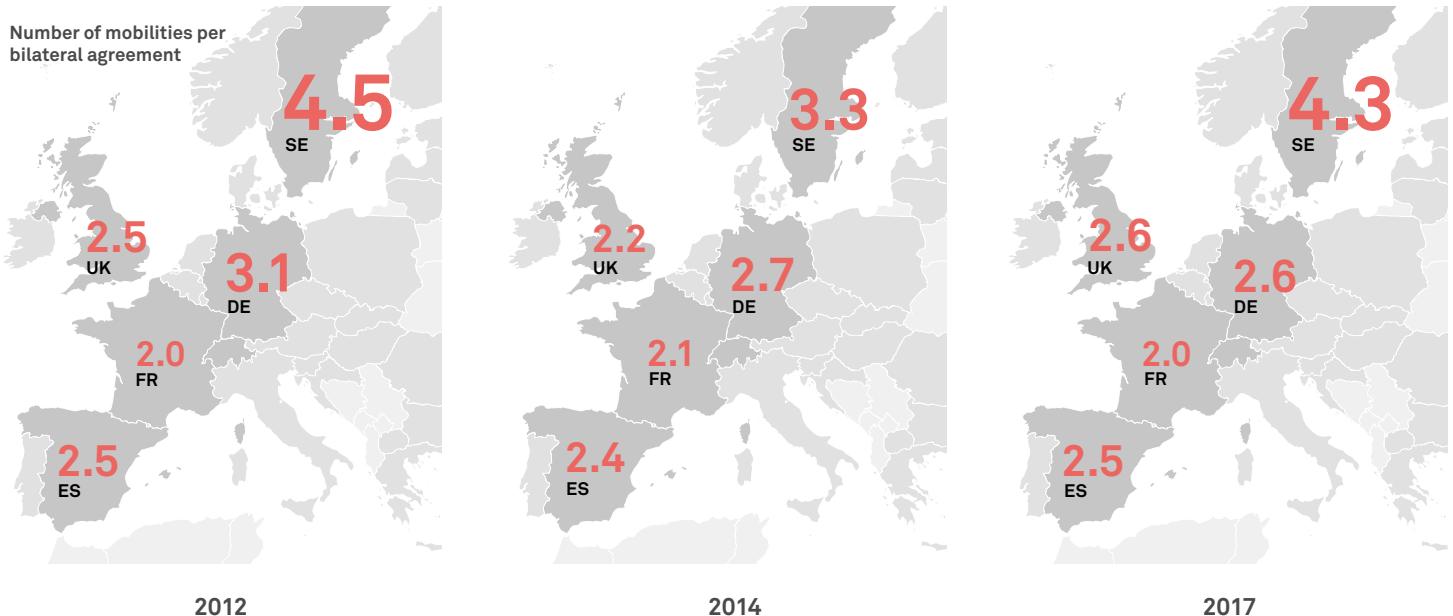
Large number of interinstitutional agreements necessary for a close collaboration

For the organisation and realisation of semester stays abroad, both the SEMP and Erasmus+ require an interinstitutional agreement between partner institutions. This obligates the institutions to commit to shared quality principles and regulates the quotas for the mutual exchange. In addition, SEMP agreements must also define the aspects that are already arranged between Erasmus+ programme countries as part of the association (financing, legal framework).

An overview of all active agreements maintained by the higher education institutions also reflects the most popular destination countries for mobility. Most agreements exist and most mobility activities are organised with Germany, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium, followed by the Scandinavian countries.

The graphic shows the active agreements that led to at least one student mobility activity in 2017/18. Swiss higher education institutions conclude far more agreements overall, but not all of them lead to a mobility.

Universities



Since 2014, Swiss institutions have required more agreements to maintain the mobility figures

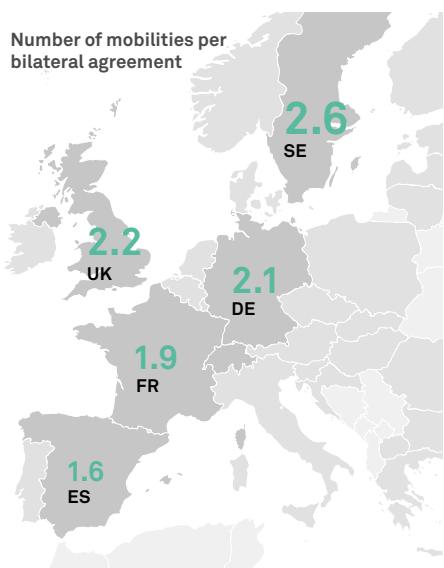
These graphics show the ratio of realised mobility activities to the number of bilateral agreements in the various years: in 2012 as an associated Programme Country of Erasmus+, in 2014, the first year without programme association, and in 2017 with the latest available SEMP figures.

Let us take Germany and Universities as an example: in 2017, an average of 2.6 mobility activities were realised per agreement, whereas before, in 2012, half a mobility activity more was realised per agreement.

Although these differences do not appear to be particularly large, they must be considered in the context of the realised mobility activities. In the case of Germany, 95 agreements were required for 332 mobility activities in 2012, 116 agreements for 366 mobility activities in 2014, and 126 agreements for 358 mobility activities in 2017.

Universities of Applied Sciences

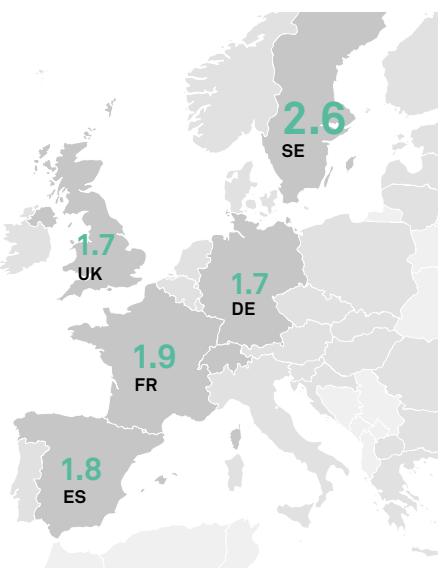
Number of mobilities per
bilateral agreement



2012



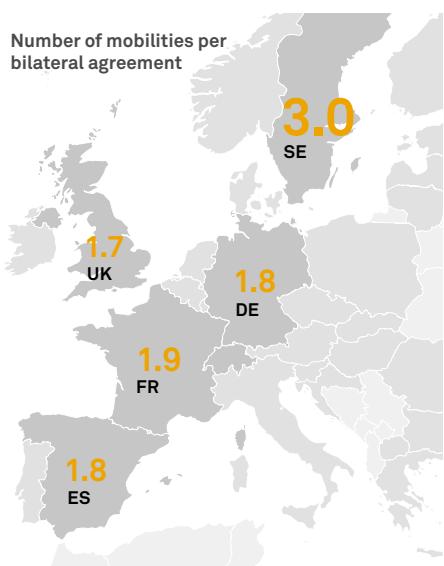
2014



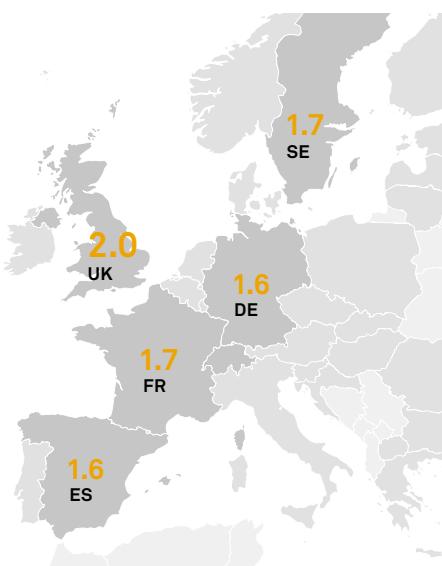
2017

Universities of Teacher Education

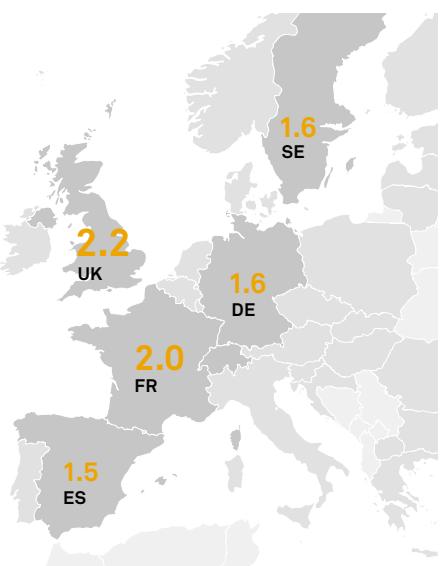
Number of mobilities per
bilateral agreement



2012



2014



2017

A comparison of Europe and Switzerland



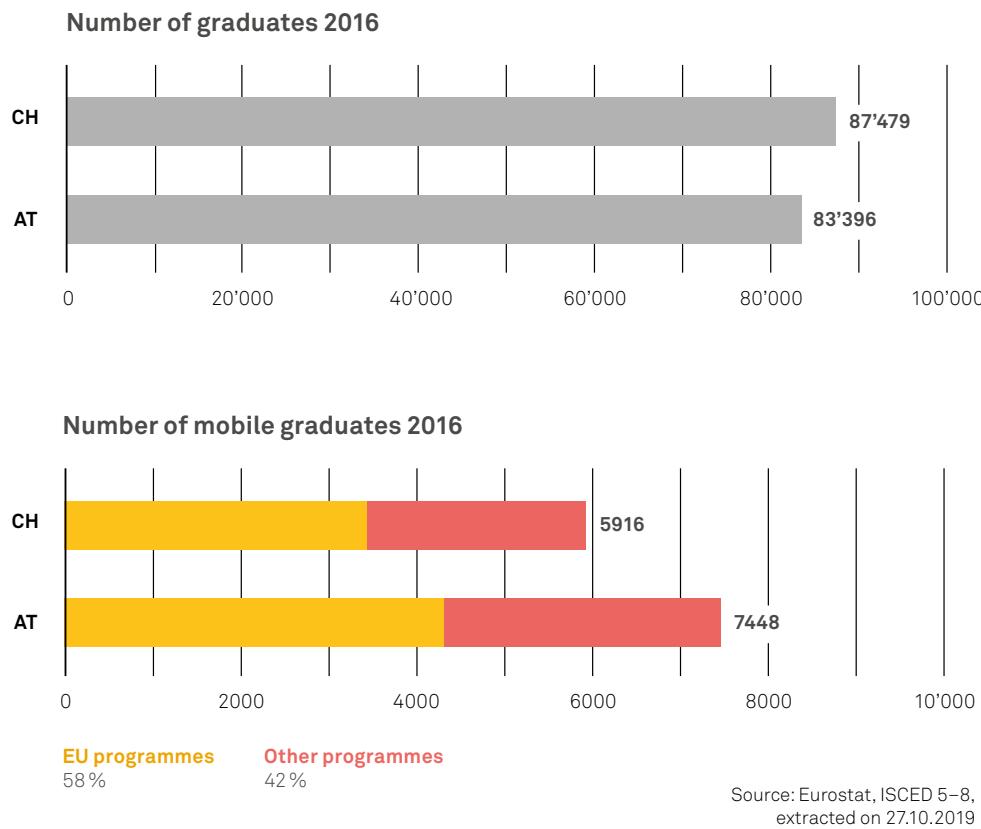
Graphic without Liechtenstein for reasons of readability
Data: Erasmus+ Call 2016 and SEMP Call 2016

Swiss students less mobile than students from elsewhere in Europe

This graphic shows the outgoing mobility of the Erasmus+ programme countries and Switzerland in absolute figures. For the European countries, the SEMP mobility figures for mobility to Switzerland have been added up.

Due to their large student population, France, Germany and Spain also stand out as countries with high levels of student mobility. The Swiss figures are comparable to those of Sweden, Ireland or Slovakia. This means that a similar number of students engaged in mobility activities in Europe in 2016/17. However, the absolute figures do not reveal anything about the intensity of the mobility activities in the respective countries. To enable comparisons, the effective figures are compared to the number of graduates; this mobility ratio is also used for the measurement of the 2020 Bologna objective.

A comparison of Austria and Switzerland



Austria realises 26 % more mobility activities as part of Erasmus+

The best way to illustrate the relationship between Swiss and European student mobility is to compare Switzerland with a similar country. In terms of its education system, graduate population and the ratio of European to global mobility, Austria is a suitable candidate. Switzerland and Austria are also similar in terms of the percentage of students who complete their entire degrees abroad: 5 % for Austria and 4.1 % for Switzerland.

In 2016, Switzerland had slightly more graduates than Austria. At 58 % to 42 %, the ratio of European to other mobility programmes is the same for these two countries. In absolute figures, Austria realised 4,320 mobility stays in Europe, which is just under 900 or 26 % more than Switzerland.

One reason for this difference is the different growth in the mobility figures. The annual growth rate at European level was 9.3% on average from 2014–2016, whereas for Austria it was 8.8%. SEMP growth averaged 5.7 % for the years 2014–2017.