The Great British Brain Drain

Movement of students and graduates to and from Glasgow

January 2019
Questions this analysis will answer

1. What are the movements of students to and from Glasgow as they start university?

2. What are the movements of Glasgow graduates post-university?

3. What is the composition of Glasgow’s new graduate workforce?

Glasgow is defined as the Primary Urban Area including East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow and Renfrewshire local authorities.
Six universities have campuses in Glasgow

1. The Glasgow School of Art
2. Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
3. University of the West of Scotland
4. Glasgow Caledonian University
5. University of Glasgow
6. University of Strathclyde

This analysis only covers campuses of the universities above which are located in Glasgow.
1. Movements to university
Three quarters of Glasgow’s students are from Scotland

**Figure 1:** Origins of all Glasgow’s university students, 2014/15

In total, there were 72,950 students in Glasgow in 2014/15. 31% of Glasgow’s students were originally from Glasgow.

Source: HESA admissions data

Note: despite only covering one specific year, this data is expected to be representative of longer-term patterns, and correlates with other data sets measuring similar variables.
Of those from the rest of the UK, a fifth are from Northern Ireland.

Figure 2: Origins of Glasgow’s university students, 2014/15 (excluding Scottish students)

Source: HESA admissions data

Note: despite only covering one specific year, this data is expected to be representative of longer-term patterns, and correlates with other data sets measuring similar variables.
Of those moving to Glasgow, 4 per cent are from Edinburgh and 2 per cent from London

Figure 3: Origin cities of students who moved to Glasgow for university in 2014/15

Source: HESA admissions data

Of those moving to Glasgow, 60% were from non-city areas
A significant number of rural Scottish students move to Glasgow for university

Figure 4: Composition of Glasgow’s university students, 2014/15

- Non-urban in Scotland: 38%
- Glasgow: 31%
- Other Scottish City: 7%
- Rest of UK: 4%
- International: 20%

Source: HESA admissions data

Our analysis covers four Scottish cities: Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee
The share of students from Scotland is lower in universities focused on the arts

Figure 5: Origin of students at each university in Glasgow, 2014/15

Source: HESA admissions data
85 per cent of students leaving Glasgow for university stay in Scotland

Figure 6: Destination regions of those moving away from Glasgow for university, 2014/15

In total, 10,870 students left Glasgow to study elsewhere in 2014/15

Source: HESA admissions data
Of those leaving Glasgow to study elsewhere, 37 per cent chose Edinburgh.

Figure 7: Destination cities of those moving away from Glasgow for university, 2014/2015

Source: HESA admissions data
2. Movements of new graduates post-university
Nearly half of Glasgow’s graduates stay in the city to work after university

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
This high retention rate is similar to other cities with larger shares of local students.

**Figure 9:** Relationship between retention and local students, 2013/14 – 2014/15

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
But it varies significantly across Glasgow’s universities

Figure 10: Percentage of graduates retained in Glasgow post-graduation, 2013/14 – 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Share retained who are originally from Glasgow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Glasgow School of Art</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Strathclyde</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the West of Scotland</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across all cities, there is a positive relationship between retention rates and the share of those retained originally from the city. So the findings for Glasgow’s arts specialist institutions are an exception to the rule, indicating the draw of job opportunities in the city to graduates of the creative arts.

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
Computer science, creative arts and law graduates were most likely to stay in the city.

Figure 11: Retention rate of students studying each subject, 2013/14 – 2014/15

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
Of those leaving after graduation, 11 per cent go to Edinburgh, 8 per cent to London.

Figure 12: Destinations of Glasgow graduates who move to other cities for work, 2013/14 – 2014/15

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
3. The nature of the new graduate workforce
**Figure 13:** Comparing students lost and graduates gained by Glasgow, 2013/14 – 2014/15

- Glasgow gained graduates overall

Source: HESA destination of leavers' survey
Despite this, two in five Glasgow students arrive for university and leave on graduation.

Figure 14: The bouncers and the graduate gain, 2013/14 – 2014/15

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
More than half the new graduate workforce did not grow up in Glasgow

Figure 15: The components of the new graduate workforce, 2013/14 – 2014/15

- **Glasgow**
  - Stay for university and work: 35%
  - Come for university, stay for work: 32%
  - Leave for university, return for work: 10%
  - Move in for work, not from city: 22%

- **Bristol**
  - Stay for university and work: 16%
  - Come for university, stay for work: 25%
  - Leave for university, return for work: 20%
  - Move in for work, not from city: 40%

- **Edinburgh**
  - Stay for university and work: 19%
  - Come for university, stay for work: 32%
  - Leave for university, return for work: 14%
  - Move in for work, not from city: 35%

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
But the cohort is less high-achieving than UK graduates on average

Figure 16: Share of working new graduates by class of degree, 2013/14 - 2014/15

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
Wages earned by these graduates are in the top third of UK cities

**Figure 17:** Mean graduate wages of each UK city, 2013/14 – 2014/15

- **Source:** HESA destination of leavers’ survey
- **Note:** Data is by place of work
But they vary by university, and graduates who move away for work tend to earn more.

**Figure 18: Mean graduate wages by institution and location of employment, 2013/14 – 2014/15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>University Average salary of graduate</th>
<th>Average salary of a graduate employed in Glasgow</th>
<th>Average salary of a graduate employed elsewhere</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Glasgow School of Art</td>
<td>£20,100</td>
<td>£18,300</td>
<td>£21,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</td>
<td>£18,600</td>
<td>£17,700</td>
<td>£19,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the West of Scotland</td>
<td>£23,400</td>
<td>£24,300</td>
<td>£23,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
<td>£22,400</td>
<td>£21,500</td>
<td>£23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td>£23,100</td>
<td>£23,200</td>
<td>£23,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Strathclyde</td>
<td>£24,000</td>
<td>£23,100</td>
<td>£24,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
Graduates were slightly more likely to work in knowledge services than UK average

**Figure 19: Share of graduates working in each sector, 2013/14 – 2014/15**

- **New graduates working in Glasgow**
  - 44%: Construction
  - 28%: Knowledge-intensive business services
  - 19%: Other private services
  - 5%: Logistics and communications
  - 5%: Manufacturing
  - 5%: Publicly funded services
  - 5%: Extraction
  - 5%: Utilities

- **New graduates working in Bristol**
  - 44%: Construction
  - 26%: Knowledge-intensive business services
  - 20%: Other private services
  - 15%: Logistics and communications
  - 5%: Manufacturing
  - 5%: Publicly funded services
  - 5%: Extraction
  - 5%: Utilities

- **New graduates across UK**
  - 46%: Construction
  - 30%: Knowledge-intensive business services
  - 15%: Other private services
  - 10%: Logistics and communications
  - 5%: Manufacturing
  - 5%: Publicly funded services
  - 5%: Extraction
  - 5%: Utilities

- **Total employment in Glasgow**
  - 30%: Construction
  - 39%: Knowledge-intensive business services
  - 14%: Other private services
  - 10%: Logistics and communications
  - 5%: Manufacturing
  - 5%: Publicly funded services
  - 5%: Extraction
  - 5%: Utilities

Source: HESA destination of leavers’ survey
Conclusions

• Despite many students arriving in Glasgow for university and leaving on graduation, overall the city gained graduates. In other words, the number of non-local graduates in Glasgow outweighed the number of local graduates who left to work elsewhere.

• All six universities had a strongly Scottish student base, with at least half their students from Scotland. But the diversity of the non-Scottish students varied, with some focused almost solely on educating local students while others producing graduates from more diverse backgrounds, many who then chose to work elsewhere on graduation.

• Policies designed to keep more graduates in Glasgow must appreciate these differing roles: not all the universities need to aim for high retention rates.

• Instead, policy should focus on improving the city economy. Ultimately it’s the jobs available to graduates which determine if they stay. By offering more, and better, opportunities the city will attract more graduates, both those who have studied in the city and those moving in for the first time from elsewhere.