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Making
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International student mobility as part of institutional strategies for talent development and graduate employability

Evidence and implications from the Netherlands and the EUR

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René A.G. Teunissen | Head of Internationalisation – Senior Policy Advisor Internationalisation
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Why this discussion, and why now?

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

- Highly politicised debate
- Housing shortages, language concerns
- "Over-internationalisation" framing

INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURE

- Talent development for labour markets
- Strengthening graduate employability
- Demonstrating societal value

KEY QUESTIONS FOR THIS SESSION

What do international students contribute, beyond enrolment numbers?

How can mobility be used strategically for talent development and employability?

How do we balance short-term pressures with long-term talent needs?

Mobility as a driver of talent development

International students

- Enrich learning environments with diverse perspectives
- Raise the bar for English-taught and intercultural curricula
- Contribute to research and innovation capacity

Internationalisation at home

- Intercultural and language skills in the classroom
- Experience of working in diverse teams
- Access to global peer networks

Mobility produces value for ALL students — not only those who travel.

International students in Dutch higher education

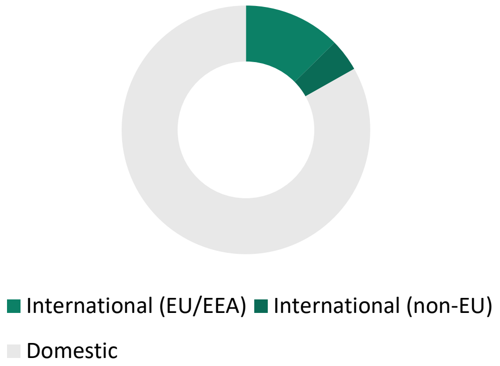
130.190
International students
(2025/26)

16.8%
of all students
≈ 1 in 6

≈72%
from EU/EEA
(incl. Norway, Iceland)

COMPOSITION

DE	**Germany**	≈ 21.000 — largest sending country
BE	**Belgium**	significant inflow
FR	**France**	significant inflow
UA	**Ukraine**	notable cohort
IT	**Italy**	significant inflow



Sources: CBS StatLine (85125NED); Nuffic factsheet 2025

International students and the Dutch economy: key figures

Indicator	Figure (approx.)	Source & year	Notes
International students in Dutch HE	130.190 (of 773.270)	CBS; Nuffic 2025	≈ 16.8% of all students
Origin — largest country	≈75% EU/EEA; Germany ≈21.000	Nuffic 2025	Also: Belgium, Italy, France, Ukraine
Net economic benefit per student	**EER ≈ €5.000–€17.000** **Non-EER ≈ €69.000–€96.000**	CPB, 2019	Lifetime present value; varies by stay & origin non-EER far higher (see next slide)
Short-term budget savings from caps	**≈ €80–132 million/year**	SEO, 2025	Small vs the GDP loss (same SEO study) Mainly lower public spending on education
Long-term GDP loss from caps	**≈ €3.9–4.8 billion/year**	SEO, 2025	≈ 0.3–0.4% of GDP; 5 Randstad universities (incl. EUR)
Stay rate — 1 year after graduation	**≈ 42% (national, 2025)**	Nuffic 2025	Rising for recent cohorts (56.6% for 2022–23) Higher for masters & STEM fields
Stay rate — 5 years after graduation	**≈ 25% (national, 2025)**	Nuffic 2025	Non-EER ≈ 39% vs EER ≈ 20% — almost double (Nuffic) Majority in paid employment

EER vs non-EER: who they are, why it matters

EER students (≈ 75% of the total)

1. From the EU/EEA (incl. Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein); pay statutory tuition (€2,601 in 2025/26); the State funds their study place
2. Lower stay rate: ≈ 20% remain 5 years after graduating
3. Net lifetime contribution to public finances: ≈ €5k (hbo) to €17k (wo) per student

Non-EER students (≈ 25% of the total)

1. From outside the EU/EEA; pay the higher institutional tuition; the State pays no study-place subsidy or student finance
2. Higher stay rate: ≈ 39% remain after 5 years — almost double the EER rate
3. Net lifetime contribution to public finances: ≈ €69k (hbo) to €96k (wo) per student — far higher than EER

Contribution: CPB (2019), Table 5.5, p.37 — net present value over the graduate's lifetime, 2017 prices; the gap reflects that non-EER students receive no State study subsidy and stay longer. Stay rate: Nuffic (2025), p.17 — share still in NL 5 yrs after graduating, cohorts 2013–19. Share: Nuffic factsheet (2025) — 72.3% EEA / 27.7% non-EEA of all int'l students.

How international students create value

Direct economic & fiscal effects

1. Tuition income and local spending
2. Public costs: study places, support, infrastructure
3. Public revenues: income tax, social security, VAT

Labour market, innovation & competitiveness

1. Graduates feed into tight labour markets (tech, IT, health, education)
2. International graduates strengthen R&D and innovation
3. International talent supports the Netherlands as knowledge & business hub

Embedding mobility in talent development

Curriculum design

- Integrate global and comparative knowledge and perspectives across courses
- Use challenge-based learning with mixed international–local teams

Learning environment

- Purposeful design of the 'international classroom'
- Staff support for inclusive, intercultural and international teaching (use the power of diversity)

Co- and extra-curricular

- International student projects, incubators, consultancy labs
- Language and intercultural training accessible to all students

Mobility produces value when it is integrated, not when it is an isolated mobility window.

From international experience to employability

SKILLS BUILT THROUGH MOBILITY & DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

- Intercultural communication and teamwork
- Working in international & virtual teams
- Adaptability and resilience in unfamiliar contexts

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Align career services with internationalisation strategy
- Facilitate internships, thesis projects and part-time jobs with international and local employers
- Provide structured support for international graduate transitions to work

Erasmus University Rotterdam in focus

≈26%
EER international students

≈7%
non-EER international students

Student experience at EUR

93% overall satisfaction — above the Dutch average

95% / 87% / 86% feel a friendly attitude / welcome in Rotterdam / welcome in NL

Most valued: international classrooms, sports & social facilities, support services

EUR institutional data: composition & stay rate from EUR registries; satisfaction from the International Student Barometer (Etio), latest wave, n > 1,650. National comparison: Nuffic 2025.

Countries of origin

2.02% North America
2.78% South America
73.5% Europe
0.16% Australia and Oceania

Top 10 countries

1. Poland
2. Belgium
3. Bulgaria
4. Indonesia
5. India
6. Italy
7. China
8. Greece
9. Germany
10. France

Stay rate trend

EUR's international intake is overwhelmingly EER (only ≈ 7–8% non-EER) — yet non-EER graduates stay almost twice as often (Nuffic 2025)

First-year stay rate is higher (≈ 73% in 2023) supported by the orientation ("visa") year; EUR's stay rate is up ≈ 5 pts since 2019, mirroring the national rise (Nuffic 2025)

After 5 years the stay rate normalizes in line with the national average. Barriers cited: jobs, cost of living, language.

From Arrival to Career: how EUR strengthens stay & employability

Welcoming, soft-landing and integration activities — coordinated by the International Office — span the full journey from arrival to first job.

SOFT LANDING & INTEGRATION

100 Days Buddy Programme

CULTURAL COMPETENCE & INCLUSION

Dutch Culture

EMPLOYABILITY

Kickstart your Career in NL

REGIONAL BINDING

Make it in Rotterdam

Arrival → Integration → Employability → Regional binding

SUPPORTING INVESTMENTS

- Discounted Dutch courses (Language Training Centre); starter course "Dutch for Foodies"
- 15 EC minor "Feeling Orange" (in development) — Dutch history, art & (popular) culture
- Dedicated career advisor in the International Office — bridging to the local labour market
- Faculty-based initiatives and activities tailored to each school

A continuous pipeline — not isolated events — turns mobility into retained talent.

Benefits, pressure points and trade-offs

⚠ Real pressure points

- Housing shortages in university cities
- Teaching capacity & support services under strain
- Concerns about language, integration, 'over-internationalisation'

📊 What the evidence shows

- Short-term fiscal savings from caps: modest
- Long-term GDP and innovation losses: much larger
- Net effect: international students are an asset

🎯 Strategic response

- Shift from 'how many?' → 'which profiles, where, under what conditions?'
- Combine intake management with investment in housing, integration and language

Towards a 'smart' mobility and talent strategy

1 Clear positioning

- Define institutional talent profile (fields, sectors, ecosystems)
- Align international recruitment with regional labour market needs ***(but?)***

2 Integrated talent pipeline

- Link recruitment → education → internships → first jobs → alumni
- Treat international and domestic students as one diverse talent pool

3 Evidence-based steering

- Use data on completion, employability, stay rates
- Draw on reliable national sources (such as SEO, Nuffic, CPB, CBS for the Netherlands) for internal and external decisions

4 Partnership approach

- Collaborate with municipalities on housing
- Work with employers on placement options, internships and graduate jobs
- Engage government on differentiated, not one-size-fits-all regulation

Questions of relevance

For institutional leaders

- How do you balance economic, educational and societal objectives in your internationalisation strategy?
- Which trade-offs are you currently facing in managing international enrolment?

For policymakers

- How can national policy support differentiated approaches rather than one-size-fits-all caps?
- What evidence do you need from institutions to balance short-term pressures with long-term talent needs?

For employers and students

- Which international experiences matter most for recruitment and early careers?
- Where are universities over- or under-investing?

Key messages & references

KEY MESSAGES

- International students are central, not peripheral, to talent development and innovation
- Restrictive policies may ease short-term pressures but risk significant long-term economic losses
- Integrated, data-informed strategies can link mobility, curriculum and employability while addressing capacity and inclusion

SELECTED REFERENCES

- *SEO Economisch Onderzoek (2025) – "Zonder internationalisering uit balans?" (commissioned by the five Randstad universities, incl. EUR)*
- *Nuffic (2025) – Factsheet international students in Dutch higher education*
- *CPB (2019) – Economic effects of international students in the Netherlands*
- *CBS StatLine (85125NED) – International students in higher education (2025/26)*

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Mobility is not a cost to manage, but talent to develop.

Let's build mobility strategies that are smart, evidence-based and shared.

Thank you — I would welcome your questions and reflections.

René A.G. Teunissen
Head of Internationalisation – Senior Policy Advisor Internationalisation
teunissen@eur.nl · www.eur.nl · Erasmus University Rotterdam

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