The Turing Scheme

Understanding impacts and implications

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The British Academy

Contents

Executive Summary

The British Academy has published a suite of policy briefings and analysis which raise awareness of international higher education mobility and its value for the sector, society, and the economy. This ongoing body of work is concerned with how the UK can maintain its research excellence and vitality by widening opportunities for international exchange and mobility.

Based on this evidence, the British Academy was asked to produce a briefing on the Turing Scheme - the government's programme for global mobility - for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Modern Languages, ahead of a House of Lords debate on financial pressures in the higher education system.[1] This was supplemented by insights from a programme of work led by the Academy, dedicated to monitoring trends in language education provision and mobilising this expertise to inform debate on the importance and value of language uptake in the UK.

Mobility programmes are a key driver in promoting language acquisition, enhanced cultural exchange, and supporting a vibrant international community of students and staff. This briefing has therefore been updated to inform a wider audience and aid understanding on the known impacts and implications of the Turing Scheme for international mobility in the higher education sector since its launch in 2021.

As the UK's replacement to Erasmus+, the briefing offers analysis into the opportunities, participation and funding options available under Turing in comparison with its predecessor, against the following areas:

- **The impact on outward mobility** within higher education, such as participant numbers and destinations. The Turing Scheme has been marketed as offering a significant global reach but, notably, does not fund staff placements like Erasmus+. This briefing examines the breadth in destination countries, student participations numbers, and placement accessibility.
- **Funding, fees and reciprocal arrangements** for students and universities. The briefing considers the differences in the total allocated budgets between Erasmus+ and Turing and how this affects students and universities. Significantly, the scheme does not cover tuition fees at host universities for higher education placements, with the expectation that host universities will offer a fee waiver. Inward mobility of students, however, is not supported by the Turing Scheme.
- **Devolved administration participation** and their respective mobility mechanisms. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have access to the Turing Scheme but have either designed – or are in the process of doing so- their own schemes. For instance, Wales has developed its own global mobility programme, Taith, which encourages outward as well as inward mobility. Meanwhile, the Irish government has announced a deal that will enable students registered at Northern Irish universities to have continued access to Erasmus+.

[1] For a record of the House of Lords debate that took place on the 30th of March 2023, please see Hansard (2023), *'Higher Education: Financial Pressures'*, [accessed 31 July 2023].

1.0 Introduction

Mobility schemes have historically allowed UK students to benefit from a semester or a year abroad as part of their degree. For those pursuing language degrees, this period abroad presents a pivotal opportunity for students to develop fluency and confidence in their linguistic skills far beyond what can be acquired in a classroom setting alone.[2] This, coupled with the rich immersive experience of living, studying and/or working in a different culture, is of an enormous transformative value for students and increases the global competitiveness and marketability of UK graduates.[3]

Since 1987, Erasmus has funded intra-national school and university placements for pupils, students, and staff. Its initial iteration began with 11 members of the European Community (later replaced by the European Union) and was used primarily for higher education exchange. It later evolved to facilitate a wider programme of study, training, and work opportunities across 34 EU and associated countries, and 156 non-associated countries. Its revised name, 'Erasmus+' demonstrates the increased range of mobility activities on offer.[4]

Following the UK's departure from the European Union (EU), the government ended the UK's association to the Erasmus+ programme, reversing a commitment made by the then UK Prime Minister to remain associated.[5] In lieu, the UK government unveiled the Turing Scheme as its new flagship global mobility programme - a replacement to Erasmus+ - in December 2020.[6] Formally launched in March 2021, the Turing Scheme facilitates outward mobility by funding opportunities for students and pupils from the UK and British Overseas Territories to study, train or work abroad in over 150 countries.

The scheme aims to increase global mobility for young people from widening participation backgrounds, through offering financial support. Organisations in the higher education, further education, vocational and training, and school sectors apply for funding on behalf of their students. Funding applications must demonstrate how the intended mobility projects meet the scheme's four main objectives (as aligned with key government policies): global Britain, levelling up, developing key skills, and value for UK taxpayers.[7]

It is important to note that the publicly available data for the Turing Scheme as detailed in this briefing relates to planned mobilities (i.e., according to the mobility plans submitted to the scheme by higher education providers) rather than the actual mobility figures. These are yet to be published and may differ. There is an additional challenge to using participation as a point of comparison, in that Erasmus+ and Turing include differing activities. Therefore, this reduces our ability to make an accurate "like for like" comparison of the two schemes. Nonetheless, this briefing is able to highlight early, emerging trends in student mobility and consider the impact that these patterns may have.

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2 The British Academy, AHRC, ASCL, British Council, Universities UK (2020), *Towards a national languages strategy: education and skills*, p.12.

3 The British Academy, AHRC, ASCL, British Council, Universities UK (2020), *Towards a national languages strategy: education and skills*, p.5.

4 European Commission (2017), *Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2014-2020*.

5 Hansard (2020), '*Prime Minister's Questions, Wednesday 15 January 2020*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

6 Reported in The Guardian by Adams, R. (2020), '*UK students lose Erasmus membership in Brexit deal*', *The Guardian*, 24 December 2020.

7 Capita (2022), *Turing Scheme Programme Guide 2022*, p.6.

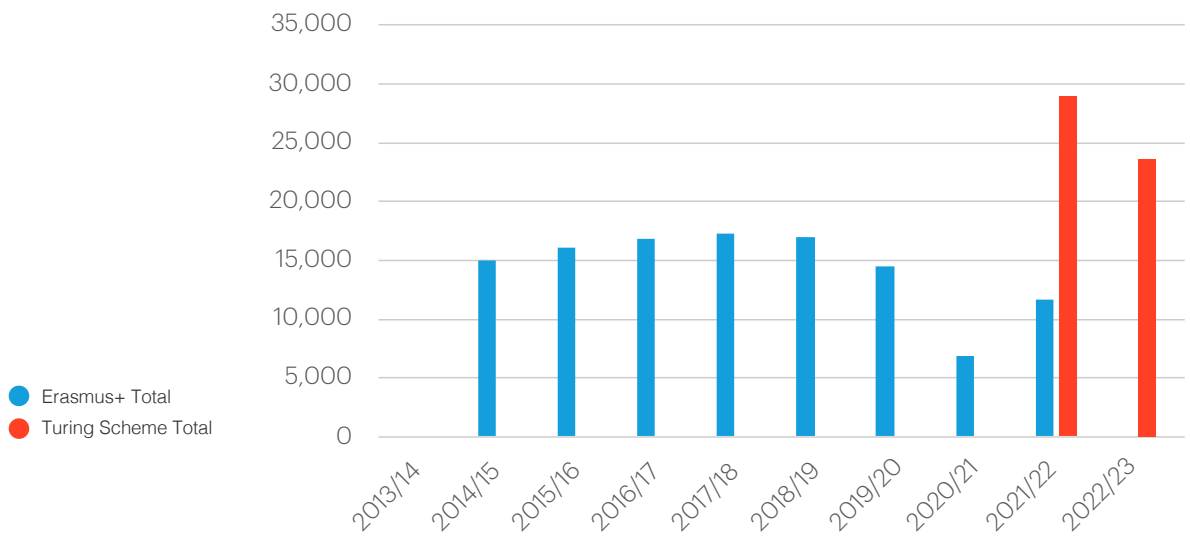
2.0 Impact on Outward Higher Education Mobility

2.1 Numbers

Since the launch of the Turing Scheme in 2021, over 50,000 higher education (abbreviated to 'HE' from this point onwards) students from the UK have taken part in outward mobility (study, training, or work experience) placements abroad. HE placements represent on average a 66% share of 'projects', the term used for student activities under Turing.[8] The remaining projects are placements in further education, vocational and training, and school projects. In contrast to the Erasmus+ programme, HE staff mobility is notably not funded by Turing, with a small exception made for staff chaperones accompanying on school projects.[9]

Preliminary data suggests that the annual number of UK HE students participating in the Turing Scheme is greater than in Erasmus+. In 2021/22, 28,997 students took part in the Turing Scheme and 23,472 in the 2022/23 cycle. Meanwhile, outward HE student mobility under Erasmus+ has typically been lower (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Erasmus+ vs Turing Scheme – Comparison of UK higher education student participant numbers



Sources: UK National Agency 2021; Turing Scheme 2023.

While discounting 2020/21 as an anomaly due to the pandemic and global travel restrictions, the average annual number of UK HE students participating in Erasmus+ between 2013/14 and 2021/22 was 13,249. In the 2018/19 call (the last 'typical' call which can be assessed before the pandemic's impact on travel) 16,575 students in the UK participated in outward higher education placements.

Erasmus+ funding was honoured up to the 2021/22 cycle, despite this occurring after the UK had withdrawn from the programme and coinciding with the launch year of the new Turing

[8] Turing Scheme (2023), '*Funding Results 2021/22 and Funding Results 2022/23*', [accessed 31 July 2023]

[9] Funding is available to accompanying staff to chaperone pupils over the age of 14 participating on a longer-term school project (two to six months). This may be deemed necessary as part of safeguarding or duty of care.

Scheme. HE student participant numbers in Erasmus+ were lower than the average, with 11,373 students taking up a placement, representing two-fifths of the student numbers in the first Turing intake in 2021/22.

2.2 Destinations

The Turing Scheme is marketed as providing a wide global reach through a breadth of destinations for programme participants. Indeed, six of the ten most popular destinations for higher education participants in the 2022-23 cycle are countries outside of Europe (Figure 2), with increased outward mobility to the USA, China, and Australia compared to that under Erasmus+. Under the latter, EU member states formed the main destinations for most UK participants.[10]

To be clear, Erasmus+ participants are also able to travel to Third Countries i.e., non-EU European countries associated to the programme, or Third Countries in and beyond Europe not associated to the programme (where partial access to certain activities or parts of the programme is granted).[11] Third Countries not associated to the Erasmus+ programme are divided into 14 Regions based on global geography (e.g., Region 3 covers South Mediterranean countries such as Egypt, Israel, and Lebanon). However, UK HE student numbers on outward placements were significantly lower for Third Countries than for European destinations. Between 2014 and 2020, an estimated average of 160 UK HE students opted for an Erasmus+ placement in a Third Country each year.[12]

Figure 2: Erasmus+ vs Turing Scheme - Comparison of the 10 most popular host countries for UK higher education student participants

Erasmus+ Higher Education Mobility – student numbers		**Turing Scheme** Higher Education Mobility – student numbers	
2018-19	**2019-20**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**
1. Spain (3,907)	1. Spain (3,470)	1. USA (3,911)	1. USA (2,655)
2. France (3,851)	2. France (3,232)	2. China (1,857)	2. Spain (1,844)
3. Germany (2,220)	3. Germany (1,719)	3. Canada (1,766)	3. France (1,682)
4. Italy (1,207)	4. Netherlands (1,124)	4. Australia (1,405)	4. Germany (1,099)
5. Netherlands (1,148)	5. Italy (989)	5. France (1,212)	5. Canada (1,096)
6. Sweden (488)	6. Ireland (420)	6. Spain (1,171)	6. Australia (1,066)
7. Belgium (406)	7. Sweden (369)	7. Japan (1,169)	7. Italy (826)
8. Ireland (396)	8. Denmark (358)	8. Hong Kong (1,102)	8. Japan (780)
9. Denmark (368)	9. Austria (334)	9. India (1,002)	9. China (704)
10. Austria (357)	10. Czech Republic (321)	10. Germany (933)	10. India (657)

Sources: UK National Agency 2021; Turing Scheme 2023. Please note that 2020/21 Erasmus+ figures have not been included. Participation numbers will have been significantly impacted by the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions to international travel.

10 See Figure 1 for UK National Agency statistics on outward UK mobility.

11 In addition to the EU member states which participate fully in Erasmus+, the following Third Countries are also associated to Erasmus+ and can fully take part: Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Türkiye, and the Republic of Serbia. Other Third Countries not associated to the programme but who can take part in certain actions, are listed here: *https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries*

12 House of Commons Library (2022), '*The Turing Scheme*', p.29.

At this stage, the data available for the Turing Scheme does not provide a breakdown of outward student mobility by subject area. However, the changes in destination choice indicate an increased mobility to anglophone countries, which may indicate that language-learning fostered by the Turing Scheme is likely to be lower compared to Erasmus+. Once the three most popular Erasmus+ destinations for UK students, Spain, France and Germany have seen a dramatic 43% decline in average UK HE participant numbers under Turing - as reflected in Figure 2 above.

Although UK HE participation to non-European destinations has increased under the Turing Scheme, it is worth noting that prior to this, student mobility beyond Europe had not been insignificant.[13] For example, whilst mobility to China via Erasmus+ may have yielded much lower numbers than other destinations, other schemes existed to facilitate such placements. The Generation UK programme, launched by the British Council in 2013, provided study, internship, and teaching opportunities in China for young people from the UK. Between 2013 and 2019, more than 67,000 young people participated in the programme, with 12,000 heading to China in 2019 alone.[14]

It would therefore be premature to conclude that, under the Turing Scheme, overall outward global mobility (i.e., beyond the UK, Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe) has increased. The programme may provide students and their respective organisations with a more centralised pot of funding to access global opportunities, but overall outward participation in regions beyond Europe had generally been rising before the programme's launch.[15]

2.3 Access and Support

The Turing Scheme has committed to offering flexible placement lengths and an enhanced support package, with a dedicated aim of increasing participation for students from all backgrounds.[16] Mobility opportunities deliver several benefits for participants, not least in terms of employability prospects, transferable skills and international networking. Providers and mobility scheme operators have therefore sought to deliver an increasingly diverse range of opportunities and access to ensure as many participants can reap these benefits.[17]

Shorter-term placements are particularly attractive to students seeking greater flexibility in international experiences, especially where these can be tailored to their academic and personal needs.[18] For instance, research from Universities UK International found that students from underrepresented backgrounds may prefer bespoke, shorter-term mobilities.[19] Shorter-term placements are less likely to present various constraints (e.g., time, financial, social or cultural) that are more likely to affect disadvantaged students.

As such, the provision of shorter-term placements (lasting four to eight weeks) under the Turing Scheme may encourage higher levels of participation and could in part explain the increase in UK HE student numbers compared to Erasmus+. Indeed, the share of disadvantaged students undertaking HE placements increased from 47.6% in 2021/22 to 52.7% in 2022/23.[20]

13 Universities UK International (2023), '*International Facts and Figures 2022*', [accessed 31 July 2023].
14 British Council, '*Generation UK: study and work in China*', [accessed 31 July 2023].
15 Universities UK International (2023), '*International Facts and Figures 2022*', [accessed 31 July 2023].
16 Turing Scheme, '*Widening Access*', [accessed 31 July 2023].
17 Brooks, R. and Waters, J. (2023) '*An analysis of the UK's Turing Scheme as a response to socio-economic and geo-political challenges*', *Higher Education*.
18 Ibid.
19 Universities UK International (2022), '*Widening Participation in UK Outward Student Mobility*', [accessed 31 July 2023].
20 Turing Scheme (2023), '*Funding Results 2021/22 and Funding Results 2022/23*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

This encouragement to participate is partly financial; under the Turing Scheme, monthly grant rates for short-term placements are higher than for those placements which last more than eight weeks. Students on short-term higher education placements are paid up to £545 per month, while those on longer programmes are paid up to £380 per month.[21]

Whilst these measures are welcome, there are concerns that students from disadvantaged backgrounds receive less funding under Turing than under Erasmus+, even where they may be prioritised as recipients.[22] The average monthly stipend for students from widening participation groups on the Turing Scheme is £490 (for placements from nine weeks to 12 months), whereas the entitlement under Erasmus+ would be £630.[23]

Further, the Turing Scheme offers additional funding support for HE students from disadvantaged backgrounds to assist with direct travel costs and exceptionally expensive travel.[24] However, all HE Erasmus+ participants were entitled to travel expenses. For instance, whilst Turing covers visa fees for students from widening participation backgrounds, the scheme does not yet appear to account for the additional costs and burden of mobility to Europe for students more broadly.

The loss of freedom of movement has presented new challenges for UK students who wish to study or work abroad,[25] including issues relating to visas for UK students wishing to study or take up work placements elsewhere in Europe for longer than three months. For example, a student who may opt to stay in France for a period that exceeds 90 days will need to pay nearly 50€ for a temporary long-stay visa.

Whilst the Turing Scheme presents a clear aim of creating a level playing-field for global mobility opportunities, there is a mixed picture as to how far-reaching its support packages are for students, particularly in comparison to Erasmus+. It is therefore worth noting that the critical advantage of Turing – its shorter-term mobilities – is a newly introduced feature of the 2021-2027 iteration of the Erasmus+ programme. New options including shorter mobilities (from 5 to 30 days,) and blended mobility options which allow participants to combine physical periods of study or work abroad with a virtual element, are designed to increase reach and viability for participants "from all backgrounds, circumstances and study fields".[26]

These changes have been in part informed and shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore were not available to programme participants in earlier cycles of Erasmus+. As such, the Turing Scheme's offer of enhanced travel support and flexibility will benefit from ongoing monitoring to measure its longer-term impact for students (particularly those from underrepresented cohorts) and how this compares with the 2021-2027 Erasmus+ cycle.

21 Cost of living rates also depend on destination countries. Countries are grouped as either Group 1 (high cost of living), 2 (medium cost of living) or 3 (low cost of living). See Turing Scheme (2023), '*Cost of Living Groups*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

22 *https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-turing-scheme-does-it-pass-the-test/*

23 Lewis, J. (2022) *The Turing Scheme*, House of Commons Library, p.17.

24 Capita (2022), *The Turing Scheme Programme Guide 2023-2024*, pp.55-56.

25 The British Academy (2021), *EU Higher Education Staff and Students in the UK*, pp.15-16; Universities UK International (2023) *The management of outward student mobility programmes in the UK*, p.28.

26 European Commission (2017), *Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2014-2020*, p. 40.

3.0 Funding, Fees and Reciprocal Arrangements

3.1 Outward Mobility Funding for Higher Education

The UK government allocated £110million for the 2022/23 cycle of the Turing Scheme. Of this, £106million was spent on projects across all sectors, an increase on £98million in its inaugural year. Funding for the Turing Scheme is guaranteed until 2025 and is to be reviewed on a yearly basis.

This compares with a budget of just over £200million for the UK under the Erasmus+ programme in 2019/20 (the final year of funding allocation to the UK). The overall Erasmus+ financial envelope is reviewed and settled by the EU for a seven-year period and the budget for Erasmus+ activities increased by over 50% for the current 2021-2027 cycle, taking the funding from €14.7billion in the last cycle to €26.2billion.[27]

Whilst overall expenditure on the Turing Scheme has increased from 2021/22 to 2022/23, providers in the HE sector have received less funding. This is because HE providers have experienced a 7% drop in successful applications. When the Turing Scheme launched in 2021/22, HEIs (higher education institutions) across the UK secured a total of £66.94million in grants to fund 139 successful applications. This dropped to £62.11million in 2022/23 with 131 HE applications accepted.[28]

This decrease in funding, along with the fact that the financial settlement for the Turing Scheme is renewed annually, means that HEIs can no longer assure students applying as part of their degree of funding available for international placements. One challenge that has emerged is the question of tuition fees. Turing does not cover tuition fees at host universities for UK students.

This is a notable point of difference with the Erasmus+ programme, which is set out in the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE). The ECHE is a framework which sets the standards and practices to which Charter holders must agree. Charter holders are institutions within EU and Third Countries that are associated to Erasmus+. Third Countries not associated must demonstrate agreement with the Charter's principles through its intra-institutional agreements. Within this, institutions must agree not to charge incoming Erasmus+ students tuition fees.

There is no mandated agreement to waive tuition fees within the Turing Scheme. Instead, it is up to the discretion of participating institutions and their individual arrangements with host institutions, noting that, "In the higher education sector, we expect tuition fees to be waived on a reciprocal basis".[29] This leaves students without a guarantee that their place will be funded at their host university. For those intending to take placements beyond Europe, tuition fees may be significantly higher with limited options for support. Student Finance England loans, for instance, do not separately cover tuition fees for host universities for a placement year abroad. For European arrangements, there are also additional challenges of securing bilateral agreements between institutions post-Erasmus+.[30]

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27 European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2021), *Erasmus+ 2021-2027: enriching lives, opening minds through the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport, Publications Office.*

28 Turing Scheme (2023), '*Funding Results 2021/22 and Funding Results 2022/23*', [accessed 31 July 2023

29 Turing Scheme (2023), '*International Engagement*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

As such, the current design and delivery of Turing may generate increasing bureaucratic burden. Universities across the UK have reported increased administrative pressures, owing to heavy subscription to the Scheme, complexities with the various placement lengths, and meeting widening participation targets.[31] Together with reduced funding to the HE sector than what was available through Erasmus+ and delays in application and award dates, this poses uncertainties for participating HEIs and their students.[32]

3.2 Implications for Inward Mobility

Crucially, the Turing Scheme currently does not fund reciprocal arrangements which means that inward mobilities are not supported. The principle of reciprocity - that is, mutually benefitting international partnerships and exchange opportunities - is a cornerstone of the Erasmus+ programme. Reciprocal arrangements through mobility programmes enable international exchange of participants at partnering institutions, with outward and inward mobility supported through bi or multi-lateral agreements. EU and non-EU European nations associated with Erasmus+ must be holders of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education, and non-associated Third Countries must agree to the Charter's principle.[33]

The Turing Scheme does not provide funding for inward mobility to the UK. Inward participants on the Erasmus+ programme have brought numerous benefits to the UK, including enhancing diversity in the classroom, on campus and in local communities; helping to champion language learning; raising awareness of the benefits of studying abroad;[34] and indirectly incentivising non-UK universities to enter into reciprocal arrangements to host UK students. Similarly, there are soft power benefits of having EU students come to the UK, including critical connections that are built through inward mobility.[35]

Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, 148,000 inward higher education students took part in a study or training placement in the UK via Erasmus+.[36] Data shows that in 2018/19, Erasmus+ students made up 12.4% of all international students in the UK. 66.7% of incoming undergraduate Erasmus+ students opted for SHAPE (Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts for People and the Economy) study, while this was 63% for incoming postgraduate Erasmus+ students.[37]

Following the loss of the Erasmus+ opportunity for UK study, and the introduction of a Student Route points-based immigration system, students from the EU, European Economic Area, and European Free Trade Association face increased costs due to the change in the home fee status and eligibility for tuition fee loans. The new Student Route visa that applies to all international students (EU and non-EU) costs £490 for applications from outside the UK.[38] A short-term study visa (£200) is also available for students embarking on English language courses between six to 11 months. If students are intending to stay longer than six months in the UK, they will also need to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (c.£470).[39]

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31 Ibid.
32 Staton, B. and Forster, P. (2023), '*British university students hit by delays in post-Brexit travel scheme*', Financial Times, 12 February 2023.
33 European Commission (2023), *Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.*
34 The British Academy (2021), *EU Higher Education Staff and Students in the UK*, p.13.
35 Ibid.
36 European Commission (2023), '*UK Factsheet: Erasmus+ 2020 in Numbers*', [accessed 31 July 2023]. Note that the main source for thee factsheet is: European Commission (2021), *Erasmus+ Annual Report 2020*.
37 The British Academy (2021), *EU Higher Education Staff and Students in the UK*, p.5.
38 Irish nationals are not affected by the new visa regulations.
39 GOV.UK (2023), '*Student Visa*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

4.0 Impact on Mobility within Devolved Administrations

Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland benefit from access to the Turing Scheme. However, both the Scottish and Welsh governments have previously expressed disappointment with the decision not to associate to Erasmus+, citing issues relating to i) funding, including the impact on mobilities, and sectors such as adult and vocational education ii) lost opportunities to support strategic partnerships supported by Erasmus+, which contribute to relationship building with partners in Europe.[40]

Wales has since launched and funded its own mobility programme. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland has agreed a deal with the Irish government where students at Northern Irish institutions can continue to participate in the Erasmus+ programme. Scotland has committed to developing a 'Test and Learn' international mobility project for 2023/24 that will feed into a Scottish Education Exchange Programme for 2024/25.[41]

4.1 Wales: Taith Programme

The Welsh government has launched *Taith* as a replacement for Erasmus+ between 2022-2026. The programme enables programmes of study, training, work, and volunteering abroad for participants in Welsh HE, further education and training, youth, school, and adult education sectors. Unlike Turing, Taith is also open to staff applications.[42]

For higher education mobility, applications can be made to Pathway 1 (Mobility of Participants). Under this pathway applications are categorised as either 'higher education' or 'higher education research.' Under Pathway 1, the total indicative budget available to higher education placements for 2022 was £5.6million. This figure applies to funding for outward and inward mobilities. For 2022, Taith predicted the number of outward participants (student and staff) across both higher education categories to total 2,234; meanwhile, 398 is the predicted inward mobilities for 2022.[43] In comparison, between 2014/15 to 2019/20, there were around 4,330 outward Erasmus+ student mobilities from Wales and 690 outward staff mobilities.[44]

Reciprocity is funded by Taith, meaning that eligible organisations in Wales can apply for additional grant funding to host international partner activity. However, the Core Programme States that: "Beneficiaries may not accept inward participants from a partner where there is no intention to send outward students throughout the course of the project".[45]

Further, tuition fee waivers are a core feature of Taith. The 2023 higher education programme guide states that "Applying organisations must have tuition fee waivers in place for outward and inward credit-bearing mobilities", noting that summer schools or activities defined as non-credit bearing are not required to waive tuition.[46]

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40 Scottish Government (2021), '*Erasmus+ exchange programme*', 26 January 2021, [accessed 31 July 2023].

41 Letter from Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Further Education; and Minister for Veterans to the Convenor of the Education, Children and Young People Committee (27 September 2023) '*Update on the Scottish Education Exchange Programme – Test and Learn Project*'

42 For more information, see the *Taith Programme website*, [accessed 31 July 2023].

43 Taith (2022), '*Taith Pathway 1 funding outcomes*', 31 October 2022, [accessed 31 July 2023].

44 For outward higher education student numbers by UK country sending institutions see: UK National Agency statistics (2023), *2014-2023 Higher education mobility statistics*, published on '*Erasmus+ Results and Statistics*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

45 Taith, (2023), *2023 Core Programme Guide*, v1.0, p.13.

46 Taith (2022), '*Taith Pathway 1* ', p.9

4.2 Northern Ireland

As of July 2023, Ireland will be funding a €2million (£1.7 million) agreement that will give access to Erasmus+ for higher education students based in Northern Ireland.[47]

When the UK withdrew from Erasmus+ in 2020, the Irish Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris announced this commitment to enable students registered at Northern Ireland to undertake an Erasmus+ placement by temporarily registering with a HEI in Ireland.[48]

At the time of writing, the details and arrangements behind the deal are currently being finalised.

4.3 Scotland

Scotland has set out proposals to introduce a Scottish Education Exchange Programme for both student and staff mobility to "re-establish some of the opportunities Erasmus+ provided".[49] These proposals sit within the Scottish government's broader Programme for Government.[50]

In September 2023, Graeme Dey MSP, the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education (and also the Minister for Veterans), detailed plans to launch an initial small-scale 'Test and Learn Project' for 2023/24, which will feed into the development of the Education Exchange Programme for 2024/25.[51]

The Scottish government has at present committed up to £1million to the Test and Learn phase. As of October 2023, universities and colleges in Scotland can bid to undertake international projects by 31 March 2024. Bids can be made for one short-term grant for a minimum of £1,000 up to a maximum of £25,000, as well as an additional £10,000 for projects "which contain cross sectoral educational partnerships e.g., with schools, youth work, adult learning and sports organisations".[52]

47 BBC (2023), '*Brexit: Irish government gives NI students €2m mobility funding*', *BBC News*, 27 July 2023.

48 Houses of the Oireachtas, (2022), '*Written answer from the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (Irish Parliament). Tuesday 14 June 2022*', [accessed 31 July 2023].

49 Letter from Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Further Education; and Minister for Veterans to the Convenor of the Education, Children and Young People Committee (27 September 2023) '*Update on the Scottish Education Exchange Programme – Test and Learn Project*'

50 Scottish National Party (September 2023), '*Programme for Government: What it means for families and young people*' [accessed: 20 September 2023]

51 Letter from Scottish Minister for Higher Education and Further Education; and Minister for Veterans to the Convenor of the Education, Children and Young People Committee (27 September 2023) '*Update on the Scottish Education Exchange Programme – Test and Learn Project*'

52 Ibid.

5.0 Conclusion

This briefing has considered some of the current implications presented by the Turing Scheme for international higher education mobility. This has included analysis into HE student trends and destination choices, no funding for HE staff placements nor for reciprocal arrangements for overseas students or staff. The briefing has also presented the differences in funding and access packages compared to Erasmus+ and considered whether students from disadvantaged cohorts are in receipt of more robust support packages.

Although definitive long-term evaluation would be premature, there are nonetheless ongoing questions for outward and inward mobility opportunities. Additionally, the scope and design of Turing placements do not invite a like-for-like comparison with Erasmus+; however, some of the most invaluable features of Erasmus+ – such as fee waivers at destination universities, international reciprocity, and staff mobility – are not covered by the Turing Scheme.

Whilst mobility to countries beyond Europe is on the increase under Turing, it is unclear whether this is because outward mobility to these destinations has been rising overall in recent years. This invites further future analysis of the scheme to retain the UK's attractiveness and soft power within the international higher education sector and beyond.

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