

International Mobility of Tertiary-Level Students in Qatar

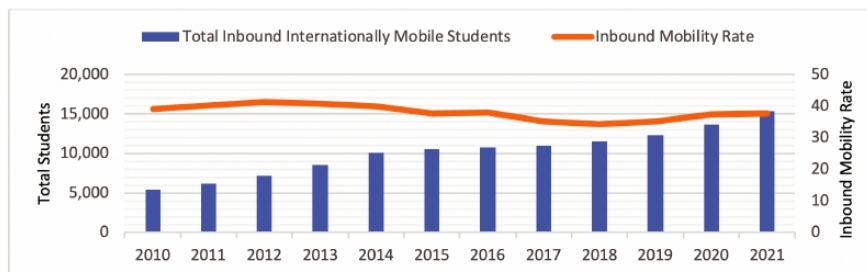
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Countries within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have witnessed a notable surge in international student enrollments in recent years. Among other GCC states, Qatar has emerged as an attractive destination for international students looking to study abroad, due in large part to its growing appeal and competitiveness in the global education landscape. This trend is underscored by the substantial growth observed in international student enrollments in tertiary education institutions (Figure 1).

According to the UNESCO-UIS definition, internationally mobile students are those individuals who “have crossed an international border, moving from one country to another, with the purpose of engaging in educational pursuits in their destination country. This destination country is different from their country of origin.” It is important to emphasize that it is unclear whether UNESCO data also include foreign students in Qatar, who are dependents of migrants or second-generation migrants.

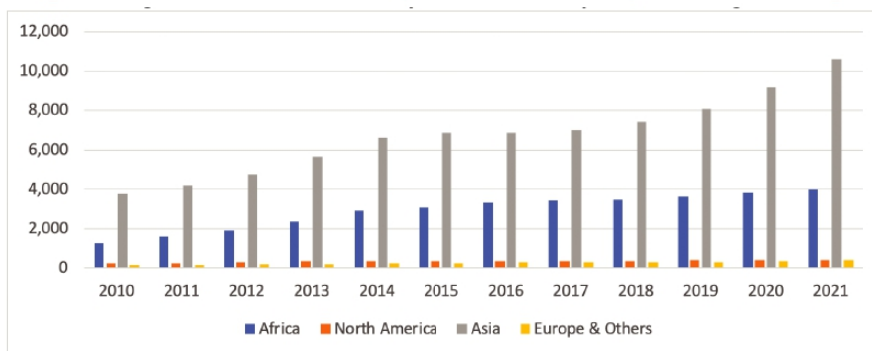
Figure 1. Indicators of international mobility in Qatar (2010-2021)



Source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics (UIS). Retrieved on July 15, 2023, from <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>

Although the total number of international students has tripled between 2010 and 2021, the inbound mobility rate, which represents the number of students from abroad enrolled in Qatar expressed as a percentage of total tertiary enrollment in the country, has remained constant. This steadiness can be attributed to a rise in the tertiary enrollment of local students.

Figure 2. Inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin



Source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics. Retrieved on July 15, 2023, from <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>

The demography of international students in Qatar is quite diverse (Figure 2), however, it is noteworthy that more than 60% of the total international student body originates from Asia, predominantly from Middle Eastern Arab countries (Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, other GCC states), as well as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Philippines. This trend can be partly attributed to the geographic proximity and cultural similarities between the Gulf region and some Asian Arab countries. Additionally, the second-largest group of international students in Qatar comes from African countries, principally Egypt and Sudan.