Since 2000, the number of internationally mobile students has more than doubled to 5 million worldwide—representing 26% of enrollment in doctoral programs. Here we look at the number of science & engineering (S&E) doctorates awarded around the world and the role of international mobility in the largest two countries—the United States and China.

In 2018, there were 0.5 million international college students in China, 25,618 working on their doctorates.

China is by far the biggest exporter of students, with >600,000 studying abroad in 2017, 35% in graduate programs.

Top 10 countries of origin of international students enrolled at U.S. universities in 2017/18

1. China
2. India
3. South Korea
4. Saudi Arabia
5. Canada
6. Vietnam
7. Taiwan
8. Japan
9. Mexico
10. Brazil

In 2017/18, there were 1 million international college students in the U.S., 123,500 working on their doctorates.

Top 10 countries of origin of international students enrolled at Chinese universities in 2018

1. South Korea
2. Thailand
3. Pakistan
4. India
5. United States
6. Russia
7. Indonesia
8. Laos
9. Japan
10. Kazakhstan

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China is increasingly a destination for international higher education—with 60% coming from other Asian countries.

In 2017, 62% of international students in grad programs at U.S. institutions were enrolled in S&E fields.

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