



Most “International” University in Hong Kong Based on Origins of Students

COMP2501 Project

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Background

THE International Ranking metrics:

- (25%) portion of international students
- (25%) portion of international staff
- (25%) portion of international co-authorship
- (25%) portion of international reputation



Most international rank 2025	Most international rank 2024	University	Country/territory
1	1	City University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
2	9	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology	Hong Kong
3	10	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong
4	6	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong
5	2	Abu Dhabi University	United Arab Emirates
6	3	University of Oxford	United Kingdom
7	5	Imperial College London	United Kingdom
8	4	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
9	7	ETH Zurich	Switzerland
10	8	École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne	Switzerland

Statistics from University of Oxford

Students by nationality

International students make up 43% of Oxford students.

60% of all graduate students are from outside the UK, as are 21% of all undergraduates.

	UK	EU	Non-EU	Unknown	Total
Undergraduates	9,495	780	2,105	0	12,375
Graduates	4,510	2,585	6,545	5	13,650
Visiting, recognised and other students	20	110	440	-	570
Total	14,025	3,475	9,090	5	26,595



Goal



Based on the origin of students (local, mainland Chinese, foreigners),
evaluate which university in Hong Kong is the most International



Importance of the topic



Learning environment

- Diversity of viewpoints
- Broadening understandings of the world
- Broader network
- Cultural competence

Global recognition

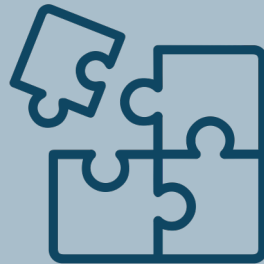
Curiosity

Difficulty



Limited datasets

- Some statistics is not publicly available (eg. Staff statistics, number of co-authorships)



Data preprocessing

- Redundant columns
- Missing values











Data reliability

- If the data is complete and accurate

Dataset

Data Resource Details

 Dataset	Student Enrolment of UGC-funded Programmes by University, Level of Study, Place of Origin and Mode of Study	
 Data Providers	University Grants Committee Secretariat	
 Data Category	Education	
 Format	API	
 API	Available	
 Last updated on	2025-03-07	
 Update Frequency	Every year	

URL https://portal.csd.gov.hk/geoportal/?datasetId=ugc_rcd_1697186814214_75295&lang=en



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QS World University Rankings 2017 - 2022

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Method



Platform

- R Studio



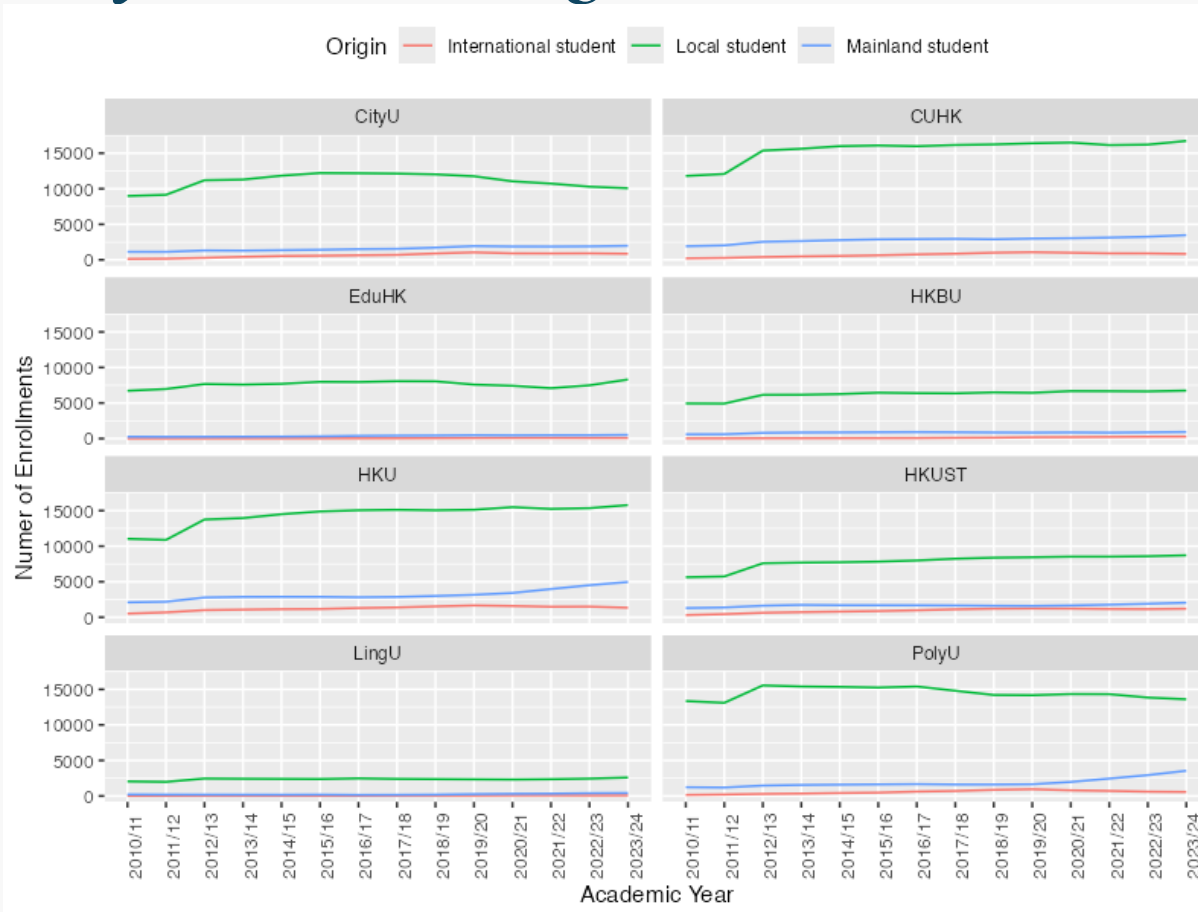
Library

- ggplot2
- dplyr
- tidyr

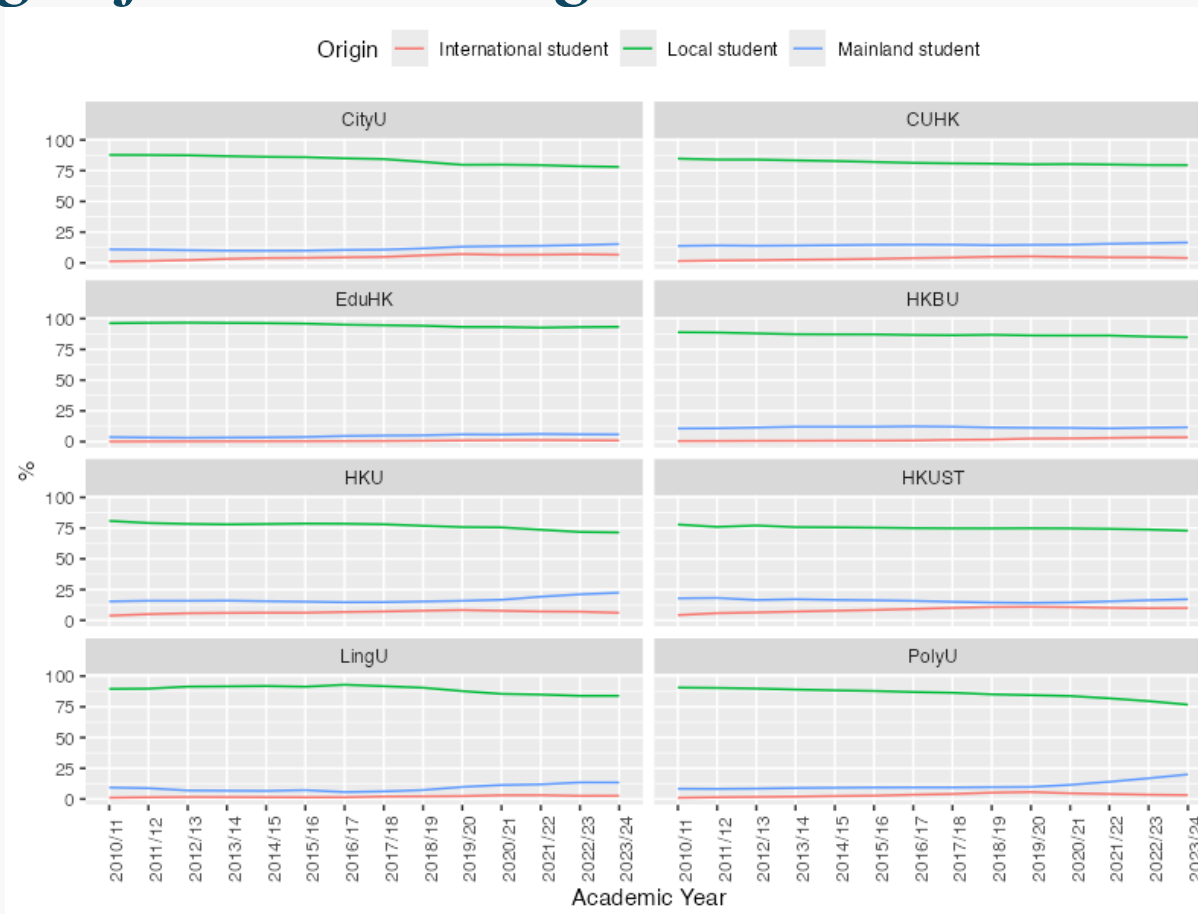


Findings

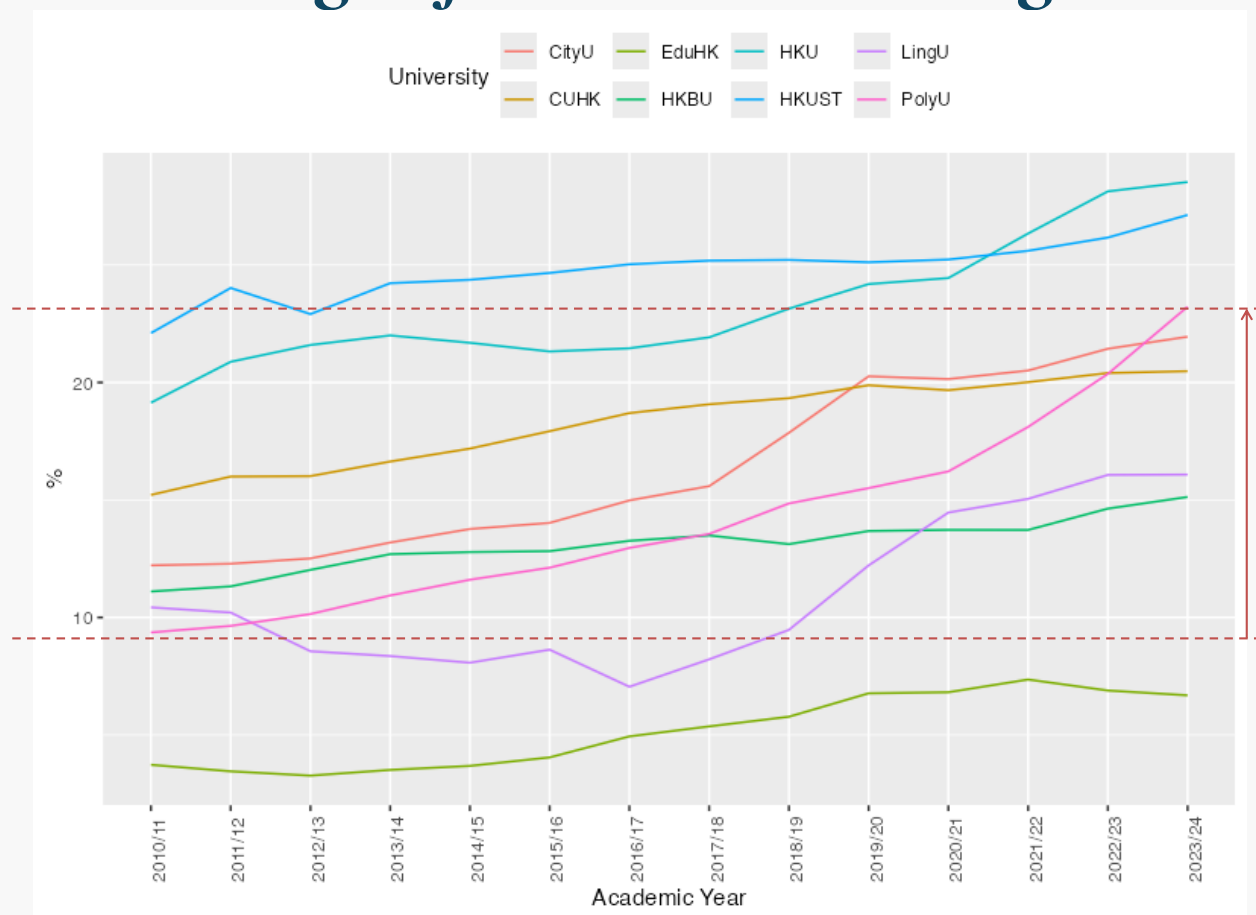
Enrolment by Student Origin



Percentage of Student Origin

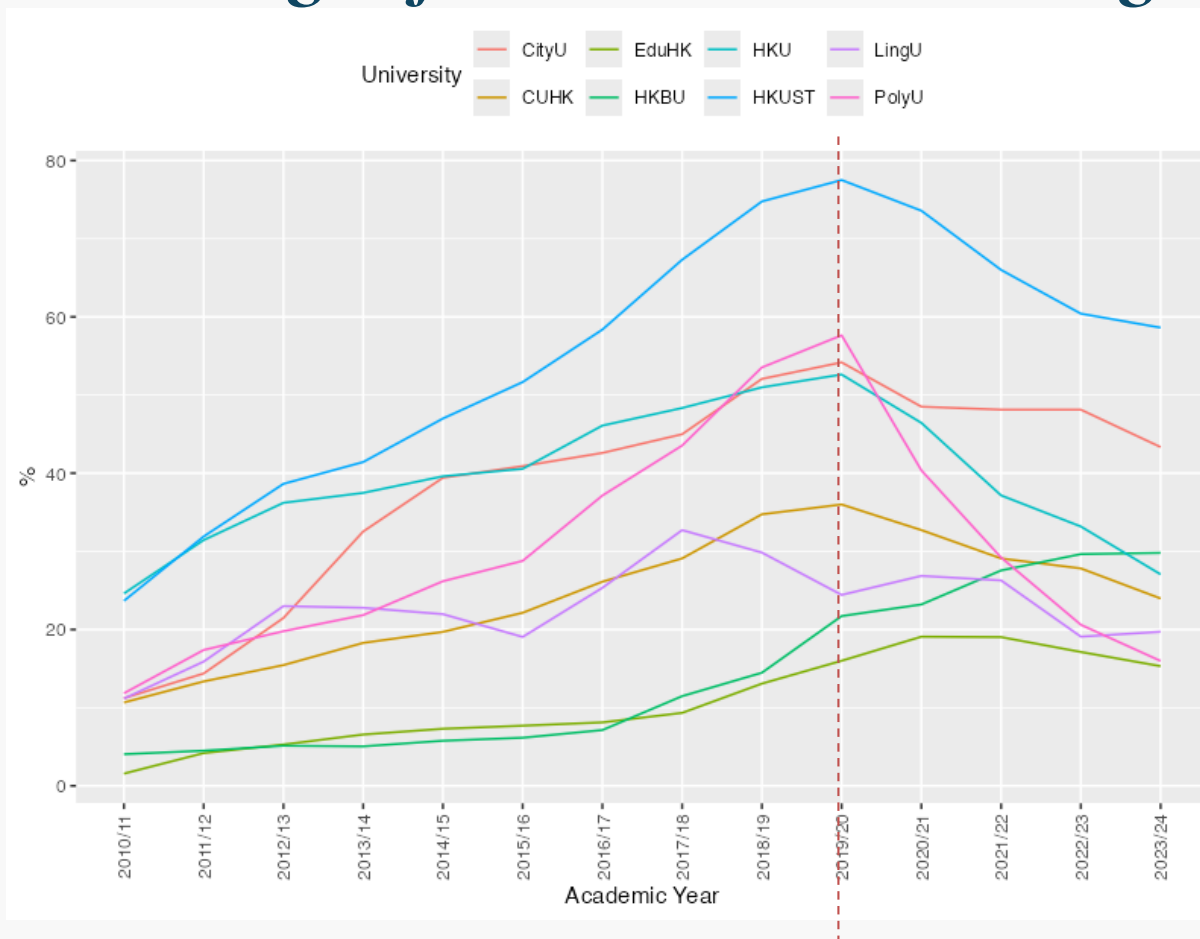


Percentage of non-locals among all students



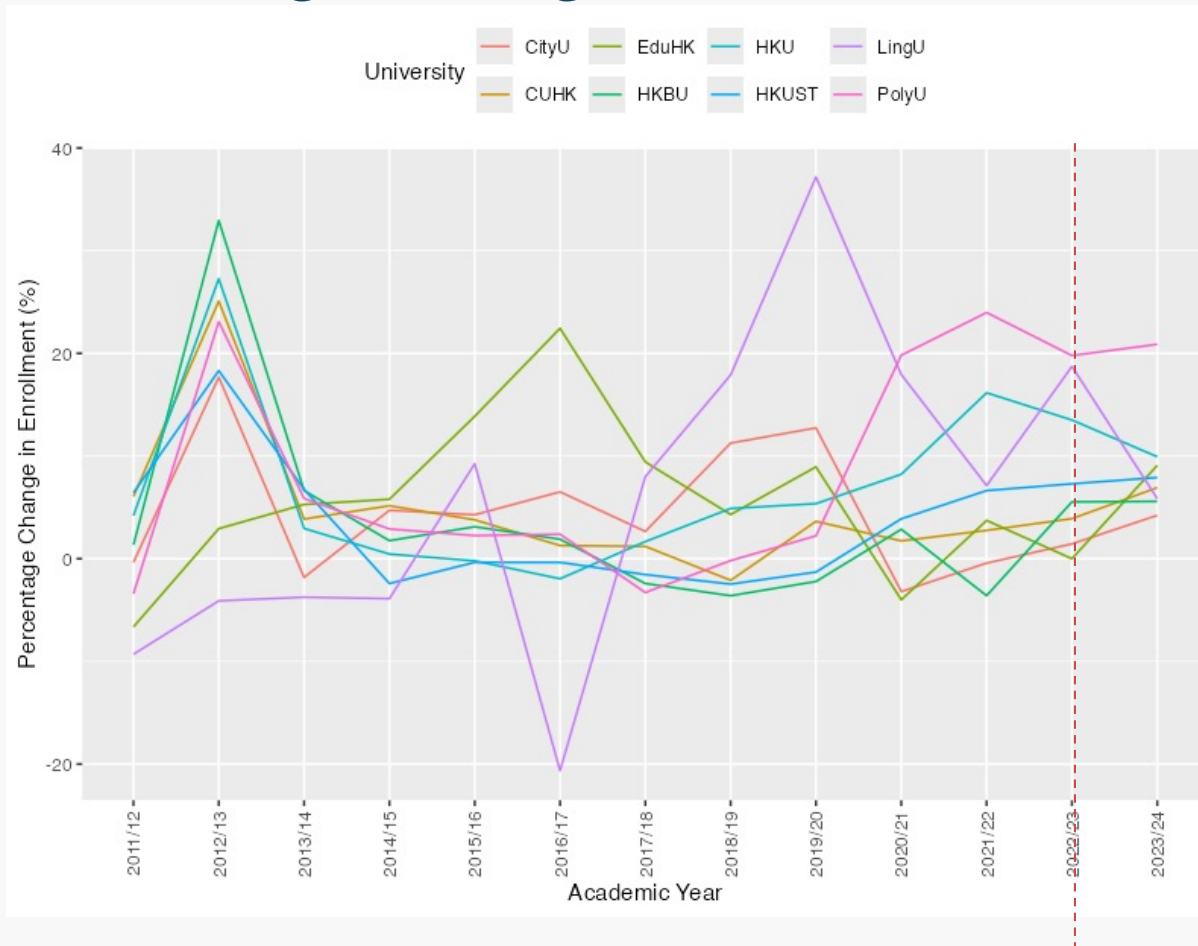
- All universities have a trend of increasing
- >20%: HKU > HKUST > PolyU > CityU > CUHK
- PolyU has the highest percentage difference

Percentage of internationals among all non-locals



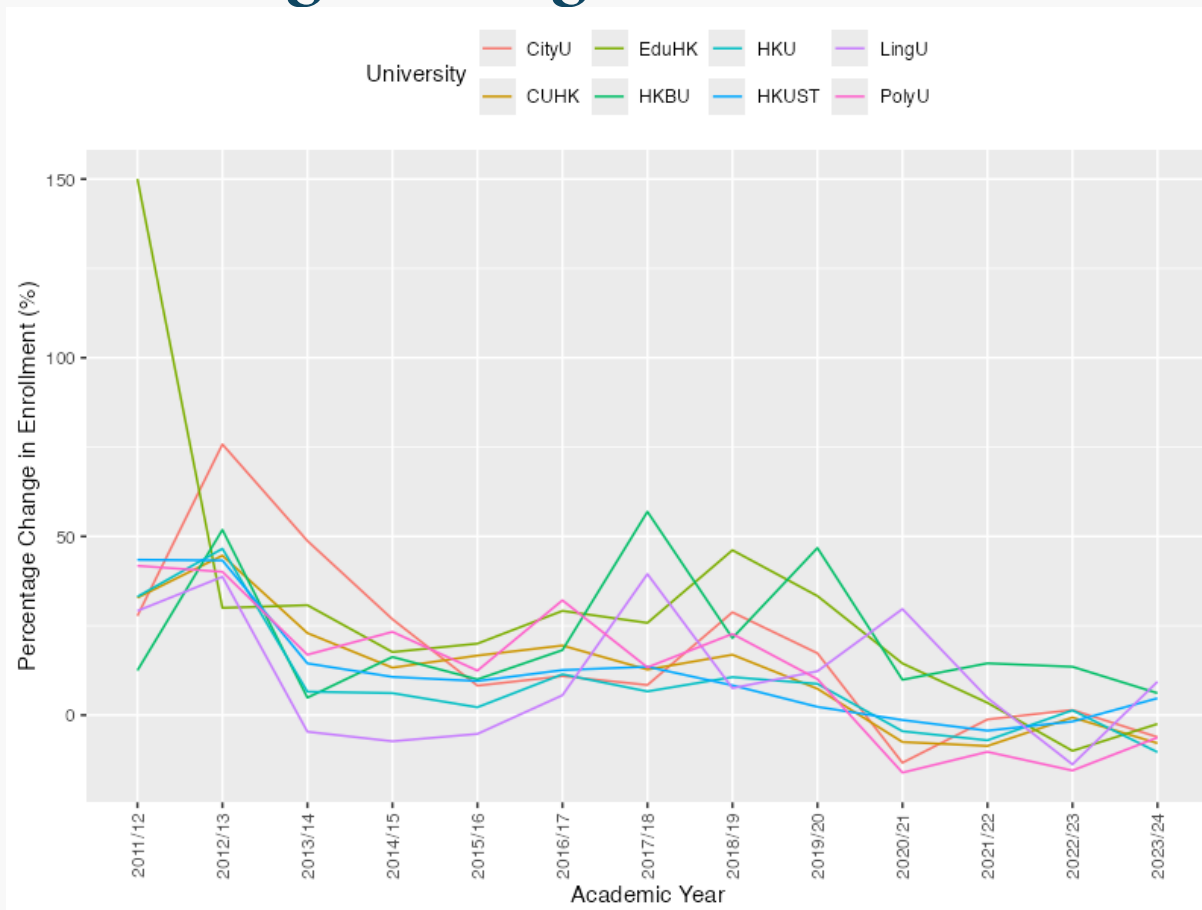
- Have a trend of increasing (2010-2019) then falling (2020-2023) of internationals, except HKBU
- HKUST > CityU > HKBU
- In other words, in 2023/24, only HKUST has more international students than mainland students

Percentage Change in Mainland Student Enrollment



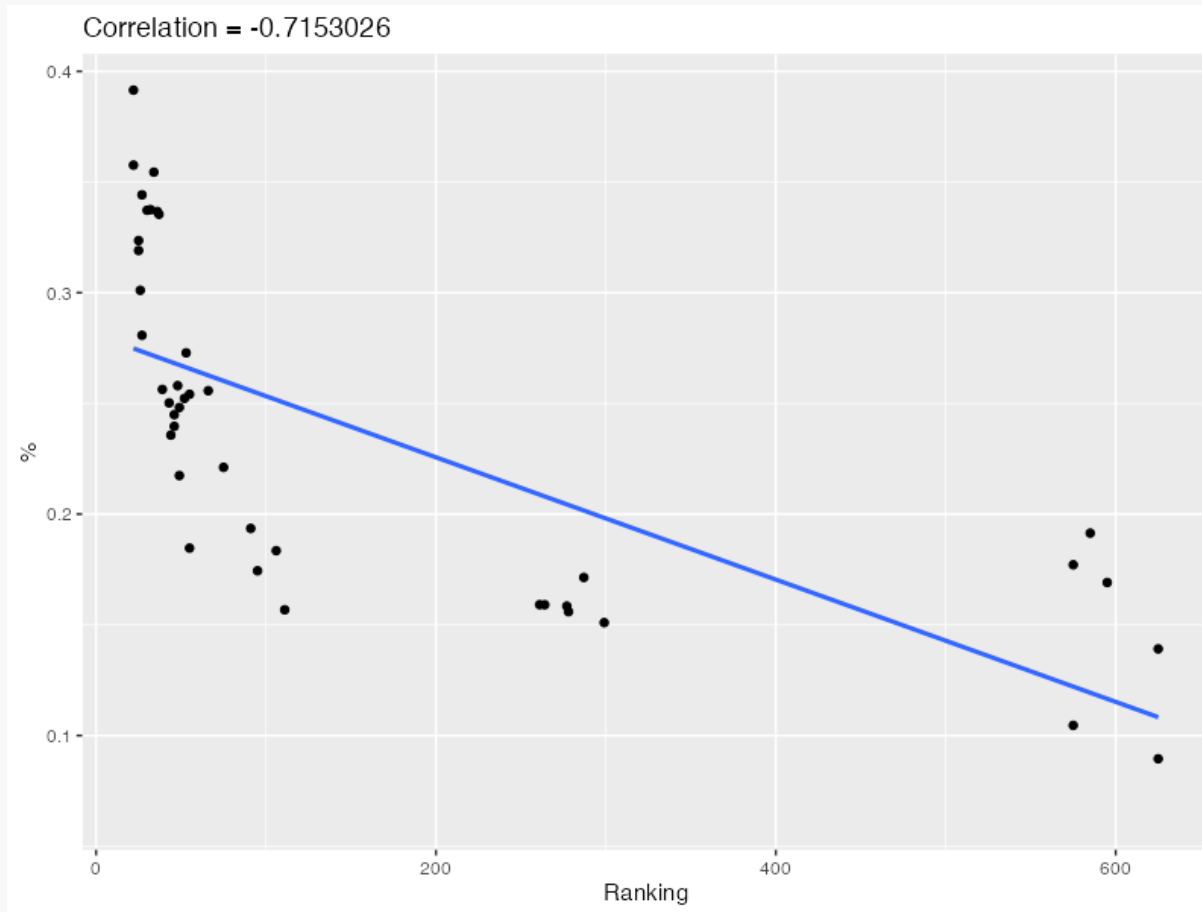
- Generally, the rate of increase is larger than decreasing
- Spiked in 2012/13
- Highest: PolyU
- Most Unstable: LingU

Percentage Change in International Student Enrollment



- Since 2020/21, percentage change tends to become negative
- In 2023/24, only LingU, HKBU and HKUST has a positive percentage change

Regression in Percentage of Non-locals and School Rank



Highlights



- Locals > Mainland Chinese > Internationals
- Exponential growth in the number of Mainland students
- Growth in the number of internationals tends to be lower
- Correlation between percentage of non-locals and school rank



Reasoning

Which university in HK is the most International, based on origins of students?

Up till 2024

If only count the portion of non-locals:

HKU > HKUST > PolyU > CityU > ...

If excluding mainland students:

HKUST > CityU > HKBU > HKU > ...

In the future

(2025~)

If only count the portion of non-locals:

PolyU > HKU = HKUST > CityU > ...

If excluding mainland students:

HKUST > CityU > HKBU > CUHK > ...

Why Hong Kong Universities has more Mainland Students than internationals?

Convenience

- Hong Kong is right next to China
- Similar culture, environment and language

Tendency of cultural difference

- Hong Kong is claimed to be an international city

High-ranking universities

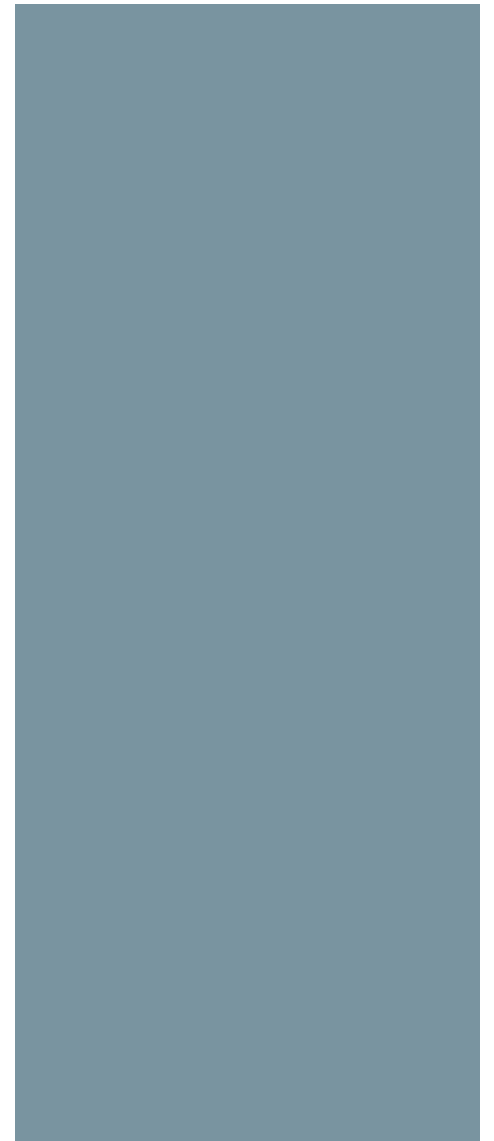
- Better impression to employers

Policies for non-locals (subsidy)



Conclusion

- Analysis regarding the portion of non-locals in universities in Hong Kong
- Point of views regarding the situation of higher portion of mainland students
- Though, there are still other parameters to measure if the university is the most 'international'



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Thank you



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Reference

<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/padhmam/qs-world-university-rankings-2017-2022>

<https://data.gov.hk/en-data/dataset/hk-ugc-ugc-student-statistics>

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/student-numbers>

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/international-ranking-2025-hong-kong-extends-its-lead>

