

Digital Transformation and International Higher Education

Education Conference 2023

University of Nicosia

Mark Crossey Assistant Director, UUKi

About UUKi

Universities UK is the **collective voice of 140 universities across the UK**. Our mission is to help UK universities be the best in the world, through their research and teaching, and the positive impact they have locally, nationally and globally.

As UUKi, we're the collective voice of UK universities on the international stage. In the UK and abroad, we **connect higher education leaders, share insights, influence policy** and **create opportunities**.

Our goal is to help UK universities flourish internationally through our unique ability to represent them and act in their collective interests.

To achieve our aims, we:

- **Enable** UK universities to develop and realise their international ambitions.
- **Influence** the framework conditions that enable UK universities to thrive internationally.
- **Create** new opportunities that deliver clear benefits to our members.

International Higher Education: an overview of current trends and issues (UK)

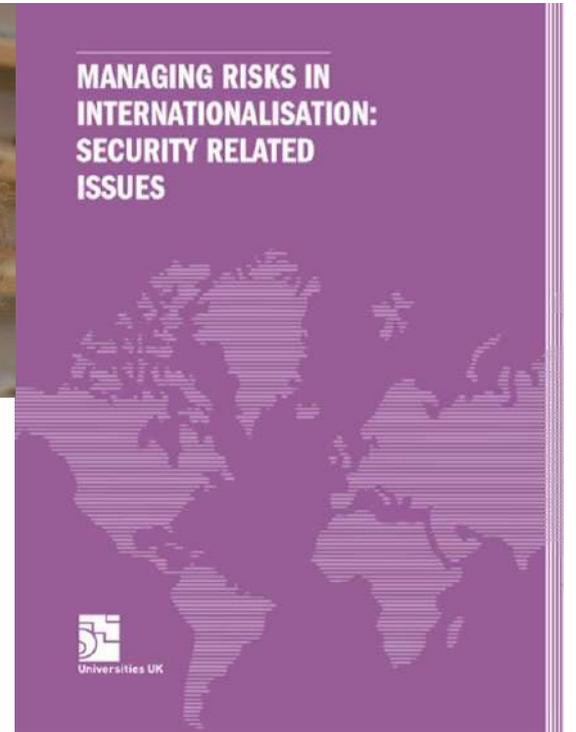


WELCOME TO THE TURING SCHEME

The UK's global programme for studying, working and living abroad, offering once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for personal and professional



MANAGING RISKS IN INTERNATIONALISATION: SECURITY RELATED ISSUES

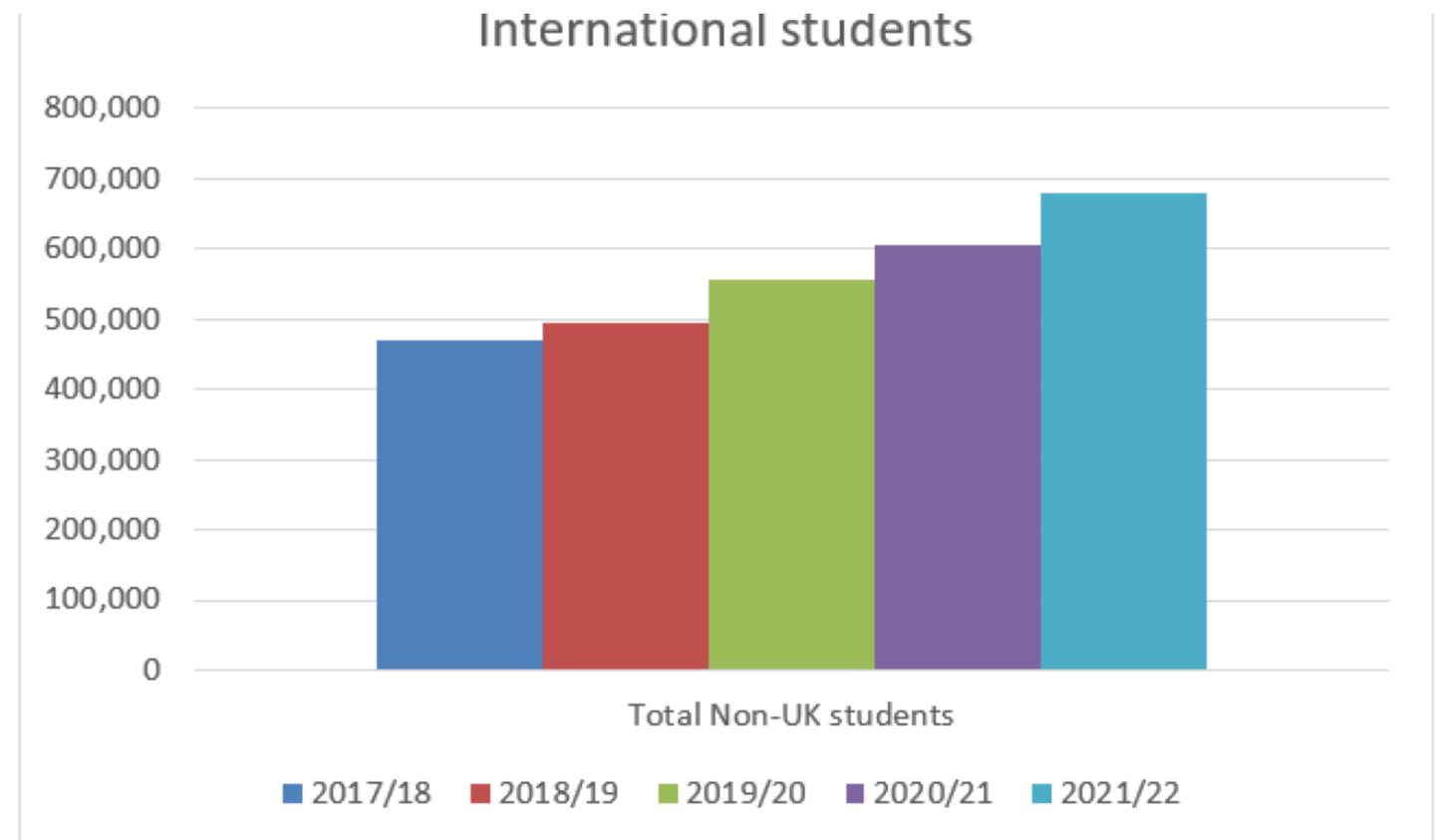
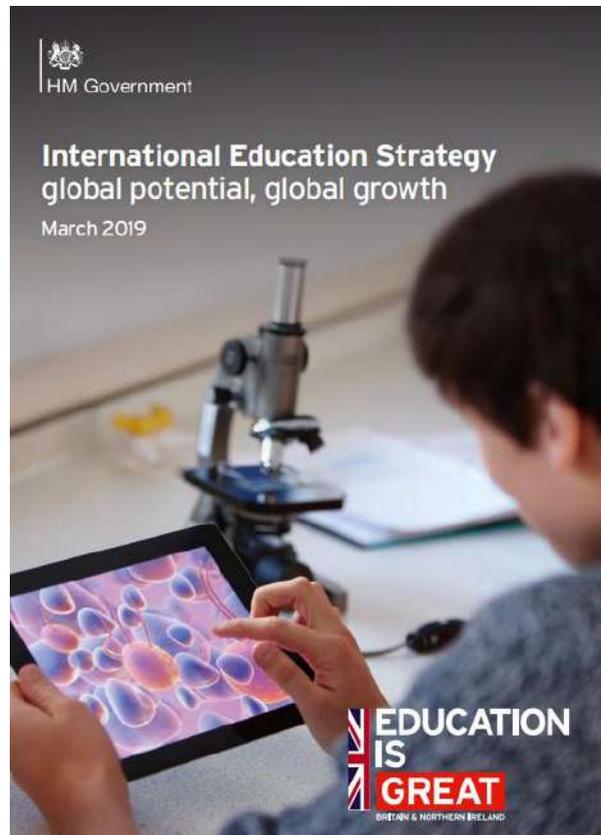


International students

International students boosted UK economy by £42bn in 2021/2 - study

Report finds economic benefit to UK rose by a third in three years, making overseas students a significant contributor to economy

The UK's international students: a success story



...but increasingly contested



The Department for Education is concerned that Suella Braverman's policy will harm UK universities
JESSICA TAYLOR/REUTERS

POLITICS

Clash over Suella Braverman's plan to cut time students remain in UK

Matt Dathan, Home Affairs Editor
Wednesday January 25 2023, 7.20am, The Times

Suella Braverman's proposal to reduce the time foreign students can stay in the UK after finishing their course is being "strongly opposed" by the Department for Education, The Times can reveal.



Suella Braverman, the home secretary, plans to reduce the number of foreign students coming to the UK
JESSICA TAYLOR/REUTERS

POLITICS

'Bonkers' to call students migrants, says former education secretary Kit Malthouse

Matt Dathan, Home Affairs Editor
Tuesday January 17 2023, 12.01am, The Times

Counting foreign students as migrants is "bonkers" and they should be cut from official figures, Kit Malthouse, a former education secretary and Home Office minister, has said.



RED BOX | JAMIE ARROWSMITH

Braverman's comments on international students are deeply divisive

Jamie Arrowsmith
Wednesday October 12 2022, 12.01am, The Times

Back in January Nadhim Zahawi, then education secretary, was in celebratory mood. The UK had, he announced, "smashed" the government's target to attract more international students to the country each year. "Our education sector is the envy of the world" he enthused. International education exports were exalted as a "powerhouse" and a "huge asset" to the economy.

Outward student mobility



- Open to schools, Further Education, and Higher Education
- Global in scope, over 150 destinations
- Annual cycle of applications, funding allocations, and mobilities
- Mobilities from 4 weeks to 12 months (48% from disadvantaged backgrounds, 21/22)



Taith is Wales' new international learning exchange programme, creating life-changing opportunities to travel, volunteer, learn and experience.

UK Transnational Education (TNE)

In 2020-21,

510,835 TNE students were reported by

162 UK providers across

228 countries and territories.

UUKI INSIGHTS

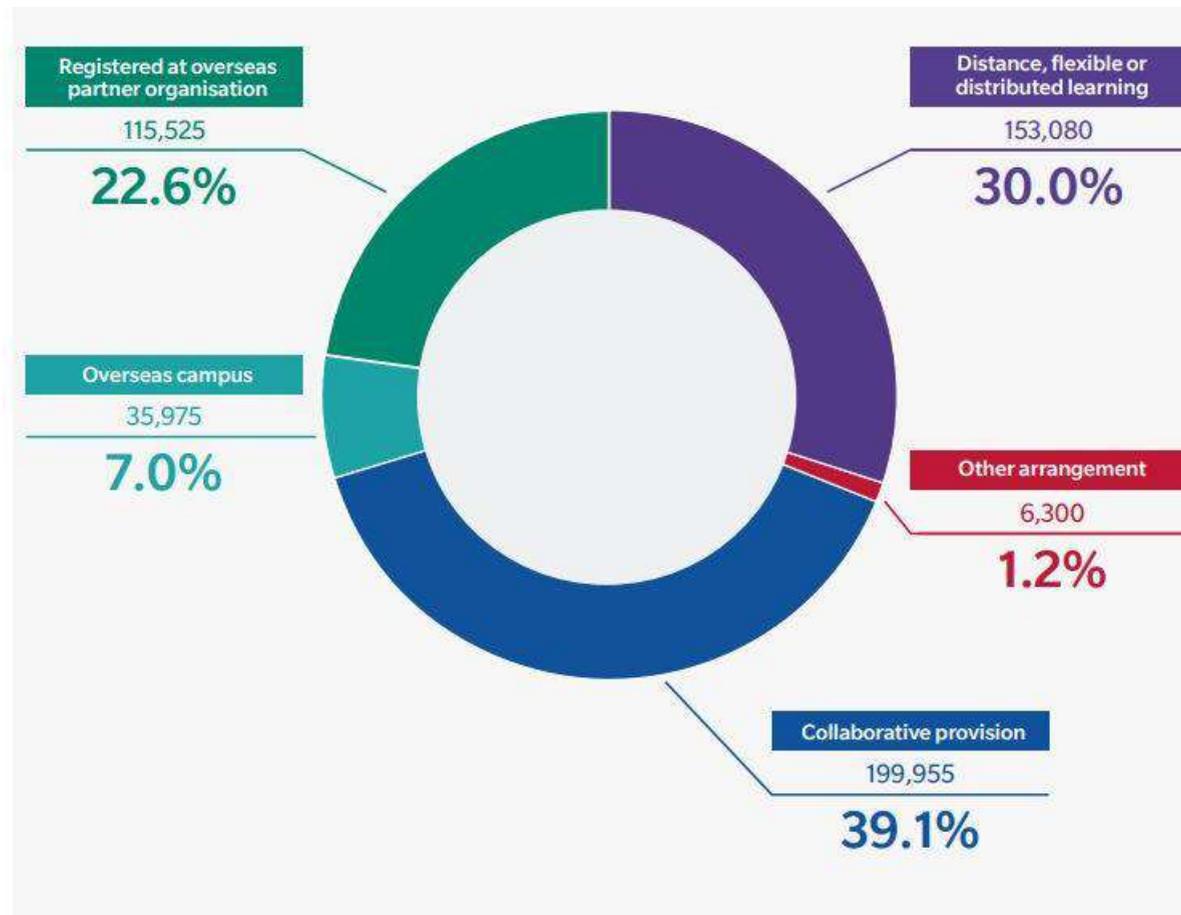
The scale of UK transnational education

Last updated on Tuesday 20 Dec 2022 at 10:27pm



Types of UK TNE provision

Proportion of UK HE TNE students by type of provision, 2020-21 (all providers)



Demand for all forms of UK TNE is increasing, despite the pandemic.

The benefits of TNE

- Addresses **local labour market needs** by enhancing skills development, improving English language skills, attracting and retaining businesses
- Supports **knowledge transfer** in quality assurance, programme development and delivery
- Strengthens **research capacity**
- Supports **staff development** in teaching skills, curriculum design, evaluation and assessment, programme management, personal skills and networks
- Offers a broader **range of courses with high employability** for students
- Attracts a **wider range of students**, including from other countries
- Enhances **international networks**, provide mobility opportunities in teaching and research
- Supports both **academic freedom** and **diversity of access**

International research collaboration

Highlights in 2020-21



60.4%

of all UK publications were the result of international research collaboration



1st

The UK's field-weighted citation impact has ranked first in the G7 every year since 2007



3rd-largest

The UK retained its spot as the third-largest research output producer globally

- The UK produced 6.4% of the world's publications
- 9.3% of the UK's publications were in the top five percent of the world's most-cited publications
- The UK produced 10.4% of the world's citations

All the above are *highly internationalised*

Keeping UK research strong

- Demonstrating relevance to national strategies (eg National Science and Innovation Strategy) and national wellbeing and prosperity, case studies
- The Trusted Research agenda
- Bridging the current gap: *Horizon association, Pioneer for SRTI*



Internationalised HE in the UK: important and volatile

- **Competition** – Anglophone and new players (Central, Eastern Europe)
- The **International Education Strategy**, where next?
- **Perceptions** (esp following Brexit) and **real hurdles** (Horizon, fees etc)
- Increasing **reticence** to foster research & TNE collaborations with ‘sensitive jurisdictions’
- Heavy **reliance** on international HE in parts of the sector, cross subsidisation

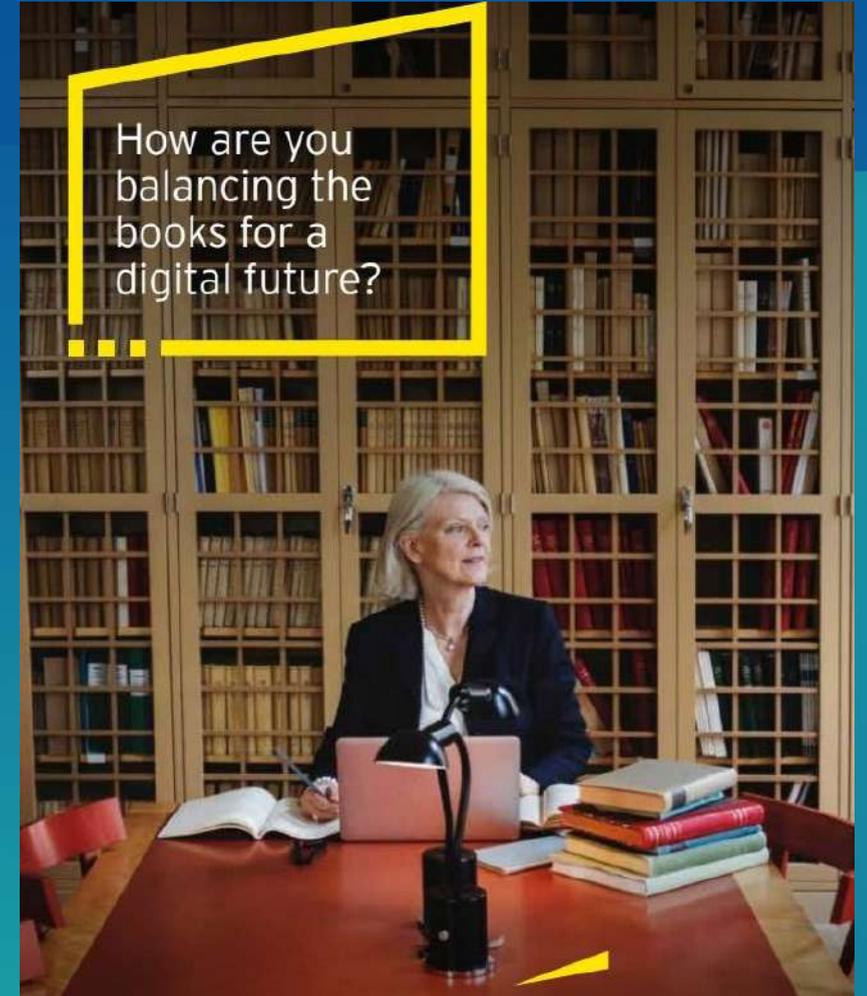


Digital transformation and International Higher Education?

Strategy and investment

The competition for students and more market-like higher education systems increase the investment required just to stand still in terms of student experience and rankings performance.

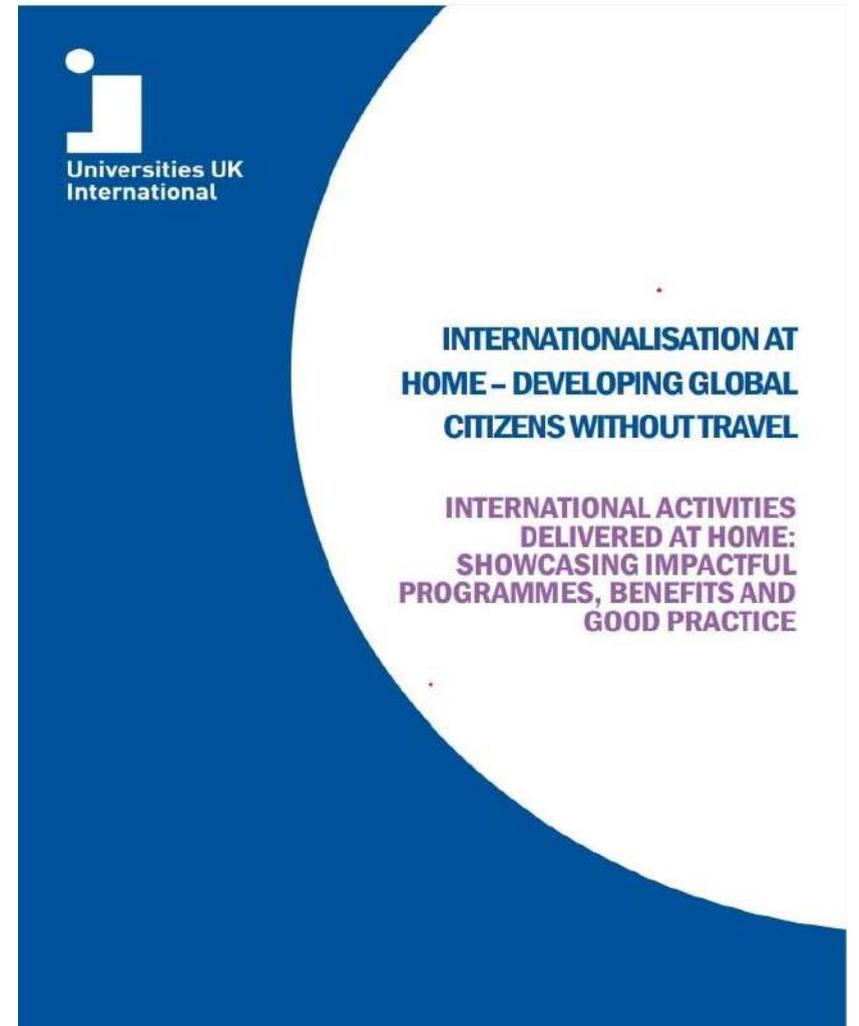
‘How are you balancing the books for a digital future?’ EY/THE 2023



Digital Transformation in practice: Internationalisation at Home

‘The purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments’, with activities that aim ‘to develop international and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes for all students.’

Beelen, Jos, and Jones, Elspeth: *Redefining Internationalization at Home* (2015)



Internationalisation at Home: some UK examples

University of Leeds, UK Virtual International Programme 2020 (VIP2020)

Type of activity: a virtual study tour Established in 2020 20 countries represented by contributing speakers 743 participating students Week-long programme Certificates of completion available

Middlesex University, UK Biomedical Science International Week

With biomedical science universities from Austria, Belgium, Denmark and The Netherlands. Aim to facilitate short-term student mobility between partner institutions to improve the students' teamwork as well as language and cross-cultural communication skills.

Nottingham Trent University, UK Perspectives on Business Sustainability in India and the UK

Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project: Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and Jindal Global University (JGU), India: business sustainability in India and the UK. Aims: Develop academic knowledge and a critical understanding of sustainability and international business, • Facilitate students and academic mentors in acquiring deep insights into intercultural competences, developing global citizens without travel • Prepare students for interacting professionally with industry practitioners in a multi-cultural context.

Internationalisation at Home: wins

Inclusivity

'The virtual nature of the project reduced the carbon footprint and also meant more widening of participation.' Associate Director NTU Global, Nottingham Trent University

Sustainability

'The virtual field course demonstrates the potential of digital technology and AI in achieving academically excellent Internationalisation at Home, with benefits for sustainability, student wellbeing and inclusion, as the barriers to traditional international mobility are removed.' Senior Lecturer, Imperial College

Integration and mutual understanding

By celebrating the diversity of the university community, all who are part of it feel welcomed, supported and included. This is particularly true in relation to integration of international students and also helps to establish a close rapport with the local community.

Internationalisation at Home: wins

Enhanced learning opportunities

'The course 'contributed to knowledge exchange activities between staff and students of both institutions, who benefitted from a different methodological and pedagogical teaching approach to the development of intercultural awareness and skills, and extending our institutional expertise in designing programmes in new and flexible models of online learning.' Head of International Partnerships, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London

Skills

'By utilising technology and international partnerships, we were able to bring the world to our students through a rich and engaging online programme of lectures, talks, and activities.' Faculty International Manager, Leeds University Business School

Collaboration

'Participating students had outperformed the average cohort by 10% on graduation.'
International Opportunities Coordinator, University of Bradford

Research and digital transformation

The stakes...

“There’s a lot of opportunity for digital.....And this needs to be rolled into the way we work in laboratories as well. So virtual presence, augmented reality, to some extent virtual reality for training or these sorts of things need to be built in. Make it easy for equipment to stream out the stuff it’s doing. I could be talking to you while you’re operating the equipment and looking at stuff and we can be seeing stuff that’s got to be made seamless, which largely is around standards and getting standards for all of this working.”

Jisc. Optimising the UK’s university infrastructure assets
2023



Considerations

Internationalisation of HE is at an important juncture, both growing and volatile: how will digital transformation determine its future?

- Digital transformation will significantly impact on international education and so, by implication, upon the academic and economic ecosystems of ‘internationalised’ HE systems: student expectations; widened access – *it must be strategised*
- Can distance learning/Internationalisation at Home/COIL ever be a substitute for **the international experience**?
- Is an ‘overreliance’ on current international education formats actually **hampering** digital transformation of the sector?
- Some forms of TNE still need visceral, **F2F connections** to embed (eg branch campuses)
- The role of international is increasingly challenged in public, media and political narratives; to what degree is digital transformation a solution to some of these concerns?

Thank you

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