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HSBC research on overseas education: International students crave the sounds of home

- **Despite the initial challenges of moving overseas, students overwhelmingly agree that studying abroad has a positive, lasting impact (99 per cent)**
- **Even with virtual family dinners and message app hangouts with friends, 74 per cent of international students say it's the sounds of home they miss the most**

The HSBC survey titled "Sounds of Home" shows that the majority of international students are using technology like video calls, Instagram, WeChat and WhatsApp (97 per cent) to connect with friends and family – but this doesn't stop them missing home.

While moving overseas is an exciting adventure for students which they say has a positive, lasting impact (99 per cent), it can take some adjusting to. Two in five (43 per cent) international students feel homesick at least once a week or more, nearly half (49 per cent) believe missing family and friends has impacted their academic performance, and for two in five (40 per cent), being away from home has affected their ability to get a good night's sleep. Homesickness is particularly prominent late at night, specifically between the hours of 10pm to 12am.

Despite facing a range of challenges, including setting up a bank account in their country of study (35 per cent) and setting aside enough money to be able to travel home (40 per cent), independence and new experiences are most commonly seen as benefits of studying abroad (60 per cent). 84 per cent of international students believe they have not only gained new skills but have also become stronger people.

Stelios Pirpinias, Head of Retail Banking & Wealth Management and Marketing, HSBC Greece commented: *"Despite the emotional and practical difficulties of adjusting to a new country, the overwhelming majority of students agree that studying abroad is a very positive life experience. At HSBC, thanks to our international presence we have the tools and the expertise to support students in the demanding process of creating funding plan to finance their studies and in solving some practical difficulties. In this context, we recently relaunched the innovative U Start! programme which is a comprehensive series of banking services and solutions for those who study in the UK."*

92 per cent of international students say that they miss the familiarities of home while studying overseas, with almost six in 10 (57 per cent) saying it's the sensory experience

they miss most, and three quarters (74 per cent) specifically missing the sounds of their hometown. International students identified the sound of people talking in their native language (50 per cent), the hustle and bustle of local markets (26 per cent), the rumble of public transport (25 per cent), and birds, insects or native animals (20 per cent) are among the sounds that international students say they are most likely to miss.

To help international students feel connected to home, HSBC has released *Sounds of Home*, soundscapes for students from India, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, crowd-sourced and created by international influencers. To see more about the soundscapes please click [here](#).

For more information about HSBC's International Services visit:

<https://internationalservices.hsbc.com/index/overseas-education/>

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Note to editors:

The research

The Sounds of Home is an independent consumer research study into the experience of international students commissioned by HSBC. It provides authoritative insights into the emotional toll of moving to a new country as a student and explores perceptions of homesickness and living in an unfamiliar country.

The findings represent the views of 897 international students from 11 countries and territories: Australia, mainland China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, UK and USA.

The research is based on a sample of students aged 17 - 29 years old who are current international students or who have studied abroad in the last 5 years and was conducted between 12th June 2019 and 24th June 2019.

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