



UNIVERSITIES
AUSTRALIA

DISCOVER LEARN LEAD

International Links of Australian Universities

Formal agreements between Australian universities and overseas
higher education institutions

October 2014



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Introduction

The information for this International Links summary was supplied by Universities Australia member universities in response to a survey undertaken between late 2013 and early 2014. The survey was aimed at identifying formal institution-to-institution agreements between Australian universities and overseas higher education institutions. Agreements include cooperation facilitating student exchanges, study abroad arrangements, staff exchanges and academic/research collaboration. This survey does not capture the various forms of informal collaboration occurring daily throughout the world between our universities and their counterparts.

The previous International Links survey was completed in 2012. International Links surveys have been undertaken intermittently since 1990.

In 2014, universities were asked to indicate the name of their overseas partner institution, what activities are covered in the agreement, the year in which the agreement was first signed and whether the agreement is currently active.

Separately, institutions were asked to identify their offshore programs including overseas partner institution, the type and title of the program offered and the duration of the course. This information is available in the *Offshore Programs of Australian Universities* report.

The information below provides an overview of the sector's international engagement activities: the full data set is available on the [Universities Australia website](#).

Total Number of Formal Agreements

The survey was first conducted in 1990 when there were 220 formal agreements in place. Since 1990 Universities Australia has periodically surveyed members to maintain up-to-date information on the number of formal institution-to-institution agreements in place at any one time.

Since 1990 we have seen a steady increase in the total number of formal agreements in place. As demonstrated in *Figure 1*, in the last decade the number of total agreements in place has almost doubled to 8,515 in 2014; of these 7,911 are currently active. We have seen an increase of almost 20 per cent on 2012 figures and 811 new agreements have been signed in the past two years with the majority (over 65 per cent) of new agreements providing for research collaboration.

Figure 1 Number of Agreements in Place 2003-2014

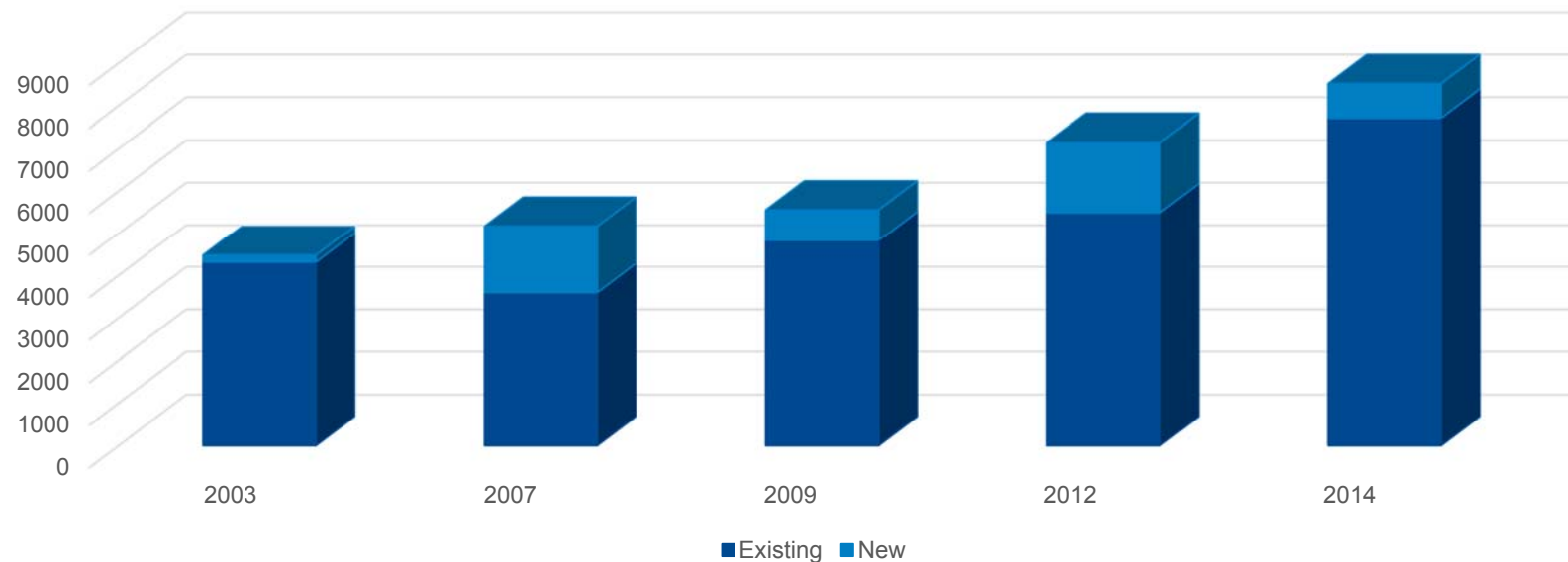


Figure 2 provides an indication of when the agreements currently in place were first signed; while some will have expired, others have managed to withstand the test of time with over 1,000 current agreements signed between 1980 and 2000. Of the thousands of agreements in place as at March 2014, over 40 per cent have been signed since 2009. Figure 3 illustrates the number of formal agreements in place at each institution in 2012 and in 2014 (as at March 2014).

Figure 2 Number of Agreements in 2014 by year signed

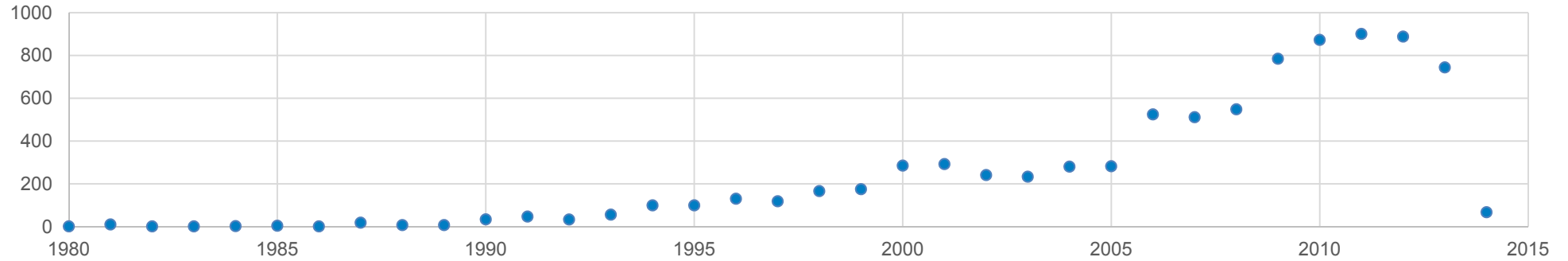
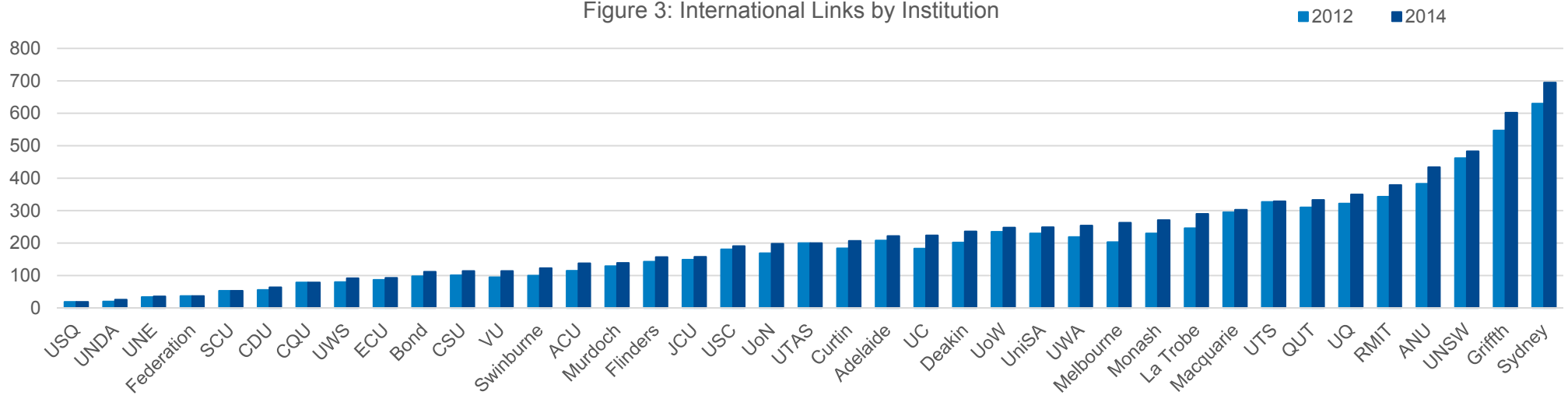


Figure 3: International Links by Institution



Type of Agreement

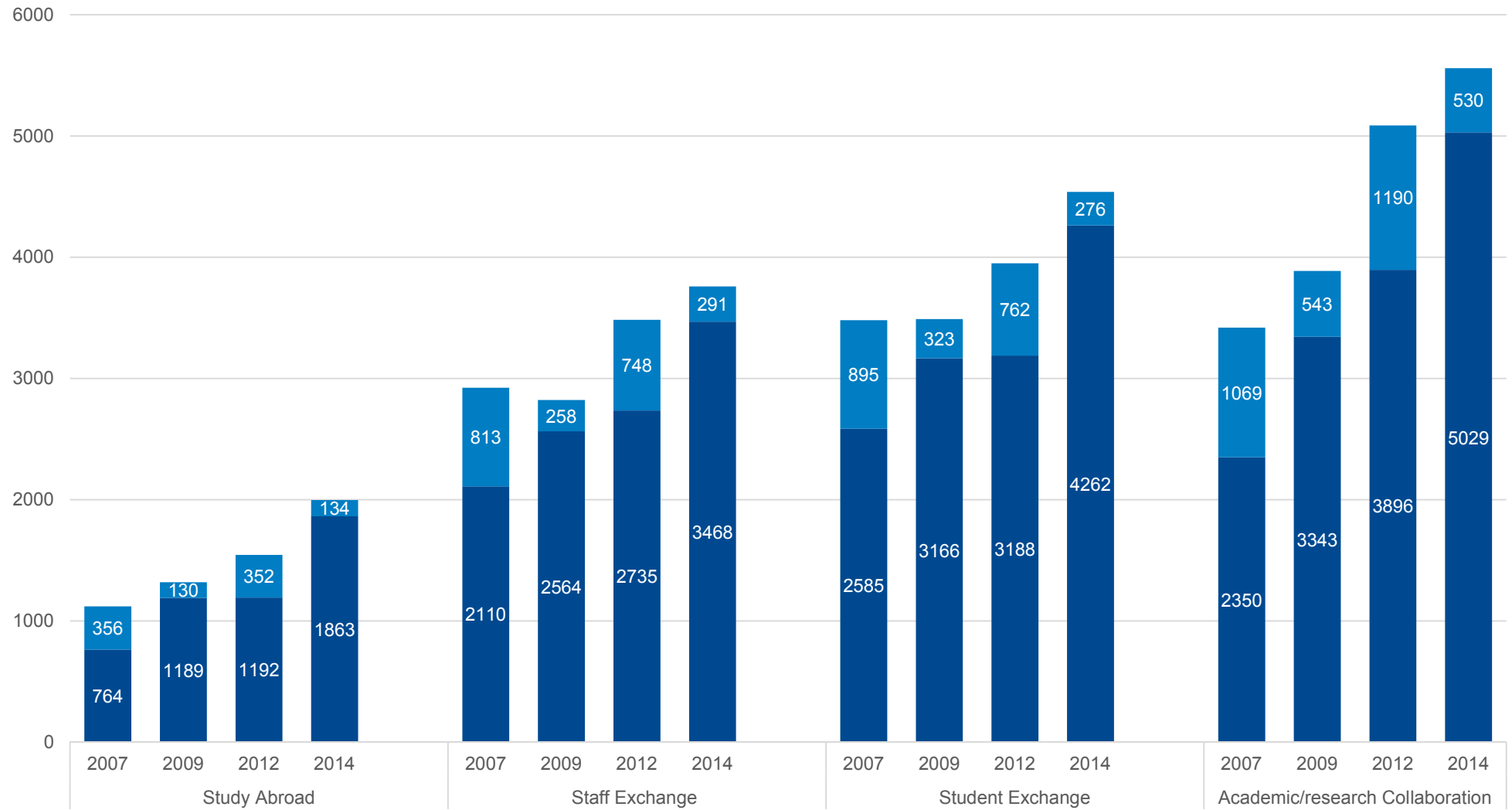
Table 1 and Figure 4 illustrate the type of activities the agreements cover; with over 60 per cent of current agreements including a component of academic or research collaboration and more than half providing for student exchange. There is a demonstrable increase in the number of agreements that provide for Study Abroad and Research collaboration and a levelling out of the inclusion of staff exchange and to a lesser extent student exchange in formal agreements.

Table 1: Type of Activity covered by agreements

	2003		2014		Percentage of change
	Number of agreements	Proportion of total agreements	Number of agreements	Proportion of total agreements	
Study Abroad	854	19%	1,997	25%	134%
Staff Exchange	3,231	72%	3,759	46%	16%
Student Exchange	2,771	62%	4,538	56%	64%
Academic/Research Collaboration	3,054	68%	5,559	68%	82%

Figure 4: Type of agreements 2007 to 2014

■ Existing agreement ■ New agreement



Number of Agreements by Region

Table 2 below indicates the number of agreements in each region. Australian international university links continue to be dominated by North-East Asia (27 per cent) and North-West Europe (29 per cent), however, links in North-East Asia continue to grow at a greater rate than in North-West Europe. Latin America has been identified by Universities Australia as a strategic priority for international engagement; there are currently 378 formal agreements in place between Australian and Latin American institutions comprising just four per cent of total agreements but showing an increase of 38 per cent on 2012 figures compared with just eight per cent growth in North America (Figure 5).

Table 2: Number of Formal Agreements by Region 2014 (*ABS Standard Classification of Countries)

Region	Number of agreements	Proportion of total agreements	Region	Number of agreements	Proportion of total agreements
Oceania and Antarctica	103	1%	North-East Asia	2280	27%
North-West Europe	2445	29%	Southern and Central Asia	344	4%
Southern and Eastern Europe	477	6%	North America	1277	15%
North Africa and Middle East	172	2%	Latin America	378	4%
South-East Asia	949	11%	Sub-Saharan Africa	82	1%

Figure 5 below illustrates the growth in each region on 2012 figures; there has been significant growth in the number of agreements with Latin American universities as well as universities in and North-East Asia. The number of agreements with universities in North-West Europe and North America are still increasing but at a declining rate.

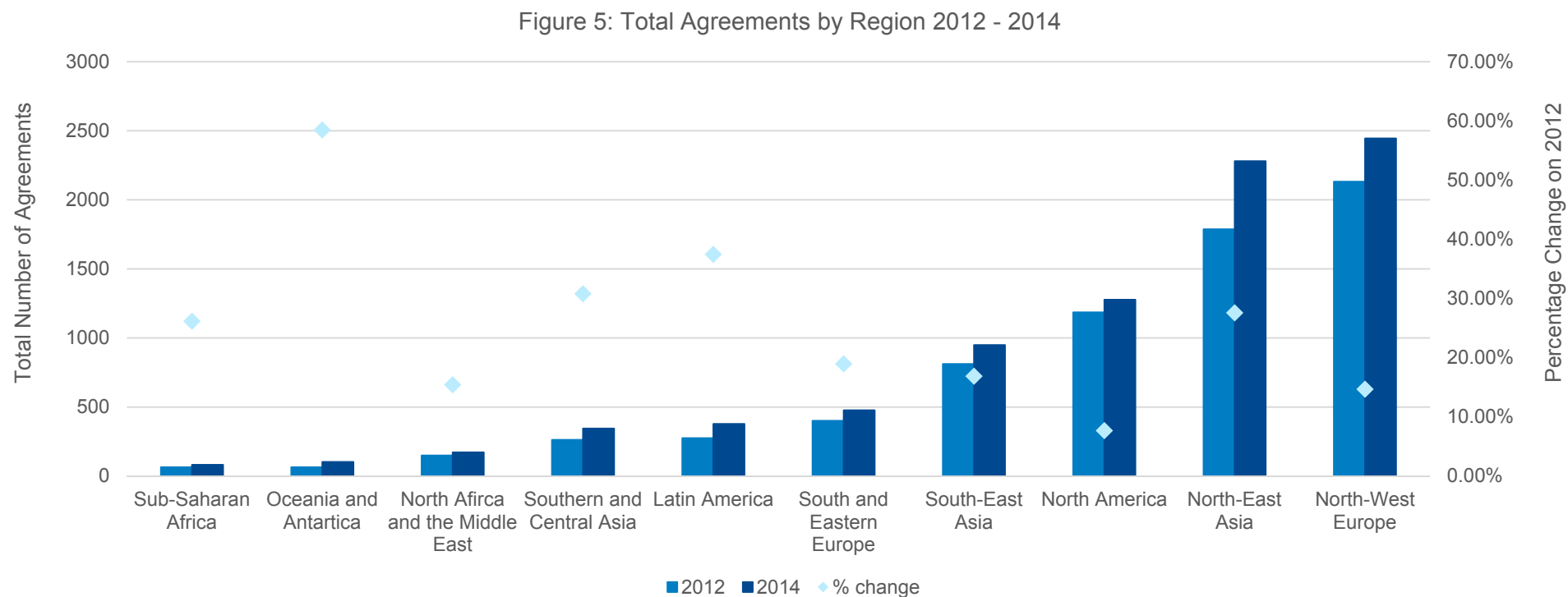


Figure 6 shows the changes between regions over the past decade. It is evident that links with Africa and the Middle East as well as Southern and Eastern Europe have remained relatively stagnant since 2003. However, North-West Europe, North-East Asia and the Americas have seen a significant increase in the total number of agreements in place. Figure 7 examines the type of agreements in place in 2014 by region.

Figure 6: Number of Formal Agreements by Region 2003-2014 (*ABS Standard Classification of Countries)

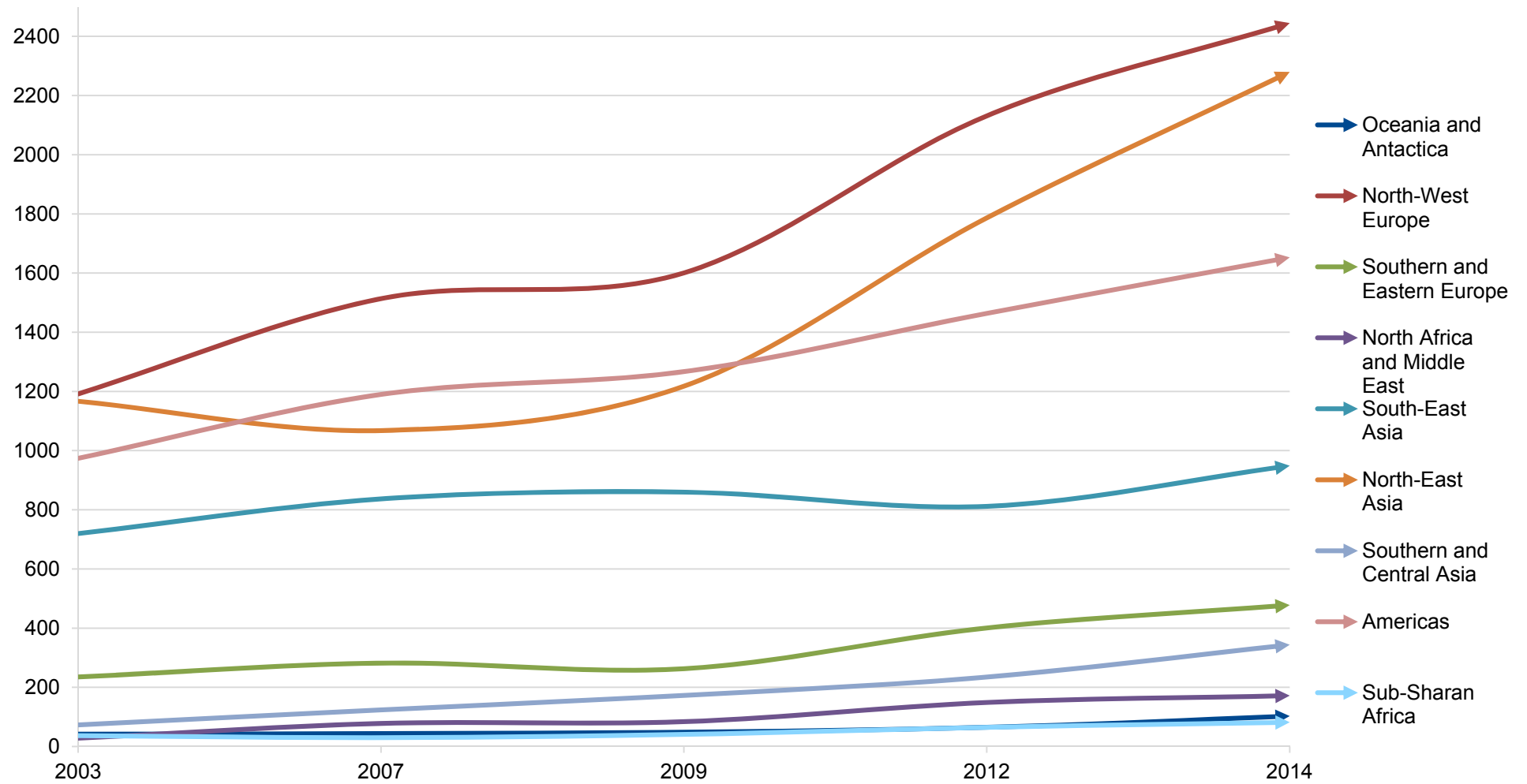
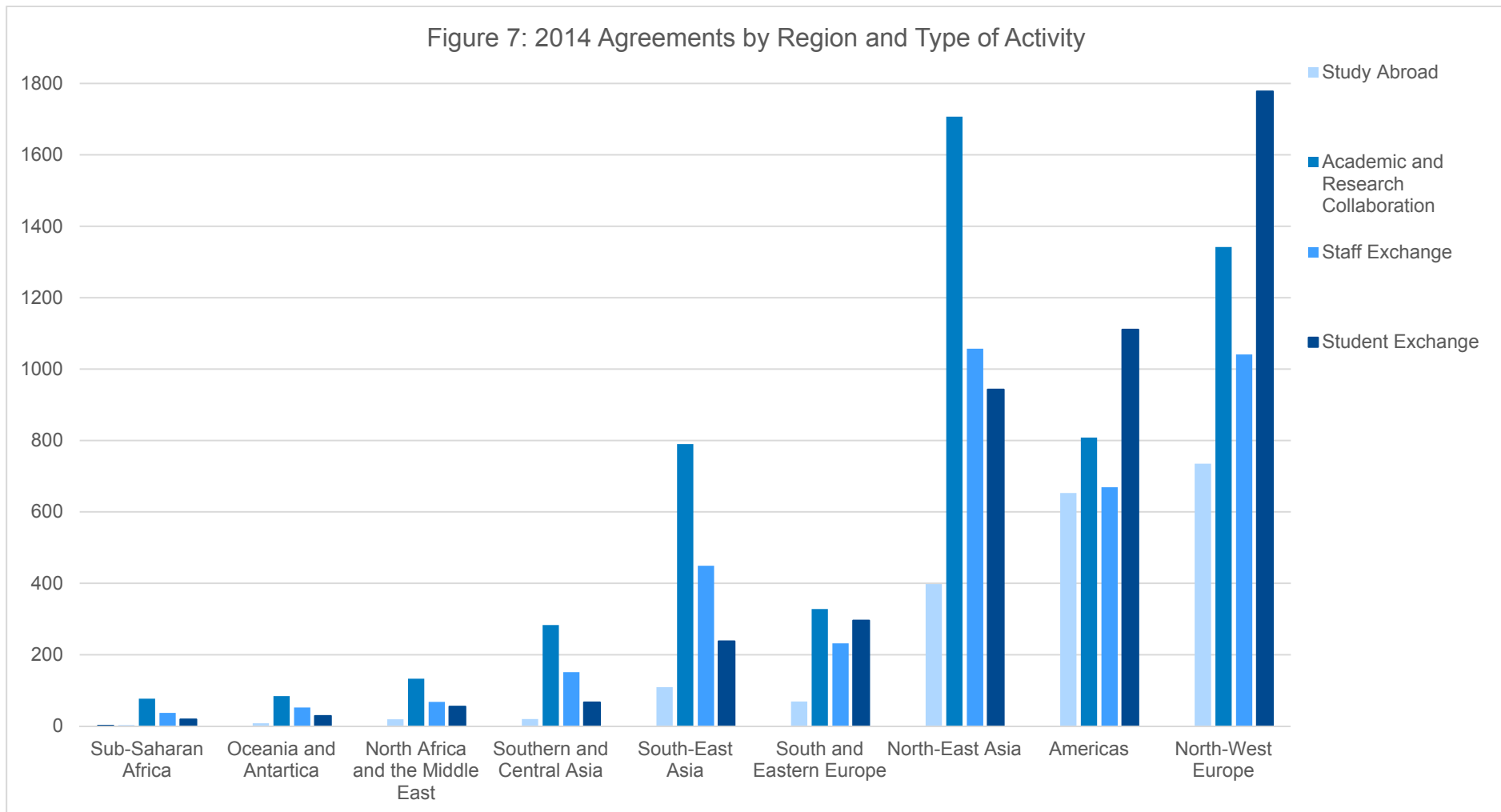


Figure 7: 2014 Agreements by Region and Type of Activity

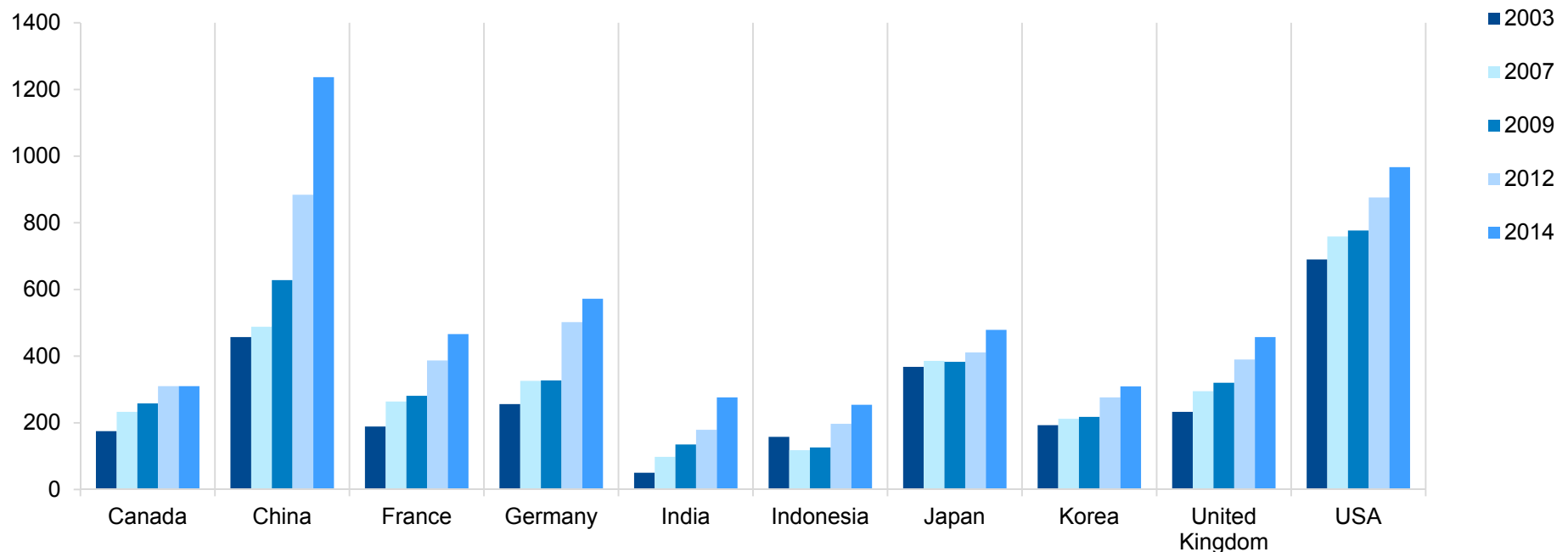


*Note agreements may include one or all components of activity; this graph does not represent the total number of agreements for each region.

Top Ten Countries for International Partnerships

Figure 8 identifies the top ten countries for formal international agreements. These countries have effectively comprised the top ten for the past two decades, although in 2014 India overtook Sweden to make the top ten for the first time. This figure demonstrates the massive increase in the number of links with China in recent years and a steady increase in agreements with our traditional key partner the USA.

Figure 8: Top Ten 2003-2014



The top ten countries are listed in *Table 3* below; they account for 62 per cent of total agreements in 2014 and this has remained consistent over the past decade. During this time the total number of agreements amongst these countries has almost doubled. *Table 3* below also shows a substantial increase in the number of agreements with the UK, France, Germany, China and India (albeit from a small base).

Interestingly the proportion of agreements occupied by the top ten is beginning to decrease suggesting that Australian universities may be progressively diversifying their international engagement activities (*Figure 9*).

Table 3 Top Ten Source Countries 2003-2014

	2003	2007	2009	2012	2014	Percentage Change 2003-2014
Canada	175	233	258	310	310	77%
China	457	488	628	884	1,237	171%
France	189	264	281	387	466	147%
Germany	256	326	327	502	572	123%
India	50	98	135	179	276	452%
Indonesia	158	118	126	197	254	61%
Japan	368	386	383	411	479	30%
Korea	193	212	218	276	309	60%
United Kingdom	233	295	320	390	457	96%
USA	690	759	777	876	967	40%
Top Ten Total	2,769	3,179	3,453	4,412	5,327	92%

Figure 9: Number of Agreements for Top Ten Countries Aggregated by Year 2003-2014

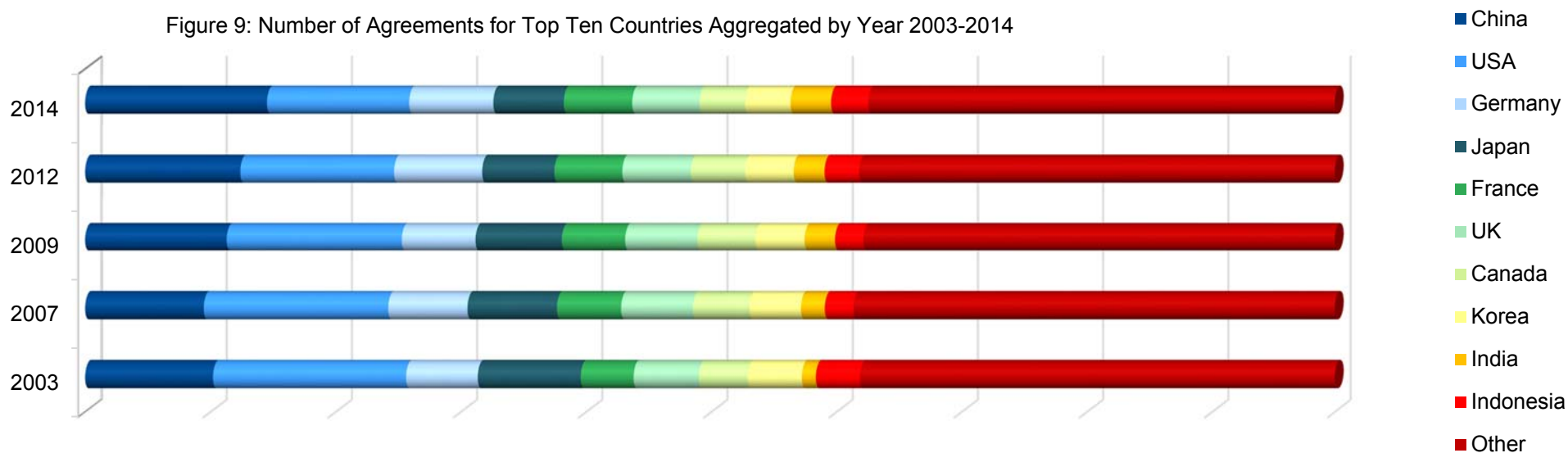
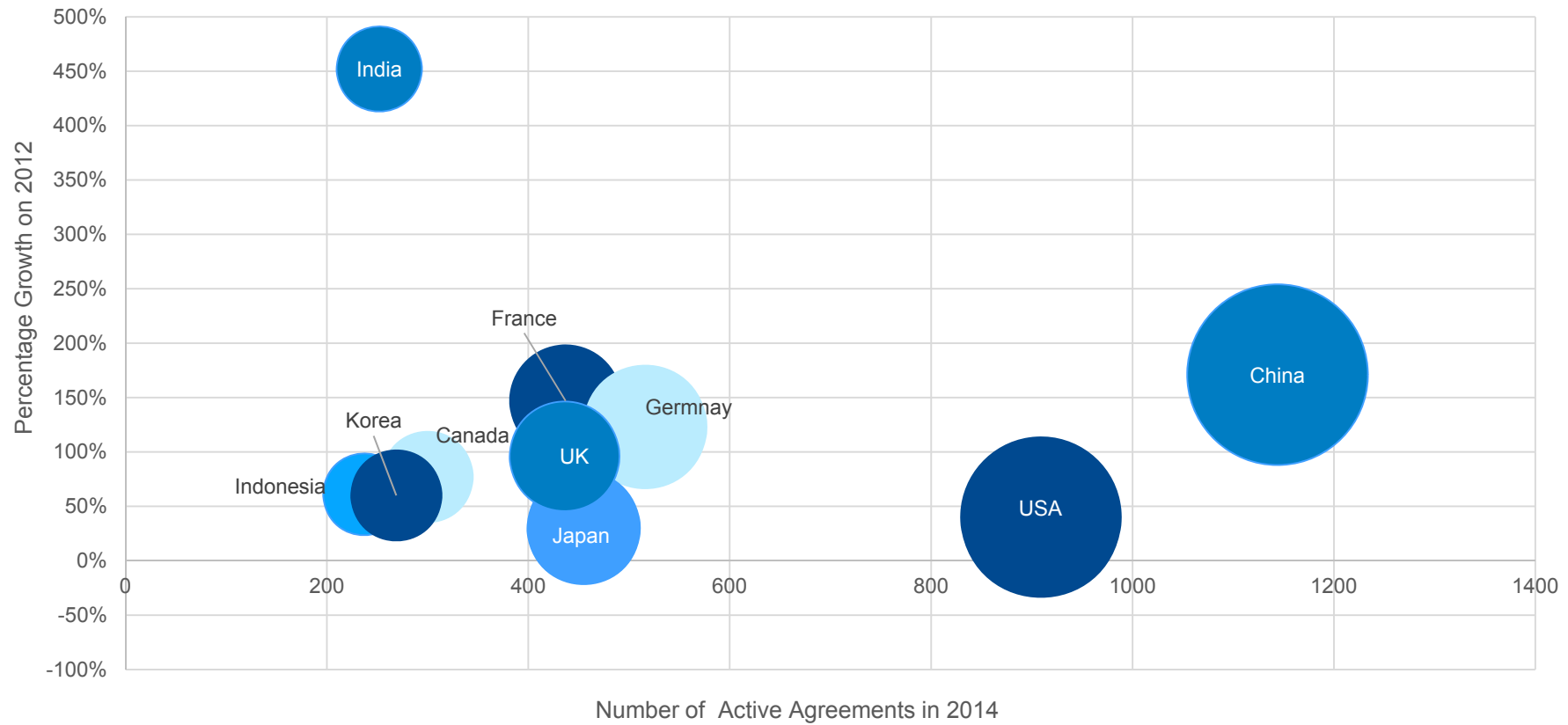


Figure 10 represents the total number of agreements for each top ten country in 2014 by the percentage of growth on 2012 figures and the number of active agreements in 2014.

Figure 10: Top Ten Agreements in 2014

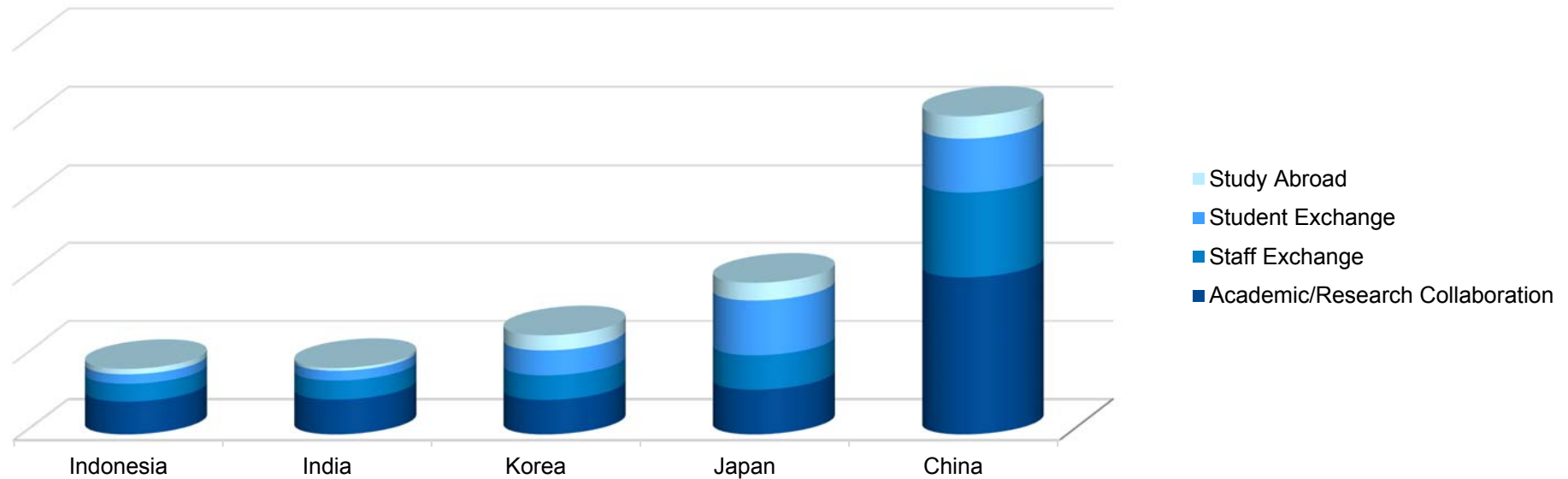


*Note the size of the bubble represents the total number of agreements (active and inactive)

Top Five Countries in Asia 2014

From within the top ten, five countries are from the Asian region. This correlates with our top source countries for international student enrolment which is dominated by the Asian region.

Figure 11: Top five countries in Asia by agreement type



*Note agreements may include one or all components of activity; this graph does not represent the total number of agreements.