

# Britannia still making overseas-student waves

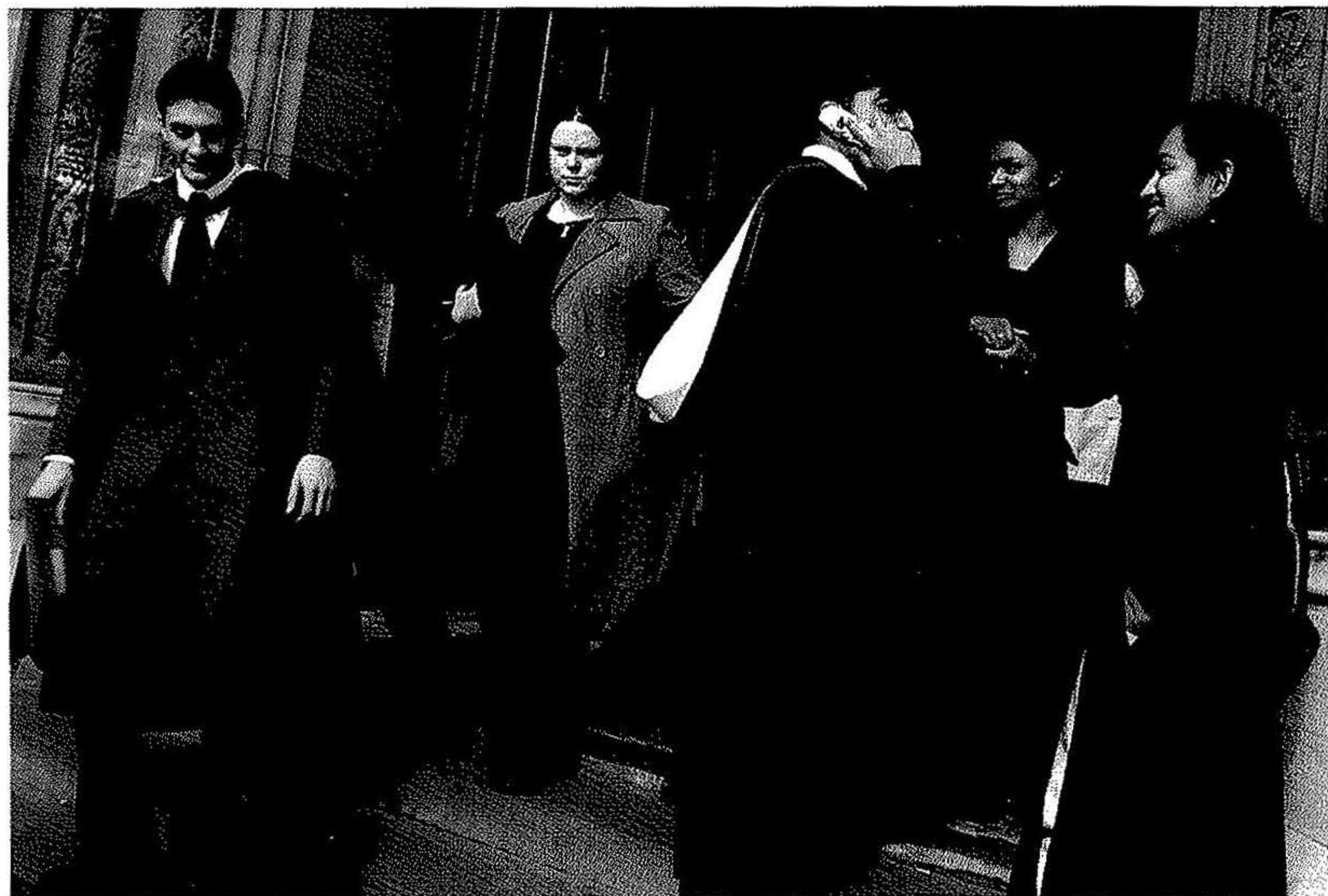
The number of Indian students taking university courses in the UK rose by almost a third in the past academic year, official statistics show.

More than 34,000 students from India studied at British higher education institutions in 2008-09, up 31.5 per cent on the year before.

It has been suggested that the increase may have been driven by a spate of attacks on Indian students in Australia, prompting students to look to other Western countries such as the UK as safer alternatives.

However, William Lawton, policy adviser at the UK Higher Education International Unit, pointed out that the attacks were reported in mid-2009, so would not have affected 2008-09 enrolment figures. He added that the number of Indian students in the UK had increased by a similar proportion the previous year.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency figures also show that Nigerian nationals have overtaken



**UK-bound** the number of Indian students rose by 31.5% in 2008-09

Americans to become the third most numerous overseas-student population in Britain.

A total of 14,380 Nigerians came to the UK to study in 2008-09 – a 22 per cent increase on the previous year – compared with

14,345 from the US.

Arrivals from Saudi Arabia showed the most dramatic rise, up 47.2 per cent. However, this was from a relatively low base, from 3,535 students to 5,205.

Students from mainland China

remained the largest overseas group at 47,035 – up 3.7 per cent on the year before.

However, numbers from Taiwan fell 6.8 per cent to 5,235, and from Hong Kong by 1 per cent to 9,600.

Allaying fears that the UK may be losing its grip on the international-student market, total numbers from outside the European Union – who pay the highest fees – rose by 9.4 per cent, topping 250,000.

Numbers from within the EU rose by 4.9 per cent to 117,660.

Dr Lawton said: “The predicted fall in our share of the global market – as a consequence of other countries gearing up and vying for international students – does not seem to have happened.”

Recruitment may have been helped by a weaker pound, he added, “but it most likely reflects a reputation for good quality and sustained brand strength”.

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