

Internationalization of Higher Education: Potential Benefits and Cost in United Kingdom: An Overview

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization of higher education (IHE) is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural and global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of higher education (UNESCO), World Conference on Higher Education. Internationalization of higher education adds competitive edge to the quality of education, generates diplomatic good will and harmony across borders, and opens up new channels for economic collaborations. Leading Universities have acknowledged “internationalization” to be the future of higher education in India and many other countries across the world and have voiced the need to internationalize. The policymakers, aware of the many benefits of internationalization have taken steps to promote the internationalization of higher education through various policy initiatives. It has now become necessary for all the countries Higher Education Institutions to chart out a road map to internationalize their higher education in an environment of increasing competition.

Key words: Internationalization, Diplomatic, Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

POTENTIAL AND BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A wide variety of potential and benefits were identified, which are classified at the highest level by the beneficiaries. Benefits for the UK as host country were sub-divided into ‘economic’ (excluding the direct financial benefit of fees and expenditure during study) and ‘influence’ sub-groups. The ‘internationalisation’ benefit on UK HE institutions and the student community from the presence of international students were excluded since this would have required wider research, but could be inferred.

Brief descriptions of the 14 benefit types are identified follow. The following points are types using testimony from the alumni including exemplar case studies of individual graduates. The boundaries between some types are somewhat subjective and indistinct, with considerable overlap.

BENEFITS TO THE UK (ECONOMIC)

A1: Additional HE exports. The great majority of alumni with a positive experience of their personal participation in UK HE had influenced or would recommend others to undertake a similar experience. The scale on which they had done so varied greatly with their circumstances and personality.

A2: Indirect economic benefits. These comprise a range of tangible business-to business transactions benefiting the UK, other than additional education exports (type A1) or the

personal consumer behaviour of the alumni (type A4), arising directly through the activity of the alumni since graduation. While a minority reported these types of transaction to date, their extent should grow as alumni progress to more influential positions.

A3: Professional networks. Almost all the alumni retain friends and contacts made while they were in the UK, now located worldwide including some in the UK. As potential professional networks these offer the possibility of future business transactions and collaborations of economic value to the UK. The extent to which alumni utilise these contacts for business is likely to increase as they progress to more senior positions.

A4: Personal consumer behaviour. Distinct trade benefits to the UK arise from alumni as purchasers or consumers of UK products and especially as travellers who return to the UK for leisure purposes. The value of the personal consumer behaviour of a single graduate may be limited, but multiplied across hundreds of thousands of alumni could collectively be substantial. Alumni with loyalty to UK brands may also influence the behaviour of others.

A5: Skilled migration. Some alumni were still in the UK when interviewed, of whom about half expected soon to return to their home country. Those few that hoped to remain in the UK permanently were either working in highly skilled occupations or, in a few cases, had married UK citizens. The proportions broadly reflected evidence that the dominant motivation was for study in the UK to lead to impact once they returned home.

BENEFITS TO THE UK (INFLUENCE)

B1: UK ambassadors. Many alumni had formed very a positive understanding of the UK's culture and values. For some, this underpinned activity on return home to facilitate educational, cultural, developmental and business links and collaborations with the UK. They had become informal ambassadors for the UK, based on an emotional bond developed during their UK HE study. The impact of this will only increase as they become more influential in society, bringing potential support to UK economic, socio-cultural and political agendas. xi
The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK

B2: Promoting trust. One key perception held by international alumni of the UK is trust; in the UK as a nation, society, and its enterprises and individuals. Alumni promote trust in the UK, leading to perceptions of the UK as a desirable partner in potential trade, diplomatic or developmental relationships. The underlying basis for this benefit relates to issues of mutual understanding and soft power, but it also has potential in terms of national economic benefit.

B3: UK influence during capacity building. A proportion of alumni had returned home to work in capacity building or other societal development, taking with them embedded British values and ideas. These may be seeds for long-term development of different linkages and synergies with the UK. Chevening and Commonwealth scholarship alumni are expected to have positive impacts on their home countries, but other alumni were also contributing to national socio-economic development, including through education.

BENEFITS TO INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES

C1: Career enhancement or change. The most common motivation for study in the UK was potential improved employment or career outcomes, and the advantages of income, status and influence that follow. Alumni cited many individual career-related benefits, either acceleration on an existing career trajectory or a change in career direction inspired or

enabled by UK HE study. Several had perceived an enterprising ‘can do’ culture in the UK which helped prompt them to set up their own business at home.

C2: English language proficiency. Another main ‘pull’ factor for international students choosing the UK is the opportunity to study in English and improve English language skills. Irrespective of their course of study, many alumni whose first language was not English reported that their greater command of English language was an asset valued on return to their country and in their career.

C3: Personal growth and wider experiences. Alumni reported other perceived personal and social development while in the UK, and beyond academic learning. An expected impact of international study is that students change and grow as individuals both through their on-campus activities and wider interactions with the host country society. Alumni obtained many such impacts through off-campus activities, including part-time work and volunteering, as well as growth in confidence as they overcame challenges inherent in overseas study and even certain personal hardships.

C4: Social benefits and networks. Almost all the alumni articulated social benefit through new friendships developed while they had been in the UK, with fellow students in the UK or elsewhere and also other contacts they had made. Many of these relationships had xii The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK sustained, providing alumni with a wide international network of social and professional contacts. Some will last a lifetime, including marriage/partnership. Much of the interaction within these networks is through social media such as Facebook.

BENEFITS TO COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

D1: Capacity building and societal development. From the alumni interviews it was possible to infer impacts within countries of origin. These included impacts as a result of their professional activities, ranging from the direct labour market benefit of their up-skilling and acquisition of new skills, to broader impacts within societal or economic development and capacity building, or political impact. Some of these were directly related to new careers they embarked upon after UK HE. As the alumni progress to more senior career and societal positions, with embedded UK values and links, these impacts may grow considerably for the home nation.

D2: Personal multiplier effects. Beyond the impact through their professional activities, alumni could deliver other impact through certain multiplier effects. These could be small-scale, such as impact on children and family who had accompanied the graduate to the UK, or at a larger scale through the influence of the alumni where they chose to undertake work or volunteering in education or other social or political settings.

COST ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN UK.

RISING STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Increasing the tuition fee cap has led to a focus on the student and their expectations in a way not seen in UK higher education before. Students are now paying more for their studies and expect a more lucrative return on investment, whether in academic quality, employability or the facilities offered to them.

University strategies must become more flexible in order to best attract students in a highly competitive market, assessing their position and mapping the customer segments most important to them.

Institutions will need to take difficult decisions on how to target those markets and have processes in place to best optimize those routes, as well as ensure they have the expertise and innovation required while working to overcome embedded cultural conservatism.

INCREASING COSTS AND SHIFTING FUNDING

- With rising student expectations and intense competition as students take on a larger financial burden for their studies, institutions need to invest in infrastructure, teaching and career support to attract students. Staff, teaching and learning costs are increasing rapidly.
- The sector has responded well to this challenge since 2011, Deloitte says. HEIs have worked to cut costs; savings are twice the level they were in 2008, and though there is more to do, actual efficiencies have exceeded targets since 2007.
- Without further transformation there is a significant financial risk for institutions as levels of expenditure start to outstrip growth in income.
- The sector must build on its success and transform further in order to fully offset the risk of financial failure.
- Each institution has its own mix of subjects, its own cost structure, and each will need to reshape its operating model in order to best direct spending, attract revenue, and reduce costs, the report says.

LINKING ESTATES, STRATEGY AND THE STUDENT

The sector must continue to ensure that their space and their strategy is aligned, particularly as student demand points to dramatically different estate requirements as compared to even the recent past. Changing ways of learning mean different demands are being made of space. For example, there has been a shift from large lecture theatres built for one-way learning to more collaborative workspaces. The same can be said of library spaces, with a move towards shared areas fit for group work over independent workstations. These changes have driven significant investment in new premises so that institutions reflect student demands.

MAKING RESEARCH SUSTAINABLE

Funding for research has become more difficult to access since 2011. Availability has moved away from block grants, and is now spread more thinly, and open to intense competition.

As university income streams shift away from government, universities should look to earn income from outside of simple one way government funding, working with new partners and organizations to diversify the money they use to underpin research.

CONCLUSION

In United Kingdom, when we talk of international education, and particularly international education in universities, we understand its importance to the future of our universities and to our nation. Internationalization of the curriculum helps “the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and

learning processes and support services of a program of study.” In terms of the intended student outcome, the “internationalization of the curriculum will purposefully develop the students’ international and intercultural perspectives as global professionals. Therefore we can conclude by saying that internationalisation of United Kingdom universities is of major benefit to UK , the benefits are greater and longer lasting than a number in the national accounts or the budgets of the universities.

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