

## **VC-NET**

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### **UK universities and Europe: Competition and internationalisation**

A new report authored by a team from The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education and Kingston University, and published by the UK Higher Education Europe and International Units, cautions that UK universities need to look at more collaborative approaches to international partnerships in order to ensure that their success in attracting international students is maintained.

The report examines the policies of the UK and seven other European countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland) at national and institutional levels in regard to international student recruitment. The report presents data on the various 'pull factors' employed in the UK and continental Europe, including national funding, the availability of scholarships, immigration policies, English-language or multi-lingual instruction, employment opportunities during and after study, tuition fees and living costs, transnational education initiatives, and other strategies for attracting students. The report constructs a picture of where, over the coming five years, the competition to UK universities is likely to originate at undergraduate and taught Master's levels.

While acknowledging that the United States and Australia remain strong competitors in the international student market it emphasises that new competitors are emerging. Germany is identified as the most likely source of competition to the UK: the country is third in the world in attracting international students, it is targeting many of the same markets as the UK, has low tuition fees and living costs, multi-lingual and high quality programmes, and its international student recruitment policies are integrated with national trade and cultural policies. The Netherlands and Switzerland are identified as potential future sources of competition to the UK, partly due to their high number of English-taught degree programmes. The report notes that where competition for the UK exists or could develop in the future, it is in a narrow range of subjects (science, technology, engineering, IT and business) and most particularly for 'the most academically talented' students.

The report notes that the UK is strong in international student recruitment (second only to the United States) and transnational education. The quality of UK programmes is good, but costs are high. UK institutions have developed sophisticated business models for international student recruitment processes, but some programmes are highly dependent on international student fee income, and may be at risk of closure if student flows from certain countries decline. The UK's overtly individual and competitive mind-set towards internationalisation is identified as a potential problem for the future. Compared to the UK, non-EU tuition fees in continental Europe are lower, the same, or non-existent; several countries have adopted stronger national policies to support internationalisation; and 'Europeanisation' is emphasised in addition to internationalisation in general.

The main conclusions of the report are that:

- While non-EU student recruitment in the UK is mainly driven by revenue generation, recruitment in continental Europe is not profit-motivated, but seen as contributing to the internationalisation of higher education cultures and curricula, preparing students for life and work in international societies and economies, and as an overall investment in developing long-term partnerships at individual and (later) institutional levels.
- Compared to the UK, other European countries place a stronger emphasis on international collaboration in higher education. These countries also link a portfolio of internationalisation activities including research and education, rather than separating them.
- The Bologna Process has stimulated, supported and accelerated aspirations of continental European countries in their internationalisation strategies, and has been used as a building block for them to form more international partnerships. The growing number of collaborative programmes in continental Europe that include periods of study in several countries are likely to appeal to international students.

The report recommends that:

- UK universities should adopt and implement collaborative partnership models for internationalisation.
- UK universities should build or strengthen strategic mutually beneficial partnerships with the UK's strongest competitor countries (in Europe, the US, China and India).
- UK universities should develop integrated portfolio-based models for internationalisation.
- UK universities should do more to provide and encourage second-language training as part of undergraduate degree programmes.
- UK universities should implement all Bologna Process reforms and brand themselves internationally as 'Bologna-compatible' and at the forefront of the development of the European Higher Education Area.

Source:

- Universities and Europe: Competition and Internationalisation. Published UK Higher Education International Unit (April 2009). Available for UK University staff to download members from: [http://www.international.ac.uk/our\\_research\\_and\\_publications/index.cfm](http://www.international.ac.uk/our_research_and_publications/index.cfm)

### **The Bologna Process: its impact beyond Europe**

With the Bologna Process approaching its first decade of development, it is interesting to look at the international responses to Bologna reforms and how these reflect different patterns, and expectations, of higher education. The Bologna Process was launched in 1999 with a view to promoting greater comparability between higher education systems within Europe and establishing, ambitiously by 2010, a 'European Higher Education Area' (EHEA). This month a Bologna Policy Forum was hosted in Belgium which, for the first time, provided a formal opportunity for the higher education ministers of the current 46 Bologna signatory countries to discuss the Process and its international implications alongside representatives from 20 countries outside Europe. Among those invited to attend were six countries within the Commonwealth: Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, South Africa, and Tanzania. The selection of invited countries is itself of interest in its geographical/economic range and levels of development (also included were the US, Brazil, China, Mexico, and Vietnam).

Seen externally the EHEA is influential in bringing together different countries and different ways of organising education - whether as a collaborative model, a competitive bloc, or a single market. Given the scale and ambition of its reforms and bureaucracy its effect on international higher education in some form is undeniable, perhaps particularly as the Process moves in its second decade from comparing systems, structures, and quality, to concerns about equitable access, employability, and funding.

Some of the international responses to Bologna in the lead up to the April forum are outlined below:

- Australia's established interest, reflected in a 2006 discussion paper and now a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Bologna, has contributed to the development and recent

implementation of a Higher Education Graduation Statement, as well as recognition of the role of quality assurance standards. According to the Advisory Committee's chair - speaking last month - Bologna represents 'a seismic shift in the education landscape', and in its projected priorities 'there is as much opportunity for other countries to learn from us as we to learn from them'.

- New Zealand's Ministry of Education/NZQA published an overview paper last year reviewing 'areas of comparability' between the Bologna Process reforms and its own educational system. Since then NZQA have recently completed a consultation on developing a Diploma Supplement. Recommended as part of the Bologna Process the diploma supplement aims to provide additional contextual information to facilitate 'academic and professional recognition of tertiary education qualifications' so enhancing their portability, and graduate mobility. Arguments for these supplements in New Zealand include better international recognition of qualifications and raising the profile of the New Zealand higher education system internationally. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) was also referenced last year (in the overview paper and a New Zealand contribution to a Bologna Beyond 2010 conference) as a benchmarking example as well as potentially easing future joint degree programmes.
- Canada has generated some of the most sustained and detailed responses to Bologna. This year has already seen an AUCC-sponsored Symposium on its implications (see VC-NET 85), a related conference - 'Canadian Perspectives on the Bologna Process' - and discussion at the AUCC's Presidents' Spring meeting. Apart from mobility and comparing qualifications, the impact of a co-ordinated 'higher education area' in a global higher education market has been considered. Potentially this could represent a threat to Canada, especially given existing competition for students from the US, the UK and Australia. More positively however, the greater use of comparative standards and more coherent systems between countries in Europe could provide a useful model to a provincially based education system such as Canada's. The institutional variety and flexibility of Canadian federal education though also implies the value of simply sharing good practice, rather than adopting a single, inclusive, and formal 'policy' either in sympathy with or in reaction to the Bologna Process.
- From a US perspective a recent report by the Institute for Higher Education Policy asserts the value of comparing curricula and qualifications, especially within the context of a varied and decentralised education system such as that of the US. The IHEP report issued earlier this month makes a particular case for the role of 'tuning projects' and 'Diploma Supplements' in the US.
- In Asia, the Bologna Process is to be the subject both of a 'Europe-Asia dialogue' later this summer and an ASEAN Education Ministers' Meeting.

The guiding principle of Bologna, to acknowledge the comparability of discrete national education structures has, paradoxically, also drawn attention to what is distinctive, and perhaps innovative, about each country's universities. Similarly the responses beyond Europe to Bologna Process reforms reflect varying histories and values, as well as needs and, increasingly, expectations of higher education.

Sources:

- The Bologna Process: Reforming Universities in the Next Decade (Europa press release 22/4/09) <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/615&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
- Ministerial Conference hosted by the Benelux Countries (Leuven; Louvain-la Neuve, 28-29/4/09) Towards the European Higher Education Area Bologna Process (official website) [www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/conference)

Australia

- The Bologna Agreement and how the Reforms will Impact on the Australian Higher Education System (S.Shwartz) (Presentation on Bologna Reform at the Australian Higher Education Congress, Sydney, 24/3/09) [www.vc.mq.edu.au/speech/speech714.doc](http://www.vc.mq.edu.au/speech/speech714.doc)

New Zealand

- New Zealand and the Bologna Process (New Zealand. Ministry of Education; New Zealand Qualifications Authority; 2008) [www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/IntlEdNewsFromAroundWorld/Europe/Bologna.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/IntlEdNewsFromAroundWorld/Europe/Bologna.aspx)

- Considering a Diploma Supplement or Equivalent for New Zealand (New Zealand Qualifications Authority; 2009) [www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/dip-supplement/docs/diploma-supplement-discusspaper.pdf](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/dip-supplement/docs/diploma-supplement-discusspaper.pdf)

#### Canada

- Canadian Perspectives on the Bologna Process (Conference hosted by the University of Alberta, 19-20/3/09) [www.international.ualberta.ca/bologna.cfm](http://www.international.ualberta.ca/bologna.cfm)

#### US

- The Bologna Process for US Eyes: Re-Learning Higher Education in the Age of Convergence (Adelman, C. (IHEP); April 2009) [www.ihep.org/press-room/news\\_release-detail.cfm?id=164](http://www.ihep.org/press-room/news_release-detail.cfm?id=164)

#### Asia

- Regional Higher Education Cooperation in the Next Decade: the Bologna Process and Europe-Asia Dialogue (Round Table 2), Brussels, 1-3/7/09 (EU-Asia Higher Education Platform) [www.eahep.org/web/index.php/events/roundtables/bologna-and-asia.html](http://www.eahep.org/web/index.php/events/roundtables/bologna-and-asia.html)

### **Internationalising the curriculum**

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) has published a guide to support Canadian Universities in their efforts to internationalise the curriculum. It comes as the IAU undertakes its third global survey on internationalisation of higher education. Previous IAU surveys have highlighted that the predominant strategic focus of internationalisation is on cross-border mobility and international competition rather than curriculum development. However, growing emphasis on equipping students with the skills to operate in the global labour market together with the importance of attracting students from broad multi-cultural and international communities is strengthening the strategic importance of internationalising the curriculum. This is reflected in the AUCC's report which emphasises the impact of student demand, political and economic imperatives as well as academic rationales.

The report intends to provide practical advice to institutions looking to imbue their curriculum with a stronger international dimension. It focuses on five areas of strategic importance:

- Developing successful partnerships to support international learning
- Integrating foreign language learning into courses and programmes
- Supporting and sustaining faculty members' efforts to internationalise the curriculum
- Harnessing the experience of students to facilitate international and intercultural learning on campus
- Demonstrating the value of an internationalised curriculum in the context of assessing and measuring student learning outcomes

The report highlights the challenges facing institutions, such as: time, resources, institutional culture, academic commitment in the face of competing priorities and the lack of recognition for international efforts, sustaining and ensuring quality standards in relationships with international partners, integrating foreign languages into courses, recognising students' international and intercultural experiences, lack of interaction between foreign and domestic students and measuring the learning outcomes of international activity and experience. It highlights examples of good practice and linked to these are a series of recommendations (or 'catalytic actions' for consideration) for each of the focus areas. These provide guidance, not only for institutions, but also for students and governments on how to advance the internationalisation of their curricula.

While the report is directed at Canadian universities its findings will prove insightful to a wider constituency. The imperatives of more internationalised higher education systems in many countries will require curricula that reflect the diversity of students and staff as well as the needs of an increasingly globalised society, economy and workforce. This is as true, if not more so, for institutions in developing and emerging economies where the importance of collaborating with international and regional partners has become an important means of enhancing capacity. In the 2005 IAU internationalisation survey it was institutions in Africa and the Middle East that ranked innovations in the curriculum as the most important benefit of internationalisation (overall it was ranked 4<sup>th</sup>). Internationalising the curriculum will mean different things to different institutions depending on their context, but certain issues and

challenges will be universal and may well benefit from the insights and recommendations provided in this report.

Sources:

- Internationalisation of the Curriculum: A practical guide to support Canadian universities' efforts. (March 2009) Available from: [http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/publications/curriculum-primer\\_e.pdf](http://www.aucc.ca/pdf/english/publications/curriculum-primer_e.pdf)
- Announcement of the IAU 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Survey on Internationalisation of Higher Education. IAU Horizons vol. 15 No.1 <http://www.unesco.org/iau/newsletters/iaunew15-1-en.pdf>

## Launch of Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows

April saw the launch of the second Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows (1959-2009). It is an impressive undertaking, listing 3,700 profiles and 25,000 names of former award holders of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). The directory provides an insightful snapshot of the scope and impact of the scheme, highlighting prominent and prestigious positions held in a range of fields including academia, politics, law, business, health and science and journalism, among others. In his foreword to the Directory the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Kamalesh Sharma, writes that it is a 'unique testament' to the achievements of the CSFP in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

As public funds for scholarships come under greater scrutiny, scholarship schemes face growing pressure to demonstrate their value, impact and relevance. The Directory goes some way to meeting this objective. It not only details the career trajectories of a significant proportion of former CSFP award holders it also provides a useful networking tool, listing contact emails for the profiled alumni. In a parallel development, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSCUK) has undertaken a major evaluation of the impact of its awards (16,000 CSFP awards have been held in the UK since the scheme's inception in 1959). The evaluation attracted responses from over 2,000 alumni and examined the broad impact of the scheme, with particular focus on the contributions of alumni to socio-economic development. Preliminary findings of the survey were published at the end of 2008 but the main report will be released later this year.

The Directory and the CSCUK evaluation will provide interesting reading for Ministers due to consider plans to expand the CSFP at the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in June 2009.

Sources:

- Directory of Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows 1959-2009 (April 2009). For more information see: [http://www.cscuk.org.uk/news/alumni\\_dir.asp](http://www.cscuk.org.uk/news/alumni_dir.asp)
- Evaluating the impact of Commonwealth Scholarships in the United Kingdom: Preliminary results of the alumni survey (November 2008). Available from: <http://www.cscuk.org.uk/docs/CSCEvaluationv5.pdf>

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## Key publications

A selection of recent publications on higher education:

- **Education Today: the OECD Perspective** [OECD; 978-92-6405-989-4; 2009] (<http://browse.oecdbookshop.org/oecd/pdfs/browseit/9609021E.PDF>)  
A new OECD publication which brings together some findings from its various education-related titles, including those covering higher education. Looks at trends applying across the sector as a whole and some common policy principles.
- **First Among Equals: Stories from Higher Education Leaders in South Africa** [Fish, P. for Higher Education South Africa (HESA); 2009] ([www.hesa.org.za/resources/HELM%20First%20Among%20Equals.pdf](http://www.hesa.org.za/resources/HELM%20First%20Among%20Equals.pdf))  
Interviews with senior staff in South African HE institutions who have benefited from the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows Programme.

- **Institute of International Education Study Abroad White Paper** series [IIE; 2009]  
([www.iie.org/Template.cfm?Section=Study\\_abroad\\_white\\_papers](http://www.iie.org/Template.cfm?Section=Study_abroad_white_papers))  
Recent issues in the IIE's surveys and analyses series:
  - Expanding US Study Abroad in the Arab World: Challenges and Opportunities
  - Promoting Study Abroad in Science and Technology Fields
  
- **National Knowledge Commission: Report to the Nation 2006-2009** [NKC; 2009]  
([www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/report2009/eng/report09.pdf](http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/report2009/eng/report09.pdf))  
The Indian NKC's final report, which as a compilation of its previous studies shows the range and detail of its analyses and recommendations. Higher education plays a significant role. The NKC's mandate expired on 31/3/09.
  
- **Students and Higher Education Reform: Survey among Students in Higher Education Institutions in the EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Norway, and Turkey: Special Target Survey: Draft Analytical Report** (Flash Eurobarometer Series, 260) [Gallup Organization. Requested by the EC Directorate-General Education and Culture; European Commission; 2009]  
([http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news1330\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news1330_en.htm))  
Detailed survey of student opinion in 31 European countries on a range of current issues including access, quality, academic/business links, as well as studying abroad, career plans, and the relative 'significance of three objectives of higher education' - employability, personal development, role in society.
  
- **Social Mobility: Universities Changing Lives** [Rodda, M.; Tilbury; million+; 2009]  
([www.millionplus.ac.uk/news/socialmobility.htm](http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/news/socialmobility.htm))  
Impact of undergraduate degree courses on social mobility, focusing on the 28 UK universities which subscribe to million+.

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The authors, Nick Mulhern and Jay Kubler (and guest author Rosa Becker) are always pleased to receive comments on the usefulness and content of this briefing. News from other Commonwealth countries, which might be of wider interest, is also most welcome. They can be contacted by e-mail on [vcnet@acu.ac.uk](mailto:vcnet@acu.ac.uk) or by fax on +44 (0)20 7387 2655.

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