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11 December 2009
Hobsons Conference: Transparency online and international marketing at universities
London, UK

06-08 December 2009
Higher Education Spaces and Places: For Learning, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange
Riga, Latvia

08-10 December 2009
SRHE Annual Conference: Challenging Higher Education
Newport, Wales

08-09 January 2010
Second International Conference on Brand Management
Ghaziabad, India

Note to readers:
Bold text within articles are hyperlinks to original sources

League tables: Living with the R Factor

International league tables: many people in our sector will either **loathe them or ignore them**. It is hard to do the latter, however, because prospective partners and students abroad often ask how one's university fared in the latest rankings. Another reason that one is forced to care is closer to home: it does not require a big leap of the imagination to see that domestic rankings, including the RAE/REF, will help a government seeking to defend hard decisions on funding cuts through the veneer of objective data.

The two international rankings that are followed in the UK are the (now disbanded) **THE-QS World University Rankings** and the **Academic Ranking of World Universities** (ARWU) from Shanghai Jiao Tong University. The 2009 lists were released in early October and early November, respectively. Now that the dust has settled, a couple of things can be said about them.

The first is slightly puzzling because it has contradictory elements. On the one hand, there was not much international press coverage this year; in the case of the ARWU it was hard to find any. The QS website claims a large number of responses from academics and employers (the academic response rate was about 4%) and suggests that this demonstrates the 'growing importance of the rankings'. This is like saying the popularity of the X Factor demonstrates the growing importance of music. On the other hand, its website appears receive a very **large volume of traffic**.

Secondly, Times Higher Education and QS have parted ways and both intend to forge ahead in the rankings world. THE, however, is in search of a new methodology and has invited readers to help it find one. **It implied last week** that its methodology was suspect all along: 40% weighting for academic peer review was too subjective, and it was **argued elsewhere** that there was no way of knowing whether respondents were representative of their supposed academic communities. THE has found a new partner, **Thomson Reuters**, whose bibliometric and citation data are already used for the ARWU lists.

Methodologies vary considerably and can include criteria which range from too discriminating (number of Nobel winners produced) to defiantly batty (**number of Fortune Global 500 CEOs produced**). In addition to its 40% peer review, THE-QS drew a further 10% based on employer views, 20% each to citations per academic staff member and the staff-student ratio, and 5% each to the number of international staff and students.

The ARWU is very different and profoundly weighted toward prowess in STEM research. 60% of the scoring is based on the number of papers published in Nature and Science, the number in citation indexes, and the number of 'highly-cited researchers in 21 subject categories'. A further 30% is for the number of staff and alumni that receive Fields medals for maths and Nobel prizes for physics, chemistry, medicine and economics (peace, love and literature are nowhere, man).

The different methodologies produce different results: eighteen UK universities appear in the top 100 in the 2009 THE-QS rankings, and 11 in the ARWU. For American universities, the numbers are 32 and 55. US dominance aside, UK universities have a strong position internationally for a number of reasons; quality is right up there but it also reflects the UK's cultural cachet (or '**positional value**') among internationally mobile young people.

This latter quality is not captured by metrics data. This may become more apparent when the THE adopts its new methodology. It is unlikely to be as eccentric as the ARWU's but it is set to shift away from reputation and toward metrics (and thereby mimicking the succession of the RAE by the REF). This amounts to an international convergence of rankings methodologies; the likely consequence, this time next year, is the UK sector having lost ground collectively. However few think that league tables do us a big favour now, that number is set to diminish.

(A '**university ranking watch**' blog has produced a composite ranking based on six international league tables. The UK gets six in the composite top 30 (versus seven and four in THE-QS and ARWU) and the THE-QS exhibits the worst correlation with the composite list.)

Markets & Intelligence

INTO's £40m teaching centre at Exeter to meet rapid rise in international student enrolment

INTO University Partnerships is to invest £40m in a new building development for international students studying on INTO programmes at the University of Exeter's Streatham campus.

The investment follows a rapid increase in international students joining INTO's pre-university courses to enable them to progress onto degree studies of their choice at Exeter. Since opening in December 2006, the centre has seen a three-fold increase in student numbers. There are now 700 international students from 42 countries and 80 members of staff.



State of the art at INTO Exeter

Spanning a building area of about 2,900 square metres, the project will include a teaching complex with multi-media rooms, lounge areas and a learning resource centre. A five-block residential development will offer 517 rooms. The project is expected to complete in time for 2011 autumn intake.

Andrew Colin, Chair of INTO University Partnerships, maintains that such investment is vital: 'Provided with an increasing amount of choice, international students are discerning consumers. A project like this positively differentiates what we offer from the competition, both within the UK as well as overseas'.

The Exeter project follows another INTO partnership with the University of East Anglia to set up a new study centre in London. Opening in January 2010, it will provide for students enrolled on UEA's academic and language programmes. It will also serve as a base for students on INTO postgraduate courses and study-abroad semesters. INTO already have a centre at UEA's Norwich campus which enrolled some 800 international students in 2008-09.

INTO has a regional presence in 15 countries and a network of over 600 agents. Its university partners currently include East Anglia, Exeter, Newcastle, Glasgow Caledonian, Manchester, Queen's University Belfast and City University London, and Oregon State University in the US.

HE and the future of Wales

The **Welsh Assembly Government (WAG)** today launched 'For Our Future: The 21st Century Higher Education Strategy and Plan for Wales'. This document employs some radical language as it builds upon and supersedes 'Reaching Higher', the government's 2002 strategy for competitive and sustainable HE in Wales. It also responds to the (Professor Merfyn) **Jones Review of Higher Education in Wales** which, earlier this year, examined its purpose and funding and noted the role of international HE links in allowing Wales to increase its presence internationally and to attract both investment and skilled people.

The new strategy and plan sets out a fresh direction for HE, and a commitment to ensuring its contribution to social justice, lifelong learning and a buoyant economy. In fact it states the need for 'a whole new model for higher education' in Wales, one that facilitates the knowledge and flexibility to respond to unfolding challenges and opportunities.

The benchmark for its effectiveness will be HE's contribution to social justice and economic success. But international aspects of HE are given much attention, not least the role of universities in responding successfully to increasing international competition and the significance of Welsh universities to the international profile of Wales itself.

The strategy states also that the WAG, working with the **Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** and the sector itself, will target funding (of a total budget of some £400m) for excellence in research internationally, through prioritising funding in areas consistent with national priorities, while building on expertise in manufacturing, low carbon economies, health and biosciences, advanced engineering, and opto-electronics.

The document balances celebration of achievement with cautionary notes. It addresses the Jones Review's claim that piecemeal changes and *ad hoc* programmes are not up to the task of positioning Wales successfully for the future. Challenges explored include demographics and increasing international competition for income and investment. It also includes a commitment to develop a plan for international student recruitment and to strengthen the contribution of HE to workforce development such that better skills make Wales a destination of choice for international business.

At the time of writing there was no internet link for the document, so we have added it to our documents library and it can be seen **HERE**.



Recruitment

Surge of international students in the US, according to new report

Last week's announcement by the **International Institute of Education (IIE)** that international student numbers in the US have increased for the third consecutive year will further cement the country's position as the leading destination for international students and provide a much-needed boost to the economy.



Data from the 2009 **'Open Doors'** reveals an increase of 8%, following rises of 7% in 2007-08 and 3% in 2006-07. It was the largest percentage increase in international enrolments since 1980 and brought the total number of international students at US colleges and universities to an all-time high of 671,616 in the 2008-09 academic year.

India remains the leading country of origin for the eighth consecutive year, increasing by 9% to

103,000. China comes in second with 98,500 an increase of 21%, followed by South Korea (up 9% to 75,000) and Canada, the only non-Asian country in the top five (up 2% to 30,000).

The number of UK students enrolled at US colleges and universities rose less than 5%, **despite reports in the UK press** that 'record numbers' opted for US colleges in the past academic year. **The Fulbright Commission suggested** this was fuelled by the popularity of Barack Obama and US institutions offering generous scholarships and bursaries to international students in comparison to UK counterparts. The UK is the 15th-largest sending country to the US, although both remain the top destination of choice for each other's students.

The latest figures from IIE come at the same time as a **NAFSA report reveals** foreign students and their dependants contributed \$17.6bn (£10.5bn) to the US economy in 2008-09. **This newsletter noted in its last issue** a Universities UK report that stated HE earned £5.3bn for the UK economy. According to Alan Goodman, President of the IIE, **quoted in the New York Times**, the surge in international enrolments may be a result of US colleges and universities boosting numbers in order to keep courses open during the recession.

Despite the overall increase the **US Council of Graduate Schools released figures** earlier this month which showed zero growth in first-time enrolment of international students at US graduate schools in 2008-09. This followed four years of growth, though at a slower rate year-on-year.

International students and partnership opportunities have been high on both the US and UK HE agendas recently. Earlier this year, a group of US and UK university heads **released a report** recommending closer links between the two countries by way of an Anglo-American organisation to foster such activity, and the **British Council last week announced** a \$500,000 (£300,000) initiative to boost UK-US university partnerships. The new 'UK-US Higher Education New Partnerships Fund', a joint project of the US Departments of State and Education, will promote international study opportunities. One priority will be to increase the number and type of British and American institutions that have links, with as much as a third of the money going toward projects in the community-college sector.

Top 20 places of origin of international students, 2007-08 & 2008-09

Rank	Place of Origin	2007-08	2008-09	% change
1	India	94,563	103,260	9.2
2	China	81,127	98,235	21.1
3	South Korea	69,124	75,065	8.6
4	Canada	29,051	29,697	2.2
5	Japan	33,974	29,264	-13.9
6	Taiwan	29,001	28,065	-3.2
7	Mexico	14,837	14,850	0.1
8	Turkey	12,030	13,263	2.0
9	Vietnam	8,769	12,823	46.2
10	Saudi Arabia	9,873	12,661	28.2
11	Nepal	8,936	11,581	29.6
12	Germany	8,907	9,679	8.7
13	Brazil	7,578	8,767	15.7
14	Thailand	9,004	8,736	-3.0
15	United Kingdom	8,367	8,701	4.0
16	Hong Kong	8,286	8,329	0.5
17	Indonesia	7,692	7,509	-2.4
18	France	7,050	7,421	5.3
19	Colombia	6,662	7,013	5.3
20	Nigeria	6,222	6,256	0.5

Returning to the IIE data, the figures, perhaps crucially, do not reflect the full impact of the past year's economic downturn, since decisions to come to the United States to study were made before the financial effects were fully felt in the sending countries. If partnership initiatives are to succeed under the current economic climate, a certain level of investment will be required to sustain student mobility. If not, next year's Open Doors report, which will cover the period of the downturn, will make interesting reading.

In Focus: Economic impact of international students

GLOBALHIGHERED

Surveying the Construction of Global Knowledge/Spaces for the 'Knowledge Economy'

Taking note of export earnings

Ahh – the end of the workday and time for a glass of wine: a fine New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, perhaps?

The first time we heard that education generates more 'export earnings' for the New Zealand economy than does wine, we were both knocked off of our seats, and not because we had too many glasses! We were surprised because New Zealand's white wine industry is world-famous – indeed almost as famous as Australia's tourism industry. But wait: here too, it is now clear that education exports (ie, the provision of education across a border, either physically or virtually) generate more revenue for the Australian economy than does tourism, and is pegged third after exports of coal and iron ore.

Recent data released by the governments of Canada, the UK and Australia all point to similarly striking figures. In Canada last month, for example, the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade** noted that international students generated 83,000 jobs, C\$291m (£166m) in government revenue, and contributed C\$6.5bn (£3.7bn) to the Canadian economy. The last figure is higher than Canada's earnings for coniferous lumber (\$5bn/£2.8) and coal (\$6bn/£3.4bn).

In 2007, the British Council estimated the value of education and training exports to the UK economy at nearly £28bn, which is more than the automotive or financial services industries. And just a few days ago, NAFSA, the US-based Association of International Educators, noted that international students and their dependants contributed approximately **\$17.6bn (£10.5bn) to the US economy** in the 2008-09 academic year.

It is increasingly common to hear about such numbers, and more often than not even experts within the higher education sphere are surprised by the significance of the impact of providing international students with an education. Given this, we would like to flag three key issues to think about when faced with these admittedly staggering numbers.

First, it is important to think about why these numbers are being sought at this point in history. We would argue that these numbers are being constituted, and debated about, in the context of an ideological transition – one that increasingly enables views to emerge of higher education as a driver of economic versus cultural-political change. For example, a decade or two ago, it would have been impossible to imagine creating tables such as the one profiled in **Kate Geddie's entry in GlobalHigherEd** in which education is measured against 'scrap plastics' or 'chemical woodpulp'. Thus, a new organising logic, to use Saskia Sassen's phrase, is emerging: one that reframes higher education as an urban/national/global services industry, for good and for bad.

Second, it is worth thinking about the emerging capabilities to generate such analyses. Interestingly, almost all of the analyses have been generated by consultants working on behalf of ministries of education, or ministries of foreign affairs and trade. It is noteworthy that there is little capacity within the state to assess such impacts, so representatives of

the state reply upon consultants with track records of studying an array of economic development impacts. Most noteworthy, though, is the increased involvement of ministries, other than education, in the sponsoring of such analyses. Thus, the reframing of education as a service industry is dependent upon a reconfiguration of the responsibilities of ministries for the education sphere, such that ministries of trade, as well as immigration and sometimes foreign affairs, are coming into the picture. This emerging trend has huge implications for the future of the governance of higher education.



But what of the value?

Third, there is striking variation in the nature and quality of the analytical models adopted by ministries, and their consultants, in accounting for the economic impact of education exports. Despite our comment above about emerging capacity to assess such impacts, and of the role of more powerful ministries in this analytical exercise, the numbers are not yet comparable (nor, in some cases, trustworthy). For example, should all levels and forms of education be accounted for? Or, to what degree is national support (eg, research assistantships, fellowships, associate instructors) for foreign students accounted for in the analytical models on offer? These are but two of dozens of questions that could be asked about the numbers that have emerged to date. International comparability is impossible at this point in time, and one has to wonder why this is the case if the sector is so seemingly significant in economic terms.

In closing, the globalisation of education, including higher education, is undeniably creating a diverse array of economic, social, cultural impacts. The export-earnings issue is starting to capture the attention of powerful stakeholders, public and private, for-profit and non-profit. Yet the quality of the analyses to date is patchy at best, and certainly not comparable internationally. Why might this be the case, and what could or should be done about it?

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In Focus: Westminster in Uzbekistan

An alternative model of TNE

This newsletter reported on the outcomes of the 2009 UNESCO Global Education Digest (see IF45, p2) that charts 'the massive growth and diversification of HE over the three decades'. Universities have become more global in their reach for students and have extended their capacity to deliver awards beyond their borders – often encouraged by their governments as much as their hunger for students.

Uzbekistan is not noted for its hunger for international students or as a destination for foreign university activity. Few have any knowledge of this Central Asian country of 26m, 62% under the age of 26. It is a new country famous for its cities of Samarqand, Bukhara and Khiva, historical staging posts on the Silk Road. Independent since 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Empire, it has struggled to reform and rebuild its collapsing institutions over the past 18 years. The higher education sector has suffered both structural and cultural challenges: ossified structures, a collapse of integrity and trust, and an inability to reform to meet global challenges.

The government has, however, recognised the need to rebuild the sector and to initiate transition reforms to provide the calibre of graduates who can transform the economy. Reforms were introduced but were ineffective for a variety of reasons – in particular, professional inertia, structural barriers and pressing demands for international graduates. The government had sent 'talented youth abroad' in a scheme similar to those in other developing countries, but the impact was limited and the higher education institutions were ambivalent and protected, not being exposed to the forces of international developments as detailed in the UNESCO Digest. The plan was to close the foundation that funded study abroad and channel the remaining monies into a capacity-building project, a new international university assisted by a foreign university.

The choice was the UK and the University of Westminster won the contract to support the establishment of **Westminster International University in Tashkent** (WIUT) in 2002. WIUT was to be an Uzbek public university, part of the national HE system, but with separate governance and rights to provide UK awards based exclusively on the UK curriculum structure, delivered and assessed in English. The model was to build capability through locally recruited staff, to invest in their professional development, supported by the UoW and to build similar academic administrative systems as in a UK university as well as management support in-country. This was in contrast to previous models of sending students abroad or importing high-value academics from foreign universities.

From 2002 a phased development of undergraduate degree, then postgraduate courses were validated, in Business and Law, including a PG Certificate in Teaching and Learning, a critical part of the professional development of staff. The faculty has grown to 60, all with international degrees, average age 30 and eager to make an academic career. Administrative staff members have similar profiles and provide the foundation for WIUT's strong academic reputation and respect for the integrity of its standards.

WIUT is now ranked number 1 in Uzbekistan, to the rancour of other Uzbek universities. It has 700 undergraduate and 50 postgraduate students. It provides affordable international university education, is financially secure and has ambitious plans for research investment and further postgraduate development. It has extended the campus with new teaching capacity and sports and recreation facilities. The capacity-development model of investing in locally recruited staff, supported by a strong and integrated professional development programme and combined with robust regulatory and administrative systems, has created an educational climate that students 'love' (to quote them) and graduates that employers snap up. There are more than 500 graduates to date, with a 90%+ employability rate.



Tashkent Central Mosque

Alan P France

1st Deputy Rector (Academic)

University of Westminster and Westminster International University Tashkent

09:00 Registration and refreshments

Session One Setting the scene

09:30 **Welcome and introduction**
Glenn Sykes, Managing Director
The University of Chicago Booth School
of Business Europe Campus

09:40 **Keynote address**
**Quality, Price and Reputation:
A UK perspective**
Professor Steve Smith
President, Universities UK
& Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter

10:00 **Quality, Price and Reputation:
A business perspective**
(tbc)

10:20 **Quality, Price and Reputation:
An international perspective**
Mitch Leventhal, President of American
International Recruiters Council and
VC of State of New York System (tbc)

10:40 **Questions and discussion**

11:00 Refreshments

Session Two 'Theory' Workshops

Delegates choose to attend ONE of the
workshops listed below

11:30 **Future Pricing Models for the UK**
Professor Nicholas Barr
Professor of Public Economics,
London School of Economics
and Political Science

AND

11:30 **Perceptions of Quality: Prestige vs. Price**
Tony Westaway
Director, International Office
Loughborough University (tbc)

12:30 Lunch (hot buffet)

Session Three 'Practice' Workshops

Delegates choose to attend ONE of the
workshops listed below

13:30 **'The Price is Right': Cost Comparisons
and Reviews of Pricing**
UK vs. Australia vs. USA vs. Europe
Dr Neil Kemp
Visiting Fellow, Institute of Education

AND

13:30 **The Effect on Pricing on
Decision-Making**
Will Archer,
Director, i-graduate

14:30 Refreshments

Session Four Scholarships and Funding

15:00 **Panel discussion**

Chair: David Docherty,
Chief Executive, Council for Industry
and Higher Education

Wes Streeting, President, NUS
John Quirk, Director of International
Affairs, University of Central Lancashire
Mitch Leventhal, President of American
International Recruiters Council and
VC of State of New York System (tbc)
A business representative (tbc)

16:30 Closing statements
Dr Shaun Curtis, Director of International,
University of Exeter

Delegate fee:

Reduced rate: £299 + VAT

Full rate: £399 + VAT

**Pre-Christmas discount:
£50 off before VAT.**

Register [HERE](#)

Laws & Regulations

Nigeria opens door to foreign universities

In 2005 Nigeria's National University Commission (NUC) declared all foreign university branch campuses illegal pending approval of guidelines governing their operations. Such problems persist, but things have moved on. The British Council in Nigeria now seeks 20 UK universities with established links in that country to take part in a pilot scheme to offer education there.

In March of this year, the Nigeria Federal Ministry of Education launched a 'Roadmap for the Nigerian education sector' which addressed the themes of access, capacity, quality and funding in Nigerian institutions of higher education. Currently only 20% of Nigerian school-leavers secure a place at university in their own country.

Nigeria is the fifth-largest source of international students in the UK, with more than 11,000 students currently enrolled. Many more apply for places but are unable to secure visas. The introduction of high-quality 'cross-border higher education' is seen by the Ministry as one way of closing the gap between supply and demand. But as is the case in many other countries, Nigeria also faces the serious problem of illegal universities that try to fill that gap with poor-quality education.

This new initiative will allow UK universities to open branch campuses, develop partnerships with Nigerian universities and operate open- and distance-learning programmes in the country. The British Council, through the **PMI2 Connect programme**, has been working in partnership with the NUC to develop the cross-border HE framework. Those interested in participating in the pilot scheme should contact Bola Olaye of the British Council, Nigeria, at: bola.olaye@ng.britishcouncil.org.

At least six UK universities are currently involved in another PMI2-British Council initiative in Nigeria to market the EducationUK brand.



Foreign Education Providers Bill not tabled

The heading is a bit like 'Delhi traffic problem not solved', but we did say don't hold your breath. The Foreign Education Providers (FEP) Bill was not among those tabled for the Indian parliament's 'winter session', which began last week and ends around 21 December. Coverage of this in the Indian press was almost non-existent.

Human Resource Development minister Kapil Sibal is a major figure in the cabinet but he is clearly not getting it all his way. It would appear that the bill is struggling to receive cabinet approval. There are two other HE bills that Sibal wishes to see passed. One is for a new National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER – see IF41), the other for a new independent accrediting body. These will apparently also be introduced to the Lok Sabha in the 'budget session' in February.

There are a few plausible reasons for the FEP bill delay. Last month there were reports that **intervention from the PM's office** led to a redrafting and recirculation of the bill, though it was not entirely clear on what the concerns were. This week the **Telegraph in Calcutta** reported that the PMO had questioned the sequencing of the three bills and had suggested that the proposed NCHER – an overarching regulator to supersede the many existing regulators – should be created before proceeding with other reforms.

Other possible explanations, also **mooted in the media** for both finance and education bills, revolve around normal domestic political tensions: a re-emergence of opposition from within the governing coalition (which kept an earlier version of the FEP bill down for two years) or a realignment of left forces beyond the government that have the potential to defeat the bill in parliament.



Not aboard the legislative merry-go-round

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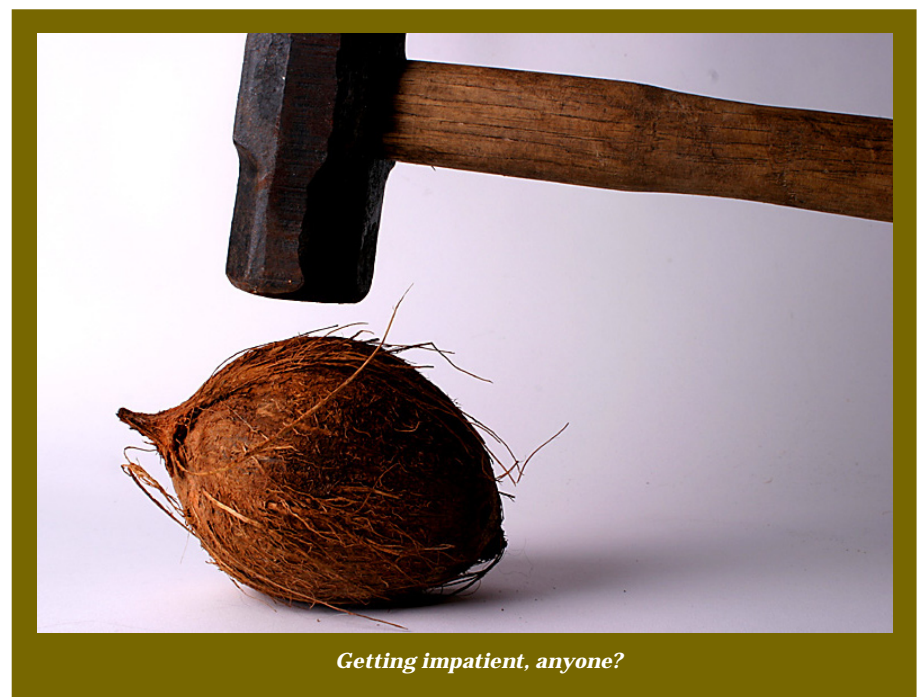
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If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding this newsletter and its contents or would like to bring to our attention news from the international higher education sector, please email info@international.ac.uk

Laws & Regulations

Review of student immigration: A sledgehammer to crack a nut?

On 12 November Gordon Brown announced a review of the student immigration route, ie, Tier 4 of the points-based immigration system. Regular readers may be wondering why a review is underway as the new system was introduced only on 31 March 2009. The answer appears to lie in suspicions held by the UK Border Agency that a number of private education providers had provided 'students' with documentation to enter the UK when those students were apparently unqualified to study here.



However, rather than review the accreditation arrangements for private education providers, the government decided to focus on qualifications and the review is considering restricting international students to study at NQF level 4 or above as well as possibly increased English-language requirements, limits on progression and work restrictions.

This potential restriction has major implications for UK universities. We know significant numbers of our international students were previously studying in the UK at other non-HE providers. Universities have also become either direct providers of foundation/preparation programmes for international students or have entered into partnerships with other providers to develop pathways into higher education. If students are already in the UK studying at appropriate institutions it is actually less risky in many ways than seeking to recruit them directly from overseas.

The review timescale is short, with a report due back to the Prime Minister on 11 December. Universities UK is preparing a response with input from institutions and any queries about the review should be directed to Catherine Marston at Universities UK: catherine.marston@universitiesuk.ac.uk.