

In Focus

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Building the pipeline: Incentivizing STEM in higher education
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San Francisco, USA
To register, please click [here](#).

Finding the balance: Access, new models and internationalization
8 February 2013
Los Angeles, USA
To register, please click [here](#).

Research and innovation in the UK – improving the commercialisation of research, and the impact of European reforms
14 March 2013
Central London, United Kingdom
To register, please click [here](#).

International Higher Education Forum - Competing globally in a crowded market
17 April 2013
Central London, United Kingdom
To register, please click [here](#).

Editorial

Happy New Year to all our readers. We hope you had a restful festive season and are now ready to face what will inevitably be a busy 2013.

January's edition of International Focus starts with a look at the UK government's December announcement of enhanced post-study work options for PhD and MBA students. Last year saw intensive negotiations and lobbying with government by Universities UK on behalf of the sector on immigration issues and it is encouraging to be able to report on a positive development for international students in the UK.

Also in this issue we highlight the recent publication of a new Chapter from the QAA's Quality Code for Higher Education on managing higher education provision with others – something all UK institutions will find invaluable to their international work.

And finally Ecuador gets a closer look following a recent overhaul of its higher education system to clamp down on under-performing institutions. The International Unit's Sean O'Connor looks at how the country is striving to bring its higher education offering up to international standards.

UK government announces new post-study options

In a recent speech, the Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced changes to the post-study options available to PhD and MBA students coming to the UK to study.

Stating that the UK government is committed to encouraging the brightest minds to come to study in Britain, Ms May announced that, from April 2013, all PhD students will be allowed to stay in the UK for twelve months following the completion of their studies in order to find skilled work or set up as entrepreneurs.

In addition, there will be a further 1,000 visa places available each year for MBA graduates who want to stay in Britain and set up their own businesses. The graduate entrepreneur visa, established in 2012, will also be extended to attract the best overseas talent, with the aim of encouraging the wealth creators of the future to settle in the UK. The full details of the policy are not yet known but implementation will be in April 2013.

The development follows the closure of the Tier 1 post study work route in April 2012, which allowed international students who have studied here (under the [Tier 4 student visa](#) system) to work in the UK for up to two years after graduating without the need for a sponsor. Its closure has been cited as a possible factor in reduced numbers of international postgraduate taught students and the Home Secretary's announcement is therefore a step in the right direction in enhancing the post-study opportunities for international students.

After a period of significant change, any commitment to keeping further changes in this area to a minimum is welcomed by the UK university sector.

In a welcome move, the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), in its report published on 17 October 2012, recommended that changes be made to the Tier 2 route including the inclusion of new entrant salaries, particularly in the academic sector, in light of the government's commitment to promoting science and research in the UK. If implemented, this should enhance post-study work opportunities available to graduating non-EU students by ensuring that the minimum salaries they must earn to secure a Tier 2 are realistic.

The Home Secretary also announced an extension to credibility interviews for international students, which were introduced in July 2012 following a pilot study. These are expected to be rolled out from the summer onwards. She also emphasised that the government has no current plans to introduce a cap on the numbers of international students coming to Britain, which Universities UK, British Council and others have welcomed, and indicated that the UK can now look forward to a period of stability on student migration policy.

Although the Home Secretary states that the number of successful applicants to study at UK universities has increased, the latest official figures for 2011–12 show a very mixed picture. While the total number of non-EU students enrolled is up on the previous year (by 1.5%, compared with 1.9% for EU students), the number of new entrants has decreased overall (by 0.4%). Whilst the figures show a marginal (2%) increase in undergraduate new entrants, the number of postgraduate entrants have decreased for the first time in 16 years (HESA 2011–12).

Whilst the commitment in the Home Secretary's speech to welcoming genuine international students seeking to study at UK universities is undoubtedly a more positive message than previous speeches, Universities UK has stressed the need to ensure that this is a consistent message, which is reflected across all government policy. UK universities have stressed that government support for sustained growth in legitimate student numbers is also required.

International Higher Education Forum: Competing globally in a crowded market

Universities UK, Woburn House, London, 17 April 2013

UK HE International Unit to host major international conference in partnership with Universities UK and Hobsons

Higher education is one of our most valuable exports, and the UK is a preferred choice of destination for hundreds of thousands of students and world-leading academics. But recent challenges to the UK's reputation include the impact of government immigration reforms, and the changes to fees and funding in England. Despite this, UK higher education retains the key ingredients that make it a hugely attractive prospect – as a sector, we just need to communicate them more effectively.

The International Higher Education Forum aims to help universities and other organisations overcome these challenges and find ways to work together. At the event you will hear from university professionals who have successfully weathered the storm, learn how our international counterparts have responded to similar challenges to those we now face, and contribute to a new vision for higher education marketing.

Early Bird
Rate until 15
February: £160

Click [HERE](#) to book
your place

Click [HERE](#) to book your place

Confirmed speakers include:

- Rt. Hon. David Willetts MP, Minister of State for Universities and Science
- Professor Colin Riordan, Chair of the UK Higher Education International Unit, Chair of the Universities UK International Policy Network and Vice Chancellor, Cardiff University
- Duncan Findlater, Director of Product and Client Services, Hobsons
- James Richardson, Director of International Development, Sheffield Hallam University (Winner of the 2012 HEIST marketing Gold Award for Best International Student Recruitment Campaign)
- Daniel Stevens, International Students' Officer, NUS
- Dr Shaun Curtis, Director of International, University of Exeter

Attend as a delegate and:

- Debate what the government and other organisations could be doing to support you in this crucial area
- Discuss latest developments in overseas marketing, competition and recruitment as well as dealing with agents
- Discuss with peers the opportunities for partnership and collaboration and best practice in recruitment and retention of international students
- Hear about existing opportunities designed to help you develop your international strategy
- Know where your markets are and find out what you should be deploying to reach them
- Learn how to enhance your international student experience with a view to improving retention and growth in this area
- Understand trends in international competition

Click [HERE](#) for the full agenda



Survival of the fittest

Following decades without proper oversight, Ecuador seeks to tighten up regulation and eradicate so-called 'garage universities' from its higher education sector with the forced closure of 14 institutions.

Charles Darwin famously perfected his theories of evolution while travelling through the Galapagos Islands, 500 nautical miles off the coast of Ecuador. Fast-forward to 2013, and following two turbulent decades without proper regulation of higher education, it's 'survival of the fittest' for the country's universities as the government seeks to rectify the errors and abuses of past administrations.

The 1990s and 2000s saw a tremendous increase in the establishment of new, private 'universities' in Ecuador¹. In the complete absence of suitable checks and balances to safeguard quality, many of these were operated purely as commercial concerns, with little or no regard for the value of the educational offering or for the utility of the qualifications awarded.

¹ Source document: 'Suspendida por falta de calidad: El cierre de 14 universidades en Ecuador', Guillaume Long PhD, Director, CEACCES (working document / unpublished).



Ecuador, Alausi, Chimborazo Province
© Steve Allen | Dreamstime.com

For unscrupulous members of Ecuador's National Congress – long tainted by corruption, and dissolved in 2007 to make way for the National Assembly, campaigning for the establishment of a local university and, later, angling for the position of rector of that same institution, was a favoured retirement project.

Acknowledging the deficiencies of the system as it had come to be, Ecuador's CONEA (Council for the Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education in Ecuador) undertook a comprehensive assessment of Ecuador's higher education sector in 2009. Its later incarnation, CEAACES (Council for the Evaluation, Accreditation and Assessment of the Quality of Higher Education in Ecuador), reassessed the findings and followed up the report with its own national survey by a team of experts in 2011, at which point Ecuador's universities were definitively graded according to quality, from 'A' to 'E'. Those in category 'E' were ordered to make drastic improvements within a specified timeframe or face closure.

The carrying out of university inspections and subsequent release of a report which graded the quality of Ecuador's higher education institutions was controversial after so many years in the absence of proper oversight. Far from shying away from the task at hand, however, in April 2012 CEAACES made good on its promises to clean up the sector and took the dramatic step of closing 14 universities. Those institutions ordered to close awoke to find a CEAACES seal taped across the entrance: *suspendida por falta de calidad académica* ('closed due to lack of academic quality'). The worst among them were so-called 'garage universities'; ramshackle institutions offering cardboard degrees to those willing to pay the price of tuition.

To give context to that decision, we should note that on the eve of the decision taken by CEAACES, 45 of a grand total of 71 universities in Ecuador were the result of the aforementioned boom in the creation of private institutions during the period 1992 to 2006. It is a credit to the reform process that those students studying at institutions required to close were all found replacement courses at alternative institutions (though some in the final year of their studies were permitted to graduate from their original institution).

The CEAACES project must be viewed in the context of wide-ranging education reforms, and as an integral part of President Rafael Correa's "Citizens' Revolution". Through raising standards and rates of participation, and cleansing the university sector of profiteering and malpractice, the National Secretary of Higher Education, Science and Technology (SENESCYT) hopes to 'reconceptualise' education as a public good in the national consciousness. The prohibition of fees in public (state) universities at undergraduate level, as outlined in the 2008 Constitution, has already resulted in an impressive rise in enrolments of Afro-Ecuadorian and Indigenous peoples in higher education – groups historically marginalised in Ecuador.

As it closes down underperforming higher education institutions, Ecuador is investing significantly in new ones, like the **Universidad Regional Amazónica IKIAM**, a major university complex which will be located in the Napo province to the East of the country. IKIAM will focus on developing areas of excellence in the Life Sciences and Earth Sciences and seems sure to attract the attention of overseas researchers thanks to its planned location in Ecuador's Amazon basin and generous funding opportunities from central government.

Ecuador's radical reforms to its education sector have already piqued the interest of institutions overseas. In November of 2012, six UK universities held meetings with Ecuadorian counterparts and

with the country's educational institutions as part of a joint-mission to Ecuador and Peru. The UK representatives also met with around 600 Ecuadorian students who were interested to know more about opportunities to study in the UK. Two of the six institutions will soon return to Ecuador to develop institutional relationships and build on opportunities identified during the November visit. Barring no surprises, presidential and congressional elections next month should see the re-election of leftist economist Rafael Correa and popular endorsement of the 'Citizens' Revolution' project. With £20 million already allocated for international scholarships through the 'Universities of Excellence' scheme, and with additional funding for English-language training of teachers and researchers overseas, international actors will watch with interest as Ecuador's reform of its education sector continues apace.

Generous funding packages are available for international researchers to undertake work at Ecuadorian universities and research institutions. Find out more [here](#). Learn about the 'Universities of Excellence' scheme offering international scholarships to Ecuadorian students [here](#) (Spanish). For further information concerning opportunities in Ecuador or to be put in contact with relevant in-country contacts please contact [Sean O'Connor – Policy Officer, Americas](#)



UK Quality Code for Higher Education — Publication of Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others

The Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Academic Infrastructure, which included the Code of Practice, is being replaced by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKCHE) and with it sees the publication of Chapter B10 on managing higher education provision with others.

QAA's guidance on study abroad and placements used to be included in of the former Code of Practice, Part 9 Work-based and placement learning. The text of this document migrated to the embryonic Quality Code whilst Chapters of the new Quality Code were being revised or developed and may still be accessed in [Section 2](#) of the document.

This document has now been replaced by two new chapters in the Quality Code. Aspects related to learning through study abroad or placements are now covered in the new generic [Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching](#) and material connected with procedures and policies, due diligence, health and safety checks, assessment of the appropriateness of staff and staffing resources, written agreements and quality assurance have been integrated into the new [Chapter B10: Managing higher education provision with others](#).

Chapter B10 has a broader remit than the former Section 9 (which was devoted exclusively to work-based and placement learning and study abroad). It is underpinned by generic principles that can be applied to the management of any arrangements to deliver higher education which involve organisations or bodies other than the degree-awarding body. Thus the Chapter applies to any arrangements a higher education provider might choose for working with others; the traditional concept of collaborative provision is just one form of this alongside others such as work placements, study abroad, joint awards and branch campuses. It reflects QAA's wish to capture both current higher education practice and any new developments in the future.

Chapter B10 now focuses very specifically on the responsibilities of degree-awarding bodies that manage arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with others (whether delivering learning, providing support, resources or facilities or providing placements or study abroad). It

signifies a step-change in approaches to managing such diverse arrangements: it is premised on a risk- based approach to working with others, and on the adoption and implementation of procedures to manage co-operations that are proportionate to the scale and complexity of the arrangements in question. Risk-based approaches and proportionality are key to understanding and applying the guidance in this Chapter.

In terms of guidance in relation to the management of study abroad, there is no substantive change to the guidance included in former Section 9. Chapter B10 includes a cluster of indicators related to strategy and governance and the text makes it clear that policies and procedures need to be in place for specific ways of working with others (such as study abroad) and that the management and governance structures for the various types of activity within a single institution are likely to differ. It makes the point (in the text associated with Indicator 2) that traditional forms of collaborative provision may be administered through a central 'Partnerships' or 'Collaborative Provision' office whereas study abroad might be managed through a 'Year Abroad' office or delegated to relevant faculties or schools. The Indicators which relate to due diligence (Indicator 6) and written agreements (Indicator 7) make it clear that a 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate and that both due diligence procedures and formal agreements need to be proportionate and tailored to the activity being undertaken. In terms of quality assurance, the Chapter includes more helpful information in relation to importing credit for study abroad (Indicator 11), dealing with learning opportunities provided (Indicator 13) and/or assessment undertaken (Indicator 15) by other awarding bodies. These issues had not been directly addressed in the former Section 9. Similarly, the Chapter includes a range of guidance as to how the Indicators would apply in the context of making joint, dual/double or multiple awards with other awarding bodies (nationally or internationally).

QAA is planning to host a launch event for Chapter B10 in the Spring and an announcement will be made on the [website](#). Questions or comments on the new Chapter should be **directed to:** **Sarah Butler** and **Anett Loescher**.



More UK students head overseas

A new report by Joan Anton Carbonell from Kingston University, Outward student mobility in the United Kingdom between 2006-07 and 2010-11: Growth in times of crisis gives insight into the current state of student mobility from the UK and provides some ground for optimism.

Although the longstanding situation of low UK uptake persists, **there has in fact been an increase of student mobility in the United Kingdom in recent years**. Improvement of promotional activities and support at both institutional and national level could go some way to boosting study abroad uptake according to the report's recommendations.

Levels of UK mobility are still below most of the main actors in Europe: the UK is 6th in terms of outward mobility through Erasmus, behind Spain, France, Germany, Italy and Poland. While Spain, France and Germany sent abroad no less than 135,000 students each from 2006–07 to 2010–11, the UK only sent 52,761 in the same period. Only around 5% of UK students have had an international experience by graduation. A positive development, however, is that while language students continue to be the core group of outwardly mobile students, a healthy growth can also be detected in areas of study.

This is the fourth edition of the report surveying 109 institutions and includes non-European mobility as well as Erasmus mobility data from 2010–11. This is the highest number of institutions involved to date and covers 84% of the total mobility in 2010–11.

The report's overall recommendation that there is **need for improvement of promotional activities and support at both institutional and national level** ties in with the International Unit's **recent work on outward student mobility**, the outcome of which is the current consideration of a dedicated UK Mobility Unit to be set up.

The report, Outward student mobility in the United Kingdom between 2006–07 and 2010–11: Growth in times of crisis, is available [here](#).



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Scottish students to receive support for European study abroad

A pilot scheme launch this month by the Scottish government will offer financial support to studying at EU universities in 2014/15.

Loans of up to £5,500 and bursaries of up to £1,750 will be offered to around 250 Scottish students attending European institutions in 2014–15. The scheme will be on a pilot basis to assess demand and benefits.

This will be the first time students studying in Europe will be entitled to the same bursary and loan support as students attending university in Scotland. Previously, students studying in Europe were only entitled to help with tuition fees from the country in which their university is located.

The Scottish government hopes the financial support will encourage students to study abroad and enjoy the associated cultural and career benefits.

New system aims to streamline application process for international students

A new automated applications system for educational agents and international students hoping to study in the UK promises to cut red tape and help stamp out fraud.

Applicants to universities, colleges and English language schools using Centurus ONE will be able to track and process their applications online in a single platform for multiple institutions. A document trail created by the system should help prevent abuse of the visa process and should reduce administrative errors, helping genuine students find a place.

Centurus is the brainchild of graduate entrepreneur Dawood Fard, 25, who came up with the idea during a business management Masters course at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). His inspiration came while on a business experience placement working in Delhi, where he witnessed the sometimes lengthy process that international students face when applying to study in the UK.

The launch of Centurus will simplify the process and reduce work for institutions and students and also supply a secure fee payments system through Uni-Pay, a leading international payments provider to the education sector. It can be used as a stand-alone system or linked to a university's own or existing systems.

The system can be used by education agents based abroad that help many students decide where to make their applications. To further combat fraud and protect students, institutions can use Centurus to share information on agents and rate them. Dawood Fard has been encouraged by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to discuss with UKBA how Centurus can help institutions comply with visa processing requirements, following a visit to UCLan by the PM.

Centurus is already in use at several colleges and at Glydŵr University's London campus, where admissions staff say it has reduced the number of queries from students about the progress of their applications.



OPPORTUNITIES AND TRAINING

Invitation to be part of Chile's innovation ambitions

Following a successful first round of applications to the Chilean government's Centres for Excellence programme, a second round of applications is now invited from UK universities

Chile has ambitions to become an innovation and entrepreneurship hub, and through the Chilean Economic Development Agency (CORFO), has established a series of programs designed to attract innovators, entrepreneurs and investors in Research and Development.

While Chile is already commercially linked to close to 85% of global GDP through more than 20 Free Trade Agreements (FTA's) with almost 60 countries, its long-term goal is become an innovation and entrepreneurship hub.

Part of this goal includes the programme, Attraction of International R&D Centres of Excellence, (ICEs). The purpose of this programme is to support the establishment of international research and development Centres of Excellence in Chile that will carry out R&D with high national and international economic impact. Applications are invited from international for-profit companies as well as non-profit international institutions.

Successful applicants must carry out research and development activities of excellence, be significantly renowned on an international level, and fulfil a specific set of criteria.

This programme provides support for the set-up and operation of a branch of the International Centre of Excellence in Chile, as well as support for activities directly associated with R&D. Institutional Centres of Excellence may receive a maximum of US\$12.8m in co-financing over 8 years.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and to apply.

Expressions of Interest invited for Study Abroad programme with India



British Council India invites expressions of interest from UK universities to be part of a Study Abroad Programme funded by the Tamilnadu government and managed by the British Council.

Deadline 31 January 2013

As part of the Study Abroad Programme, the Tamilnadu government will fund 25 postgraduate students in sciences, social sciences and humanities from state universities to spend a term at one of five UK universities starting September 2013. In addition five faculty members will also be funded to travel with the students and spend a term observing teaching and assessment practices and conduct research.

The agreement is for one academic year beginning September 2013, but could be extended by a further three years depending on the success of the programme.

British Council India will select five UK universities to participate in the programme based on their reputation for teaching, international student support services and commitment to engage, mentor and collaborate with the visiting faculty from Tamilnadu. Each UK university is expected to admit five students to the relevant postgraduate course and mentor one faculty member. UK universities are encouraged to apply as a consortium of five universities, though this is not mandatory and individual institutions are also eligible to apply. Selection of students will be the joint responsibility of the Tamilnadu Government and the British Council, based on academic merit and eligibility criteria provided by the UK universities. British Council will administer IELTS tests for selected students and the UK universities will award credits for student achievements.

UK universities interested in participating in the programme are requested to send their expressions of interest to the British Council at IHE.India@in.britishcouncil.org. Hard copies with the appropriate signatures should be sent to: The Director, British Council, 737 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002 India, by 5.00 pm (GMT) on Thursday 31 January 2013.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



Hong Kong Skyline
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Applications invited for Scholarships for Excellence – Hong Kong

UK universities are asked to encourage students to apply for the British Council's Scholarships for Excellence programme for Hong Kong.

The programme is the result of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the British and Hong Kong governments in 2006 to promote education links of mutual benefit between the UK and Hong Kong. In 2012–2013 there will be minimum of ten scholarships for students in England to spend a semester or full year at a university in Hong Kong. Each scholarship is worth up to £4,000.

Click [HERE](#) for more information and to apply.

ERASMUS MUNDUS Information Day

The British Council will be holding an Erasmus Mundus Information Day on 8 February 2013 at the London Office in Spring Gardens. The aim of this day is to support institutions interested in applying for and currently participating in action two or three projects under the 2013 call.

Erasmus Mundus is a cooperation and mobility programme focused on higher education which aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with countries outside Europe. In addition, it contributes to the development of human resources and the international cooperation capacity of higher education institutions in countries outside Europe by increasing mobility between the European Union and these countries.

Click [HERE](#) to register for this event and click [HERE](#) for more information about the programme, including full details of the 2013 call.

UKCISA training courses January 2013 – places still available

There are places still available for the following forthcoming one day UKCISA training courses:

- P621: [Tier 4 for experienced immigration advisers](#) – 22 January 2013, London
 - P622: [Making a Tier 4 application](#) – 23 January 2013, Manchester
 - P623: [Principles of Tier 4](#) – 24 January 2013, Edinburgh
 - P624: [Making a Tier 4 application](#) – 31 January 2013, London
-

Colombia Science and Innovation: events and commercial opportunities

Science and innovation is a key element of the UK-Colombia bilateral relationship. With Colombia investing some £500m per annum on science and innovation, there are huge opportunities for UK PLC. Current opportunities exist with major corporations in the Colombia, working across a range of products and services.

Click [HERE](#) for current opportunities.

The British Embassy in Bogota is also hosting a series of events to facilitate UK HE involvement in Colombia.

Click [HERE](#) for event details.

OPPORTUNITIES
AND TRAINING