

**The Continuing Internationalisation of Higher Education**  
**Notes from the Link Annual Lecture**  
**Given at London University 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007 by Sir Graeme Davies**  
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**1. What does the future hold ?**

To consider the challenges facing leaders in Higher Education in the UK and abroad we must ask three questions

Where is higher education now and how did it get there ?

Where does higher education go next ?

What is the international climate for higher education ?

This will require first a brief review of the various changes and developments that have set the scene for the future. This will then be followed by consideration of the issues that have been identified as central to the future development of higher education and the influence of the international pressures.

**2. Background to the Current Position of Higher Education**

The early days - University Grants Committee established in 1919 initially as a part of the Treasury - subsequently it became part of the Ministry of Education and its successors.

*The Education Reform Act 1988* - this set up the Universities Funding Council as an 'arms length' buffer body outside the then DES but accountable to the DES. The *Act* also made the polytechnics and colleges in England independent of Local Authorities.

*The Further and Higher Education Acts 1992* which created the new Universities and Colleges as well as the three funding councils - HEFCE, SHEFC, HEFCW. In Northern Ireland the DENI took responsibility for higher education.

**3. Student Number Growth and the Change in Resources**

There has been extraordinary growth in student numbers.

1939 50,000 students - (25% each in Oxbridge, Scotland, London and others)  
1968 200,000 (universities) + 60,000 (polytechnics and colleges) students  
1991 360,000 (universities) + 370,000 (polytechnics and colleges) students  
2005 2,287,500 students of which ca. 24% are postgraduates and 218,000 from 'overseas'

**4. Changes in the Student Population**

Not only has there been extraordinary growth in student numbers but the nature of the student population has changed significantly - the Age

Participation Index (API) has increased from 14% in 1985-86 to ca. 42% in 2004-05.

There has also been a very significant series of changes in the nature of the student mix through changes in the proportions of

- fulltime vs. part-time - now ca.39% of all students are studying part-time
- male vs. female - up from 43% in 1989-90 to 54%
- young vs. mature - now 55% of entrants are aged 21 or over
- there has also been a marked increase in the numbers of students from non-traditional educational backgrounds entering higher education.

#### 4. Diversity

Apart from those areas already touched upon there are many ways in which the sector has become increasingly diverse

- in the missions of institutions - teaching/research : vocational/non-vocational
- in governance arrangements - traditional universities/HECs/Companies
- in employment practices - tenured/non-tenured : permanent/fixed term
- in course structures - modularisation/semesterisation
- in methods of course delivery - traditional/distance.

#### 5. Where do we go from here ?

The core policies have been complemented by the proposed pursuit of endeavours in other areas particularly areas judged to be of national importance as well as those that enhance the diversification of income sources

- ensuring the effective supply of employable, high quality graduates required by the local, regional and national economies
- developing and enhancing research capacity
- increasing the commercialisation of research output either independently or through enhanced interactions with commerce and industry
- increased recruitment of students from overseas with priority given to programmes delivered in the U.K. but also to programmes delivered by distance methods or through collaboration with overseas partners.

Additionally there are severe competitive pressures on staff recruitment and mobility.

#### 6. The internationalisation agenda ?

As previously indicated there are now some 218,000 'overseas' students in the UK – that is in addition to the 100,000 European Community students who are treated for funding purposes as UK students.

This is a 'big' business since 'overseas' student fees bring in ca. £1.5 billion annually and the economy benefits by at least as much again in their spend on living costs.

But there is serious competition amongst the provider nations. The numbers of students studying outside their home country has increased from 1.8M to 2.6M in recent years. During that time the Market Share of the competitor countries has changed significantly

	Market Share %	
	2000	2004
USA	25.3	21.6
UK	11.9	11.3
Germany	10.0	9.8
France	7.3	9.0
Australia	5.6	6.3
Canada	6.1	5.0
New Zealand	0.4	2.6

The origins of overseas students are also changing significantly as there are changes in regional prosperity and demand. This increased demand is based on projected growth in household wealth, increased demand for higher education, the lack of capacity in some countries to meet this demand, and growing interest in studying overseas. This is particularly the case for countries like China and India.

Here there are also clear signs that economic demands are having a significant impact.

## 7. Strategies for enhancing internationalisation

As a result of the recognition of the economic and operational values of enhancing the numbers of international students a range of strategies are being pursued aimed at improving the market position and the market share

Among these are

- split degrees
- off-shore campuses
- franchising arrangements
- working with in-country partners/agents
- adopting mixed mode provision
- promotional Government initiatives e.g. PMI and EducationUK, UKIERI
- increasing the availability of visas

- allowing spouses to work
- making employment during and after study possible

Some countries have strategically aligned immigration policies with other policies to attract international students. Immigration policies that are used to target a high-skill labour force may also encourage the best and the brightest students to apply for graduate and postgraduate studies with the further prospect of obtaining permanent residency and long-term employment in the host country.

English-speaking countries have a language advantage when it comes to attracting international students. English is the language most used in international communications and global business. Non-English speaking countries are increasingly offering programs in English to appeal to international students.

As the student marketplace becomes increasingly globalised and competition intensifies, it may be difficult for some institutions to begin recruiting international students, if they have not done so already, and for others to substantially increase their numbers, particularly if there is no coordinated support at the national or regional level.

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