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Events

MAUNIMO - Mapping University Mobility of Staff and Students Conference
4-5 September 2012
Oslo, Norway
To find out more and to register, please click [here](#).

EUA Doctoral Week
23-27 September 2012
Stockholm, Sweden
To find out more and to register, please click [here](#).

7th European Quality Assurance Forum
22-24 November 2012
Tallinn, Estonia
To find out more and to register, please click [here](#).

This is the first edition of International Focus which includes information about what is happening in Europe - replacing the European Matters newsletter. We hope you find this of interest but please do let us know your thoughts and give us your feedback. Email info@international.ac.uk

Consortia, Networks, Alliances and the International Agenda

As national and international markets in higher education become increasingly complex and competitive, more and more higher education institutions (HEIs) in the UK are teaming up with like-minded partners to make the most of their shared advantages.

While institutional collaboration can take a number of forms - ranging from bi-lateral partnerships between universities to project specific collaborations - some institutions are finding that groups and networks offer new and sustainable ways of harnessing international opportunities.

While some established consortia are growing in size - the British Universities Iraq Consortium has welcomed five new members over the last year - new alliances are forming to take advantage of new international opportunities. Following a British Council visit to Colombia, four of the participating universities, Brunel, Leicester, Southampton and Swansea, have joined forces to strengthen their potential for collaboration with Colombian institutions. Last year the new consortium signed an agreement with the Colombian Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, Colciencias, to develop research and curriculum partnerships with Colombian institutions with similar priorities.

Alongside the provision of English language training (where required) and a range of PhD scholarships, each of the universities has undertaken to provide research and curriculum collaboration across the four consortium universities and their Colombian partners. Four symposia are planned on priority subject areas with the aim of developing joint projects, one commencing each year between now and 2015. It is hoped that an international symposium will take place at the Colombian embassy in London to accompany the first meeting.

Just as new consortia are forming, so existing ones are adapting to make the most of international opportunities. One way in which this is happening is through the extension of national programmes to encompass international objectives. The White Rose Consortium - a partnership of the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York - is keen to expand its national programmes in international directions. It is in the process of reviewing its internationalisation strategy, and plans to expand the Consortium's highly successful doctoral activity - a £16 million Social Science Doctoral Training Centre and a £6 million doctoral training partnership in the area of mechanistic biology - to encompass international postgraduate students and enable doctoral candidates to benefit from centres of excellence overseas.

University of Leicester.

Swansea University



Brunel University

University of Southampton

(University of Leicester photo credit
Martine Hamilton Knight Photography)

Like the White Rose Consortium, many of the UK HE sector's consortia are underpinned by regional links and shared geographical interests. These too are being harnessed in pursuit of international agendas. London Higher, the capital's umbrella body for higher education which represents over 40 universities and colleges, has reported substantial success in promoting the capital as a destination for international study. London Higher has the support of the Mayor, his office assists them in promoting the city as a destination for international study with great success - international student numbers have increased by 22% since 2007 to over 104,000.

Around 31% of these are from the EU and communicating with the EU's various higher education interests is an important part of London Higher's work. With the recent announcement of €8.1 billion being made available for research in the latest call of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme, and £1 billion in Structural Funds awarded to London between 2007 and 2013, a coordinated approach to bidding for funds from international sources is crucial. Consortia are among a number of bodies that can provide valuable information to both funders and HEIs. Already London Higher and regional consortia across the country are bringing together their member universities to discuss how they can capitalise on the forthcoming EU programmes Horizon 2020 and Erasmus for All.

Shared branding is another benefit of institutions teaming up. Institutions with different profiles working under a common umbrella can benefit from each other's particular strengths and institutional identities in developing opportunities overseas. For example, a recent delegation of 23 UK institutions to Brazil - organised jointly by the UK Higher Education International Unit, UKTI and FCO in Brazil with support from the Science and Innovation teams in São Paulo and the British Council - included a range of institutions from major research intensive universities to smaller specialist institutions. In discussions with the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), national higher education agencies CAPES and CNPq, the Ministries of Science, Technology and Innovation, and of Fisheries and with private sector companies, Natura and Aché, more specialist institutions benefited from the global brand recognition associated with UK institutions with worldwide reputations.

Consortia of HEIs will always face the twin challenges of having to add value to the existing initiatives of member universities, and of having to represent the collective interests of all members without detracting from their specific missions. But as consortia in the UK increasingly demonstrate their capacity for flexibility and innovation in addressing the international agenda, it is likely they will make a significant contribution to the competitiveness of UK institutions in the global higher education environment.

Consortia: a new model for international universities

Attracted by 'safety in numbers' and the benefits of collaborative working, universities are joining forces and forming consortia to set up campuses and institutions overseas.

This model of international activity is being welcomed by governments, who can draw from the particular strengths of a variety of universities when setting up new centres of learning.

In Shanghai, students at the Sino-British College (SBC), a joint venture between the nine UK universities which make up the Northern Consortium (NCUK) and the University of Shanghai for Science and Technology, can choose to study either a degree from Liverpool John Moores University, Huddersfield University, Sheffield University or a pathway course leading to degrees from all nine UK universities in the consortium. The plan is to progressively add more in-country degree courses from the other partners as the project develops. This multi-university international campus is the first of its kind in China.

Jean Krasocki, Chief Executive of NCUK, said: 'Under the skilled leadership of Professor Ian Gow, arguably the most experienced manager of UK offshore university projects, SBC now has a total enrolment of almost 2,000 students and is thriving by attracting not only well-qualified Chinese students but also a growing number of students from other countries, including the UK.'

NCUK is the oldest and one of the most successful UK university consortia working in transnational education. For 25 years it has provided pathway programmes delivered overseas to help students progress to the NCUK universities: to date more than 20,000 students have gone on to study for a degree. It currently has 3,700 students across ten countries. Now, NCUK is looking to expand. Krasocki said, 'We are indeed interested in building on the success achieved at SBC to develop similar multi-university international college projects elsewhere and we are actively seeking opportunities.'

Elsewhere, the Universitas 21 network - which includes Birmingham, Nottingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow - has set itself a goal of 'capitalising on opportunities for greater shared/multi-partner delivery'. It already runs a successful summer school, held this year at the Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico.

Governments are now recognising the strengths of the consortium model. In April, Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, invited a consortium of international universities to set up the Center for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP) in downtown Brooklyn. The initiative is led by New York University and NYU-Poly and includes the University of Warwick, the University of Toronto and the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. As well as its mandate for applied research, CUSP will grant academic degrees in engineering and sciences.

The University of Warwick and its international partners had responded to the Applied Sciences NYC competition to set up world-class science and engineering campuses in New York City. In 2011, Cornell University and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology were given the green light to build a \$2 billion, two-million-square-foot campus on Roosevelt Island in the city.

Mayor Bloomberg was not the first public leader to invite a consortium of universities to set up a world-class institution. Each of the schools and centres that make up Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University, the brainchild of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, is being developed by a leading

international university. From the UK, University College London leads the School of Engineering, Faculty and curriculum for the new King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia were set up by an ad hoc consortium of the University of Texas, the University of California Berkeley and Stanford University.

The Applied Sciences NYC initiative has caught the idea of policy-makers around the world, not least in the UK. Speaking earlier this year David Willetts, Minister for Universities and Science, raised the prospect that consortia of international universities may be invited to set up a new university in the UK. He said, 'The next round of new institutions may well link existing British universities with international partners. A major city might wish to offer a site as Mayor Bloomberg has just done so successfully with his competition for a new graduate school in New York.'

Why are universities increasingly turning to consortia rather than going it alone? Jean Krasocki believes the model benefits institutions and students alike. 'Safety in numbers and the reduced reputational and financial risk that comes from collaborative working is often quoted as the major advantage for the universities. The advantage for students comes from the wide choice NCUK can offer by virtue of its university ownership and reduced costs, especially when part of the degree is studied closer to home.'

Unity in diversity: the rise of the international university network

In a globalised and globalising world, universities exist in an increasingly competitive environment.

International rankings, such as the Times Higher Education World University Ranking or the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities bring global competitors closer to home, while national and regional policy initiatives have become ever more preoccupied with ideas of 'excellence' and the 'world-class university'.



One response to this is the international university network. Mirroring the political multilateralism of the post-Cold War period, these networks first appeared in the 1990s. However, while the nation-state has undergone a resurgence in world politics, international university networks such as Academic Consortium 21, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, Coimbra Group, Santander Universities, Universitas 21 and Worldwide Universities Network have become powerful players which are often integral to institutions' internationalisation strategies.

The University of Bristol's internationalisation strategy, for example, describes the Worldwide Universities Network as 'successful, productive and well-established', and refers to membership as 'a key focus of international collaboration'. Similarly, the University of Kent presents its membership of the Santander Universities network as integral to its profound and longstanding European engagement.

For the most part, the logic behind international university networks is one of increased cooperation for more successful competition. For one thing, there are the material gains of joining a network: increased student and staff mobility, the pooling of resources and the sharing of best practice. For another, membership of an international network adds to an institution's international visibility, enhancing its reputation and legitimacy.

By bringing universities together, networks aim, in the words of Universitas 21, 'to create opportunities for them on a scale that none of them would be able to achieve operating independently or through traditional bilateral alliances'.

Of course, the shared characteristics of these networks often obscure the diversity of their objectives. Universitas 21, for example, aims 'to foster global citizenship and institutional innovation through research-inspired teaching and learning, student mobility, connecting our students and staff, and wider advocacy for internationalisation'. The wide-ranging nature of this mission contrasts with the Worldwide Universities Network narrower focus on the 'creation of knowledge and the development of leaders who will be prepared to address the significant challenges, and opportunities, of our rapidly changing world'.

The European University Association or the League of European Research Universities offers another model again - a regional network with a high research output playing a representative role in regional policy-making.

Finally, international university networks, like the Association of Commonwealth Universities, may also play a crucial role in fostering collaboration between institutions in developed and developing countries.

In the Communiqué of the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO underlined that 'institutions of higher education worldwide have a social responsibility to help bridge the development gap by increasing the transfer of knowledge across borders'. 'International university networks', the Communiqué goes on to say, 'are a part of this solution and help to enhance mutual understanding and a culture of peace'.

Even a cursory glance at the variety of international university networks which exist, and the variety of roles they fulfill for their members, reveals a rich picture of cooperation worldwide. In this context, it seems hard to disagree with David Stockley and Hans De Wit when they predict: 'strategic partnerships in research, teaching and transfer of knowledge, between universities and of universities with business and beyond national borders, will be the future for higher education, in order to manage the challenges that globalisation will place on it. Cooperation for competition and competition for cooperation: this will be driving higher education globally in the years to come'.

European News

European Union launches a new higher education dialogue with Southern Mediterranean Countries

Earlier this month the European Commission launched a new policy dialogue with Southern Mediterranean countries on education, higher education, vocational education and training and youth issues. At a two day event, hosted by Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Ministers and senior officials from Southern Mediterranean countries discussed the education challenges that they face and how the EU can help to address these.

While student enrolment rates have soared across the region, there is an insufficient number of well-trained teachers. Low salaries and a lack of professional development for teachers exacerbate this situation and insufficient funding is having a major impact on the quality and relevance of higher education.

The funding available for Southern Mediterranean countries under European Union programmes Tempus and Erasmus Mundus has significantly increased since the events of the Arab Spring. Tempus, which supports the modernisation of higher education, has received an additional €12.5 million in 2012 and 2013, bringing total spending to €29 million a year. Erasmus Mundus, which promotes European higher education and intercultural cooperation with non-EU countries, is set to allocate €80 million to the EU's Southern and Eastern neighbouring countries in 2012-2013, more than double the amount initially foreseen.

Speaking at the launch, Commissioner Vassiliou said: 'the European Union is ready to lend its support to political, economic and social development. We have therefore moved to anchor our new partnerships in joint commitments to the values we all cherish: democracy, human rights, good governance, rule of law and social justice. Education is central to our efforts. In order to reach our objectives of a democratic and prosperous Southern Mediterranean, we need to concentrate on young people'.

The new policy dialogue covers Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Syria may be invited to join it at a future date. For more information, please click [here](#).

Cyprus takes over the European Union Presidency



On 1 July 2012, Cyprus took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first time. The Cypriot Presidency's priorities are to ensure a more efficient and sustainable Europe; to work towards a better performing economy; to make Europe more relevant to its citizens; and to bring Europe closer to its neighbours.

The Presidency of the Council is held by each of the 27 Member States in turn for a period of six months. The Presidency's role is to determine the agendas of the Council, COREPER and other Council preparatory bodies, to represent the EU at international conferences and to facilitate policy decisions, helping to achieve consensus in a way that supports the Union's interests. The next Presidency will be held by Ireland, beginning in January 2013.

In terms of higher education, the Presidency will be placing an emphasis on quality assurance and internationalisation. It will also be taking forward informal negotiations with the European Parliament on the text of the Erasmus for All proposal with a view to reaching an agreement by early 2013. The Danes achieved consensus on the text as it now stands when the Council adopted a partial general approach in May.

Commission launches final call for Framework 7



The European Commission has announced the final call for research proposals under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).

At €8.1 billion, this last call will be the largest under FP7.

The Commission has identified a number of thematic priorities according to which the funding will be channelled. These include €365m for 'Smart cities and communities' and €155m for the 'Oceans of the future'.

One initiative announced for the final stage of FP7 is the creation of a €12 million pilot entitled the European Research Area Chairs. The Chairs will be hosted by universities or other eligible research institutions in less developed regions in five different EU member states.

The next EU funding programme, Horizon 2020 will be launched in 2014 and will run until 2020.

For details on the specific Call for proposal, please click [here](#).

European Commission Consultation

Migration policy, including procedures on visas and residence permits, plays an important role in enabling the entry of non-EU students and researchers into the EU. Migration policy also plays a crucial role in defining the rights of non-EU nationals and ensuring their fair treatment outside the EU.

Currently, there are specific legal rules at the EU level on how students and researchers from outside the EU can come to the EU and move between the Member States, if the relevant period of study or research exceeds three months. To some extent these rules also cover students at school, volunteers and unremunerated trainees.

The European Commission is looking at whether these rules need to be improved and, if so, in what way. This exercise started in 2011 with an assessment of how these rules are implemented and how they fulfil their potential (Directive 2004/114/EC; Directive 2005/71/EC).

Now, the European Commission is launching a public consultation on the revision of the Students and Researchers Directives open to individuals/organisations all over the world.

To access the consultation please click [here](#).

The deadline is 23 August 2012. The results of the consultation will feed into the Impact Assessment on the revision of the two Directives.

Sector Consultation on a National Strategy for Outward Student Mobility

The International Unit is managing this consultation on behalf of the National Strategy Steering Committee which is chaired by Professor Colin Riordan. Detailed options for a national strategy on outward mobility and potential oversight body will be presented to the Minister for Universities and Science at an autumn meeting of the International Education Advisory Forum. This follows on from the report, 'Recommendations of Outward Student Mobility', published by the Joint Steering Group on Outward Student Mobility in March 2012.

Encouraging a more strategic approach to outward mobility will result in more of our students and staff experiencing the transformative effect of studying abroad.

The purpose of this consultation is to capture the views of a wide range of stakeholders within and associated with the sector.

To access the consultation please click [here](#).

Please contact Lucy Shackleton lucy.shackleton@international.ac.uk if you have any questions.

News

The Nottingham Global Network

The growth in transnational higher education is well documented, with UK institutions playing a leading role in delivering degree programmes outside of their home market. International research collaborations have also seen significant expansion in recent years with more and more institutions looking to build strategic partnerships to enhance the quality of research and magnify its impact. Cross institutional delegations have mushroomed as universities worldwide have increased their international partnerships and the number of MoUs has grown exponentially. Increasingly the challenge for universities is to turn paper agreements into genuine partnerships which are deep and enduring. And while teaching and research may often involve different types of institution, there are opportunities to link the two to build genuine institution-wide strategic partnerships.

A challenge for many institutions is how best to develop links that have originated in individual discipline areas into broad-based institutional partnerships. The Nottingham Global Network brings together a group of prestigious universities from as far afield as China, India, Europe, Thailand and Indonesia as a mechanism to try to address this particular challenge. The common factor between them is that they are all currently engaged in teaching collaborations with the University of Nottingham. For the first time the group met face to face in Malaysia, home to the University of Nottingham's Malaysia campus for over 10 years. There were two full days of debates, informative case studies and the sharing of best practice around the subject of teaching and research partnerships. While the first day was based in Kuala Lumpur, the second was held out at the University's campus in Semenyih, home to over 4,000 domestic and international students.



This was the first time that the University had brought together its teaching partners from across the globe. It provided a real opportunity for the partners not only to engage with the practice of teaching partnerships but also to extend their collaborations both with the University of Nottingham and with other partners in the network. Particular targets included broadening existing teaching partnerships into new subject areas and developing teaching links into research links.

The two day event culminated with the launch of the University's **Knowledge Without Borders Network** with a key note address from Dr Fernandez-Chung, who was at the heart of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and the Ministry of Higher Education for much of the last decade, whilst also maintaining an impressive academic career examining policy and practice issues in the sector. She talked about some of the challenges facing Malaysian universities, in particular the difficult balance between economic or business imperatives, and wider nation-building or ethical concerns.

As a result of the Nottingham Global Network event the University is now planning to extend the teaching collaborations it has with its own partners, whether it be dual or joint degrees at undergraduate or postgraduate level, collaborative PhD schemes or extending the relationships into joint research opportunities. And many of the University's partners were also able to identify opportunities to collaborate with each other across a range of activities. Plans are now forming to develop the network in the future and to meet for a second time in 2013.

Going Global 2013: Call for proposals



In the 21st century, knowledge-based economies will create the wealth, prosperity and wellbeing of nations. Research and tertiary education systems are primary drivers of these, playing three key roles. They produce cutting edge knowledge; they transfer, exchange and apply that knowledge to drive innovation; and they educate and skill knowledge workers. For these three roles to build knowledge and innovation in a globalised world, they must themselves be globally connected. Cutting edge research requires world-class research partners from across the globe; major innovation requires not only researchers but also businesses and investors to collaborate across national boundaries; knowledge workers need to develop international competences and skills to be effective in the future world.

Going Global 2013 (4-6 March 2013, Dubai World Trade Centre) examines the extent to which these roles and systems are already internationalised and what impact they have on the wealth, prosperity and wellbeing of nations, communities and cultures. The conference examines current practices, systems and delivery mechanisms and what can be learnt from these. The conference will identify future trends, and explore the challenges and opportunities these present for research and tertiary systems in creating knowledge-based economies and 21st century nations.

The call for proposals is now open. To add your perspective to the debate you are invited to submit paper or poster presentations.

The deadline for paper presentations is 17 September 2012 and for poster presentations, 23 November 2012.

For details on how to submit proposals and for further information about Going Global 2013, please click [here](#).

Report investigates the impact of studying in the UK on Chinese alumni

New research suggests that studying in the UK has a positive impact on the employability and career development of Chinese students who return to work in China. This British Academy funded research, by Dr Qing Gu and Professor Christopher Day at the University of Nottingham and Dr Michele Schweisfurth at the University of Birmingham, focused on understanding study abroad as experienced by individuals who perceived it to be a necessary investment and response to the demands for skills, knowledge and talent in increasingly competitive international and national job markets. Evidence from a national survey of 652 alumni and fourteen in-depth interviews suggests that over time, the personal and social gains from educational experiences in the UK continue to be important influences, especially in relation to their broadened world view and values, enhanced interpersonal qualities, professional sense of efficacy and social confidence.

Thus, although many struggled with social, cultural and professional re-entry challenges and disappointing returns on their human capital investment immediately after their return, most were able to enjoy the rewards of their study abroad experience in the longer term.

Sri Lanka as a knowledge hub



A report by John Fielden and Jane Knight, commissioned by the World Bank, is now available online exploring how Sri Lanka can promote itself as a knowledge and education hub in the region.

The report describes how Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and the UAE have developed their plans to be regional hubs. The lessons from these countries are that hubs cannot be developed without government funding upfront; that they need a concerted programme by several government departments as supportive policies are needed on matters such as visas, the qualifications framework, quality assurance and work permits; and the overall objectives of the hub strategy must be clear.

You can read a copy of the report [here](#).

Graduate employability - Huddersfield hits the right note



The University of Huddersfield has consolidated its position as one of the country's very best for graduate employment. For the second year running, the University is at sixth place in a national league table that is based on data compiled by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

In carrying out its 2010-2011 survey of the destination of leavers of higher education, HESA found that 93.5% of Huddersfield graduates had found jobs or had moved on to further study within six months of leaving the university.

Further details about Huddersfield can be found [here](#) and the HESA graduate employability statistics can be found [here](#).

1994 group appoints new Executive Director



The 1994 Group has recently appointed a passionate internationalist to the post of Executive Director. Alex Bols was formerly Assistant Director (Research) and Head of Higher Education at the National Union of Students. He is active on the international scene as a member of the UK team of Bologna Experts supporting developments towards a European Higher Education Area, and recently acted as chair of a national working group on the Erasmus fee-waiver. On the internationalisation of higher education, Alex said: 'I have always personally been passionate about internationalisation. Having lived in Brussels for three years as Secretary-General of the European Students' Union I can see the massive opportunities for universities for being involved in higher education beyond our shores and internationalising the experience for all'.

UK Aid: educating the next generation



UK Aid has supported 5.3 million children (including 2.5 million girls) to go to primary school and has developed a series of online postcards to promote these results. You can find them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) and [Pinterest](#). If you would like to share them please use the hashtags, [#ukaid](#) and [#changinglives](#).

#UKaid is helping over 5 million children to go to primary school. To find out how else they are [#ChangingLives](#) read the Department for International Development [annual report](#) or follow progress on [Facebook](#).

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