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21-22 June 2010
UCAS International Recruitment and Admissions Conference
London, UK

22 June 2010
The Changing Academic Profession
London, UK

22-23 June
The Higher Education Academy Annual Conference
Hatfield, UK

24-26 June
IAU 2010 Conference: Ethics and Values in Higher Education
Vilnius, Lithuania

The cost and value of outward mobility

On 1 July, all new federal student loans in the US will originate through the government's **Direct Loan programme** instead of the federally guaranteed student loan programme that has operated since 1965. Universities and colleges across the US are now in high gear preparing for this changeover, as required in the **Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act** (part of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010). The majority are reportedly now ready to go.

As we indicated in **IF36**, the issue for universities and other institutions outside the US was whether there would be continued access to federal loans for Americans seeking to study abroad once the programme was fully contained within the Department of Education (DoE). It turns out that there will be. A number of governments (not the UK's as far as we are aware) made representations to Congress or the office of **Federal Student Aid** (FSA) at the DoE. Concerns were expressed about losing US students but interestingly, FSA notes that these approaches were not motivated by revenue loss; they were rather about the longer-term soft-power benefits that accrue from having international students.

In a form of nationalisation, the legislation (which divided Congress across party lines in March) cuts out the lending middlemen and eliminates the fees the federal government paid to them (the government also subsidised and guaranteed the loans). Eligibility rules, interest rates and loan amounts will stay the same. Repayment terms will become more favourable to students in 2014: repayment caps will be lowered and those with good repayment histories can have the balance of their loans forgiven after 20 years instead of the current 25 years.

The plan is to use \$40bn (£27bn) of the estimated \$67bn in savings over 10 years to expand undergraduate **Pell Grants**, starting this autumn. The widening-participation agenda is at work here: more grants will be available to low-income students and their value will increase with inflation in 2013, from the current \$5,550 (£3,750) to almost \$6,000 by 2017. This is part of **Obama's 2020 goal**: to have 'the highest proportion of college graduates in the world'.

The US and the UK share a common problem in the hugely unbalanced numbers of international students going out and coming in. In our case **the ratio is about 1/25**. Both the **Welsh** and **Scottish** governments have modest projects to promote outward mobility, including though Erasmus. **PMI2 money** has also been awarded to universities since 2007 to develop and deliver programmes to facilitate the outward mobility of UK students.

But the American government seems more serious about responding to the imbalance. The mere fact of a standard open-to-all student loan programme for degree study in other countries is remarkable in itself. There is nothing like it here and it is not remotely the same thing as scholarships for the few – as desirable as those are.

The Americans also take it seriously enough to try to ensure that 'foreign schools' (as they call them) are up to speed on the administrative changes now being introduced. **A dedicated website** is running, foreign schools are **contacted directly**, and throughout June the office of FSA is conducting a number of 2-day and 3-day training workshops for foreign schools in Dublin, Rome, London, Birmingham, Montréal, Sydney, Auckland and Puerto Rico. Bill Taggart, the Chief Operating Officer for FSA, is now personally visiting these locations.

The federal government in Canada offers something in the same spirit, although financial aid for Canadians studying abroad is generally scarce. The Canada Student Loans Program will lend to Canadian students attending **designated international institutions**. A list of these is **here**; it contains most, but not all, UK universities as well as some other HE institutions.

Some provincial aid programmes can be used for studying abroad. In Ontario, the provincial programme (**OSAP**) permit its loans to be used for study outside of Ontario or Canada in particular circumstances. **One award** is for deaf or hard-of-hearing students studying outside of Canada if the language of instruction is American Sign Language or Langues de Signes québécoises. The OSAP website does, however, provide a **simple form** by which applicants can apply to have out-of-province institutions approved for designation by the province.

Back home, pages 4-5 of this newsletter offer practical guidance, from Sean McNally at the LSE, on the switchover to Direct Loans. Members of the US-LOANS Jiscmail list will know Sean as one of the UK's authoritative voices on the issue.

Markets & Intelligence

Cardiff connects with Latin America: Vice-Chancellor attends Universia network event in Mexico

Dr David Grant
Vice-Chancellor
Cardiff University

Cardiff University has a long history of welcoming international students and offers a multicultural educational experience. There are more than 3,000 international students studying at Cardiff, representing over 100 countries worldwide, including in Central and South America.

The university's international collaboration extends across the globe with many long-standing partners in research and teaching. Cardiff is committed to developing its international partnerships and attracting high-quality students from around the world. The invitation from the Chairman of Banco Santander to attend the second meeting of the Universia network allowed me to further this commitment.

Held in Guadalajara, Mexico, the meeting was attended by more than 1,000 Vice-Chancellors from 34 countries including China, Russia and the UK. The scale of the meeting was remarkable.

While we have some students from Latin American countries, our links are not as well-developed there as for other regions. This event therefore proved an ideal opportunity to learn more of higher education as well as to talk directly to institutions that were a potential match for Cardiff in terms of teaching and research strengths.

There was great value in having the opportunity to speak with senior representatives from other UK and international institutions at the meeting and to support the excellent work that has been undertaken by the UK Santander network. Cardiff was the first educational institution in Wales to join Santander Universities and it was beneficial to be able to extend our links with Santander.

It was also useful to gain some insight into the key issues facing the development of higher education in Latin American countries. These included the lack of academic staff educated to doctoral level, difficulty in competing with more developed nations and relatively low levels of research-active staff at universities in the area. The scale of the Santander network in these countries is impressive and the commitment to higher education is manifest at all levels within the organisation.

In discussing opportunities for further collaboration between the UK and Mexico, there was much enthusiasm for student and staff exchange as well as research collaboration. Individual meetings with Latin American universities sought to further develop these ideas.

The visit also afforded opportunities to forge closer links with CONACyT – the National Council on Science and Technology and officials from the British Council and UK Embassy in Mexico.

I was also pleased to renew contact with Cardiff's alumni in Mexico. Now successful in their careers, they were keen to increase contact with the university and to build links with Cardiff academics relevant to their field of expertise.

The focus of the Universia meeting was to bring together universities from five continents to address the important issues facing higher education, particularly how best the sector could answer to the needs and demands of society. The ongoing financial support of Banco Santander (600m euros (£500m) to 2015 to support higher education globally) is an extraordinary commitment in the present economic climate. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to the debate in a prominent way and I look forward to developing new partnerships in a more strategic manner involving Santander and addressing some of the key issues identified.

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Wolverhampton opens regional office in Cyprus

The University of Wolverhampton has launched a regional office in Cyprus to provide information and advice for potential students. The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) is based in Nicosia.

The island is close to Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt which have been identified by the university's International Centre as potential areas to develop student recruitment.

The new office has two members of staff, Anthie Panayidou and Tina Theophanous, who will offer advice on a range of subjects such as courses, bursaries and scholarships.



Laws & Regulations

International academic staff and the limit on economic migration

The UK coalition government's decision to apply a cap to the number of economic migrants coming to the UK will pose challenges for many sectors of the economy, including UK universities.

There is understandably very little information at this early stage on how the government may design and implement the cap but it will presumably apply to migrants coming through Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the points-based immigration system. These tiers are used by international academic staff joining the higher education workforce in the UK.

Over recent years UK universities have attracted significant numbers of international academic staff with non-EU staff now forming more than 10% of the total academic workforce according to data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

In 2007-08 there were 18,406 non-EU academic staff in UK higher education institutions. These numbers have increased notably in recent years with a 17.6% increase between 2005-06 and 2007-08.

Analysis of the HESA data indicates that international academic staff are concentrated in significant numbers in certain subject areas. These include STEM areas, with over 10% of academic staff in the biological sciences, physical sciences and engineering coming from outside the EU. There are also many international staff in social sciences and mathematical and computer sciences.

International academic staff tend to be younger than UK and other EU academic staff, with 21.1% of international staff aged 30 and under and 41.7% of international staff aged between 31 and 40. International staff are more likely to have doctorates than UK and EU staff. A significant number of international academic staff were previously international students in the UK.

The top five countries of origin of international academic staff in the UK are the US, China, India, Australia and Canada. Non-EU nationals account for 7.5% of staff at professorial level, 14.1% at senior researcher/lecturer level, 26.3% at lecturer level, and a whopping 40.3% at researcher level.

The higher education sector awaits more information on how the government will take these proposals forward and will be keen to highlight the major contribution made by international academic staff to the teaching, research and knowledge exchange that takes place within UK universities.

The success of the UK's higher education sector depends on our ability to attract highly talented people. Anything that diminishes that will have a detrimental impact on our universities.



Let's get more academic staff through here

In Focus: American students and federal loans

The switch to Direct Loans

In March 2010, President Obama signed the Bill which, in broad terms, reined in the issuing of student loans from private lenders to the federal government. Hence the moniker 'direct lending'. Foreign schools have never been eligible for Direct Loans, partly because it involves the school drawing down the loan funds directly from the government's bank account. The President gave an assurance that students at foreign schools would not be disadvantaged by direct lending and the law was changed to allow foreign schools to participate. From 01 July 2010 the only federal loans available to American students will be Direct Loans.

The 'I don't know yet' effect

The how-to-do-it remains a mystery given that foreign schools do not work in an American way, do not have student records systems which can interface with Direct Lending (all our UK student systems have interfaces with the UK Student Loan Company), do not have bank accounts which match US systems, nor secure personal government identities, such as Social Security (National Insurance) numbers. This lack of lead time poses several problems for recruiters, admissions offices, and student finance offices in the UK, and frustrations for those students and applicants due in autumn 2010 when the only answer they can get from anyone is 'I don't know yet'.

Apply under the old system

Some students are trying to apply to lenders under the old system before 01 July hoping that all will be fine. Officers in HEIs are now being asked to certify loans but the reality is that students are seeking loans for an educational period which starts after 01 July 2010 for which the complete process – application, certification, confirmation of student status (current attendance) and payment of funds – cannot be wholly completed before 01 July. 'What can I do?' asks the student, and the officer can only reply, 'I don't know yet'.

Get proof of funding for visa application

Students are asking officers at HEIs for some form of certificate stating that they have adequate funds for their studies in the UK. But no HEI will issue such certificates without proof that students can actually get full funding because part of the loans are subject to credit-worthiness and application may be declined. 'What can I do?' asks the student. 'I don't know yet' says the officer.

Who can I talk to get this expedited?

This is a familiar cry at all times from students and especially of 'helicopter parents', in the belief that they just haven't yet gotten (interesting etymology) high enough in the chain of command. So the various offices of recruiters, departmental administrators, admissions, scholarships, student support, students unions and embassies are left running around internally only to be told 'I don't know yet'.

I've never had this problem before, you guys should ...

In the US, everything to do with loans is handled by the school and the student has little involvement with the process. If they have studied outside the US before, then they know the old system for foreign schools. There is little likelihood that they will know everything has changed, and a natural assumption that what they knew before is what should happen now. This assumption is reinforced when they hear, 'I don't know yet'.

When will we know and how?

The US Department of Education (DoE) has been and (given their lack of available preparation time) probably still are furiously working on the software and interfaces to allow foreign schools to access their systems and expect that all will be revealed in June when the foreign schools team will be touring the globe running training courses including the use of the newly developed software. For Europe the courses are three days each in London, Dublin and Rome with only 80 places at each. For more details click [HERE](#). At the time of writing, it looked as though there was nothing that schools could do to certify loans until 01 July, but hopefully the training courses will have supplied us with that information.

DoE trainers will be sent out with a full brief of what we are required to know, covering both procedures and regulations, which may or may not have a strong bias towards essential processing information down to the level of, 'then click here ...' To expand on this and fill in any gaps after the training sessions in June, there will be a conference at LSE on 12 July.

The British Council, within the British Embassy in Washington DC, are working with the DoE and the UK visa and consular offices throughout the States so that these offices can be co-ordinated in knowing what documentation for loans will be acceptable as soon as training is completed and suitable certificate templates are created and agreed.

In Focus: American students and federal loans

The switch to Direct Loans continued...

BUFDG (British Universities Finance Directors Group) are also working to keep finance directors aware of the problems, the likely effects on cashflow, fee payments and any compliance issues which might affect their ability to continue in the loan scheme.

LSE owns the listserv which is the forum to discuss issues surrounding administration and federal regulatory compliance for US Loans. Members use it to request and give very practical help on processing as well as issues of regulation. No question is deemed to be too simple! Anyone who is not yet a member can join by clicking **HERE**.

What to do now

Make sure that members of whichever office process loans have:

- Read that website thoroughly.
- Ensured they have access to SAIG (Student Aid Internet Gateway) or apply for it immediately.
- Downloaded the essential documents, had them signed by the Vice Chancellor and returned to USDE before end May. The second set of documents does not yet need to be submitted and can wait until after training courses.
- Booked for training in June.
- Changed their university website regarding US loans to make sure that all information has been removed regarding the old system of loan applications.
- Join the listserv.

What to tell students and applicants

Provide some assurances on your website along the lines of:

- Although everything has changed to direct lending, you will still be entitled to loans as before as foreign schools are now being allowed to participate in the program (American spelling).
- New systems are being developed for foreign schools and which will not be available until mid June along with training for our staff.
- Don't panic, but start now by applying to FAFSA for eligibility and get your electronic SAR.
- Bookmark [your university's website and keep watching for changes after mid June.
- We know this may be a tight timescale for visa applications, but there is nothing the school can do or tell you until after about mid June.

Final Words ...

This is going to be an 'interesting time' but not an impossible one.

Sean McNally
Fees Manager, LSE

In Focus: VAT rules and UK universities

New VAT package could spell increased costs for UK universities

The new VAT rules introduced on 01 January 2010, and further changes to be introduced in January 2011, mean that in most cases the place of supply for services purchased from overseas providers will move to the UK. This means that UK customers buying services from overseas will, in most cases, charge themselves UK VAT under the reverse charge mechanism. When the UK customer is a university, they cannot usually recover all their input VAT (typically only 15% is recoverable). These changes mean universities could suffer more irrecoverable VAT costs, and the cost of buying in some services from overseas will therefore increase in real terms.



Where a complex service is provided (such as services provided by an international recruitment agent to both prospective students in their countries and recruiting universities in the UK), there is a degree of uncertainty in the application of the new rules. Because most UK universities use international recruitment agents ("agents") and the total fees paid are very considerable, BUFDG decided to team up with British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA) and set up a working party to consider the correct VAT treatment for services provided to UK universities by agents.

The working party agreed that the best course of action was for BUFDG to commission Counsel's opinion (from David Milne QC) to confirm the correct VAT treatment of these services under the new rules. Counsel advised that under the current standard UUK contractual arrangements, these services would be subject to UK VAT at the standard rate under the reverse charge mechanism, from 01 January 2010. He also advised that because a substantial service is provided from the agents to the students outside of the UK, in addition to the services provided to the UK university, making some changes to the current contracts (introducing new contracts between the agents and students) could potentially reduce the UK VAT burden.

The working party considered the possibility of commissioning alternative template contracts for use across the sector to better document the nature of the services received by the student and the UK university and achieve a more favourable VAT position. (These would have been based on the current UK HE International Unit's standard contract as drafted by Eversheds.) However, it became apparent that the costs for each HEI of adapting a template contract would probably be very similar to commissioning new contracts. Instead, BUFDG prepared a flowchart (below) which aims to outline the steps required; to assist HEIs in approaching their own legal providers for advice at a reasonable fee.

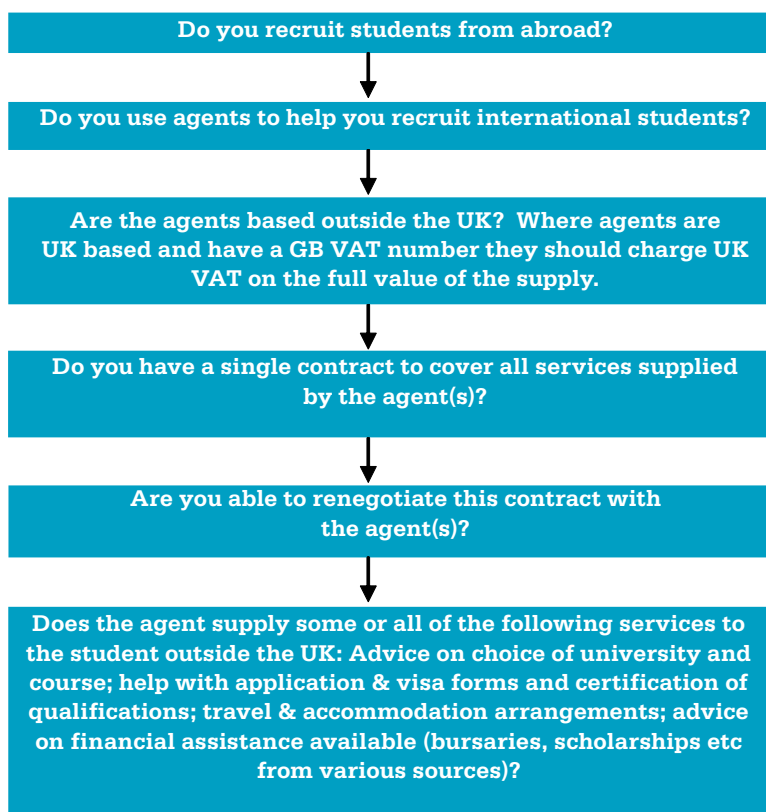
As an alternative, Eversheds have been working independently with a number of HEIs in this area, and have already drafted template documents. Eversheds are marketing these documents for the price of £1,000 + VAT. Most institutions will need to tailor the documents to suit their own needs. This could be done by Eversheds or another legal firm (there is no obligation to use Eversheds to adapt the documents). Eversheds would charge an hourly rate for this work but would be happy to agree a fee cap or work with regional consortia to reduce costs. This should be an effective way of working to get a solution.

Although BUFDG cannot recommend any particular provider, Eversheds' pricing is competitive and will be a good solution for some members, or at least a strong starting point. Ideally institutions will want new contracts in place for the September intake, so International Offices should start work on this as soon as practicable.

The working group is hoping to get together for one final time to consider whether there would be value in:

- Drafting outline guidance on communications with agents, and
- Some indication of possible changes a UK university that adopts revised contracts may need to make to invoicing and accounting.

Eversheds can be contacted at: 0845 497 1423.



Recruitment

Market Share: East Asia and the Pacific

The third in our series of articles on market shares of international students considers East Asia and the Pacific. Once again our analysis reveals significant variations in the market share enjoyed by UK universities within the same region.

Most striking – and we have made this point before, but it bears repeating – is the case of South Korea. South Korea is the second-largest international student market in the region, and the third-largest in the world after China and India, and yet the UK receives only 4% of the country’s mobile students. The US receives more than 60%. This huge gap between the market leader and the UK is replicated in the case of Japan: although our 10.5% of market share is comparable to our share of the Chinese market, we are dwarfed by the US’s massive 66% share of the Japanese market.

Relative market share of international students from East Asia and Pacific region

Country	Total mobile students	UK Market Share (%)	US Market Share (%)	Australia Market Share (%)	Largest Market Share (country/%)
China	421,148	49,594 (11.7%)	98,958(23.5%)	50,418 (12.0%)	US (23.5%)
South Korea	105,327	4,311 (4.0%)	63,772 (60.5%)	5,430 (5.0%)	US (60.5%)
Japan	54,506	5,706 (10.5%)	36,062 (66.0%)	3,249 (6.0%)	US (66.0%)
Malaysia	46,473	11,811 (25.4%)	5,398 (11.6%)	17,691 (38.0%)	Aus (38.0%)
Hong Kong SAR	32,726	9,639 (29.4%)	7,893 (24.1%)	13,536 (35.6%)	Aus (35.6%)
Indonesia	29,580	>5%	7,500 (25.3%)	10,536 (35.6%)	Aus (35.6%)
Vietnam	27,865	>5%	6,169(22.1%)	4042(14.5%)	US (22.1%)
Thailand	24,485	4,543 (18.5%)	9,082 (37.0%)	4,884(19.9%)	US (37.0%)
Singapore	18,207	3,201 (17.6%)	3,787 (20.8%)	9,429 (51.8%)	Aus (51.8%)
Australia	9,968	1,771 (17.7%)	2,859 (28.6%)	N/A	US (28.6%)

Adapted from UNESCO, Global Education Digest, 2009.

The cases of Korea and Japan are important for a number of reasons. First is the sheer size of these markets: an improvement in our share by just 10% would equate to more than 15,000 students. Second, there is the overwhelming dominance of the US in both cases. Australia’s share of these two markets is marginally lower than the UK’s, in spite of holding the largest market share in four out of the top ten countries in the region.

Although China remains the UK’s largest source of international students, it is worth noting that our share of that market is relatively modest at 11.7%. And although the lead of the US is less marked than in the case of Korea and Japan, it is still the case that twice as many Chinese students choose the US over the UK.

Other notable observations include our inexplicably poor performance in both the Indonesian and Vietnamese markets and the fact that we do relatively well in Hong Kong and Singapore, but not as well as the Australians.

The data from this region reinforce the point that market share is an important consideration when deciding where to expend effort in student recruitment. The UK’s historic underperformance in the large market of Korea and, to a lesser extent, Japan suggests that these are two countries which warrant more attention.

Research & Collaboration
A shared talent for setting the agenda puts LSE and the University of Cape Town on the road to partnership

They're both just a short bus ride from their national parliaments – and in that apparently trivial detail lies one of the main reasons why the London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Cape Town in South Africa have announced an institutional partnership.

Both universities produce research which informs policy, that is read by Government ministers and senior civil servants and which influences the public thinking of the nation.

This shared focus on producing academic work which is at the heart of contemporary society was one of the reasons why LSE chose UCT as its African partner, signing a Memorandum of Understanding in May.

Another was the international outlook which typifies the partners. Both believe that pure and applied research is strongest when it's developed in a world-wide context because it both draws on a global pool of knowledge and experience and puts the questions that need answering in an international frame.

The possibilities of the new partnership are exciting said Mark Maloney, LSE's head of academic partnerships: 'We hope to see an international summer school in Africa, visiting fellowships between London and Cape Town, joint research projects, training programmes for university teachers and perhaps even live simultaneous lectures in the two cities. In particular, we see much scope to develop a range of capacity building and other initiatives with UCT across the African continent both on bilateral basis and, with our other institutional partners, on a multilateral basis. '

This is LSE's fifth institutional partnership – adding to existing links with Columbia in New York, Peking University in Beijing, Sciences Po in Paris and the National University of Singapore. While the School already has links with several other African institutions it has long been interested in a full partnership on the continent where so many of the world's dilemmas and their possible solutions are of urgent interest. The partnership also fits neatly with LSE's African Initiative – a drive to reinvigorate its research and teaching about Africa which saw the appointment of Professor Thandike Mkandawire as the first Chair in African Development from September 2009.

LSE's international strategy is to form a small number of partnerships with high-quality universities round the world. Of course, individual academics and departments often forge their own links anyway, but at an institutional level the benefits of partnership can be to broaden the academic portfolio of research and teaching and create innovative opportunities for students who will be looking for work in a global jobs market. There are also benefits for LSE in raising its profile abroad, increasing the reach and impact of its research by fostering relations with corporate partners and policymakers, and strengthening links with its alumni.

The results for LSE in other countries are already clear to see – from an annual summer school in Beijing to a dual degree programme in Singapore, from student and faculty exchange schemes in New York to shared research seed funding with Paris. But LSE also believes each partnership has a different character and, as the ink dries on its new agreement with UCT, the two universities are just beginning to work on exactly what their joint future might look like.


Nigeria: Partnership opportunity

The University of Lagos is seeking UK university partners to offer joint and/or combined programmes through its Foundation Programme (formerly Diploma II Programme).

Students who enrol on the Foundation Programme at the University of Lagos progress to degree-level study after one year. Study may be completed there, at another university in Nigeria, or at an overseas institution.

The University of Lagos is currently in partnership with two UK universities (University of Bedfordshire and University of Central Lancashire) and seeks more partners for the Foundation Programme.

Interested universities should contact:

Nom Habu at the British Council: nom.habu@ng.britishcouncil.org / 234-803-402-2495

or

The University of Lagos: The Vice-Chancellor: vc@unilag.edu.ng / 234-1-7432457 / 234-808-199-7118

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The UK Higher Education International Unit is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Department for Employment and Learning (Northern Ireland), GuildHE and Universities UK.

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Research & Collaboration

UK government call for research proposals

The Department for International Development has announced funding opportunities for UK universities in two research areas.

The DfID Research Strategy 2008–2013 recognised that a key role for research was to help anticipate and respond to future trends and technology that will impact on the lives of poor people. To take this agenda forward DfID is now establishing two new research programmes, the Future of Aid and Beyond and New and Emerging Technologies.

1. Future of Aid and Beyond Research Competition

Research can help DfID to prepare for future challenges and opportunities, identify and better understand fast-emerging issues, such as the rise of newly powerful economies, engage with some of the best new ideas and help prepare for future 'unknowns'.

2. New and Emerging Technologies Research Competition

The New and Emerging Technologies Research Competition (NET-RC) will seek to identify the key challenges and barriers that may be reducing the impact of technologies (including those in the areas of biotechnology, information and communication technology (ICT), and nanotechnology identified in the Research Strategy) on the lives of poor people and help to identify some of the key technologies that could form the basis of further work.

Click [HERE](#) for more details on both opportunities and an application form.

Applications should be submitted by close of business (5pm UK time) on 12 July 2010.

UK-US collaboration highlighted through Fulbright

The US-UK Fulbright Commission this week announced 135 new participants for its 2010-11 educational exchange programme.

From a record number of applications, Fulbright selected a cohort of scholars representing a broad range of geographic regions, fields of study, backgrounds and institutions in the US and UK.

The group will make vital contributions to today's global challenges, including the economic crisis, HIV/AIDS and global warming.

Fulbright remains the only organisation to offer scholarships for study or research in any field, at any accredited US or UK university. Exchange schemes vary from the new Distinguished Chair Awards for senior-level academics and Police Research Fellowships, to this year's pilot undergraduate summer programme, inaugural Summer Institute on Climate Change and Sustainability, and first Distinguished Teacher Awards

Funding for the Fulbright Commission's exchange programme comes from both the US and UK governments, as well as partnerships with British universities to encourage scholars to take advantage of centres of academic excellence across the UK.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.