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Browne, the spending review and international students

What will be the impact of the independent **Browne Review** and the Treasury's **Spending Review** (SR) on the number of international students in the UK and the fees charged to them? We don't know, and nor might anyone until there is an indication of how the rise in fees for domestic and EU students will impact on the participation rates of those groups.

Although the fee rise introduced in autumn 2006 (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) caused a **one-year dip** in both applicants and enrolments, **Universities UK** noted in its first submission to Browne that participation continued to increase thereafter, and most quickly in socio-economic groups 4-7. This is partly because the negative impact of fees was countered by the introduction of loans and the reintroduction of grants.

If this experience were repeated there would be a good chance that the direct impact on international fees would be modest. And a paper by **two economists at Lancaster University Management School** concludes that there was no linear relationship between fees and international applications at 97 universities between 2002 and 2007.

Conversely, **THE** reported back in January on other reports and submissions to Browne. The Institute for Fiscal Studies, it said, predicted that a £1,000 increase in fees would lower participation by more than a £1,000 increase in loans would boost it. A study for **Million+** estimated that raising the fee cap by £4,000 would deter some 17,000 students a year.

These predictions now have to be seen in the context of the SR. The decimation of the government teaching grant (from £3.5bn to £0.7bn) makes it unlikely that we will see any improvement on the large number (200,000+) of UK and EU applicants that were unplaced this year. Add in the existing uncertainties over student visas and potential caps on international student numbers (absolutely politically driven if anything ever was) and what seems clear is that if there is to be an impact on international fees in the short- and medium-terms, it is going to be upwards.

The UK government apparently takes a different view. The **PM's comments** to a group of students at Peking University on 10 November were widely reported, here in the UK and abroad. He was quoted as saying that the domestic fee rise would do two things: ensure that our universities are well-funded and 'that we won't go on increasing so fast the fees on overseas students, because in the past we have been pushing up the fees on overseas students and using that as a way of keeping them down for our domestic students.... Foreign students will still pay a significant amount of money, but we should be able to keep that growth under control'.

Education Secretary Michael Gove went even further. **Speaking in Hong Kong** on the day before the PM, he said that the fee rise was an entirely domestic matter and that they 'had no plans to increase the amount that foreign students pay for their tuition at the moment'. (For readers abroad: international fees are entirely unregulated.) We have to make allowances for the fact that the Secretary of State was speaking beyond his schools- and-FE bailiwick, but are they trying to tell us something?

Best of all was the effect these remarks had abroad. Positive spin from Asia is a scarce commodity because of immigration restrictions but the Indian weekly **Tehelka** voiced its **approval** that the UK government was helping to 'keep the cost for foreign students in check'. And in the context of an article on 'aggressive' competition from the US, Canada and UK for Chinese students, **the Age newspaper** in Australia warned its readers that the UK domestic fee move was a hardball tactic to win Chinese students and take advantage of Australia's discomfort – thereby elevating the PM's miscalculation to the status of a **cunning plan**. Australia is going through a moment of introspection in regard to its approach to HE internationalisation but sometimes, in your quietest moments, you can get it wrong.

Colleagues of ours point out that international demographics may prove to be the most profound determinant on the international student market. India is an exception, but the **Population Division** of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs shows that in many countries – including China, Japan, Korea, Russia, eastern and southern Europe and the UK – the size of the 18-24 age group is set to fall between now and 2030. The **OECD** supports this. The long-term effect might be to reverse the current explosion in international student participation, in terms of both student mobility and TNE provision. Given that there is likely to be increasing competition for these students in any scenario, international fees could go south and the PM might be right, eventually.

Research & Collaboration**Research collaboration with China through SIN**

Scientists from leading UK universities have been learning how to develop collaborations with Chinese researchers. The UK's Science and Innovation Network (SIN), together with around 300 researchers, academics, university spin-outs and innovation experts, attended seven workshops around the UK to discuss how to develop collaborative links with Chinese scientists.

The workshops highlighted China's strengths in engineering, mathematics and material science, with relatively weaker outputs in biological and medical sciences. China is now the world's second-largest publisher of research and has as many researchers as the US. China co-authors more research papers with the UK than with any other country except the US and Japan. It is the UK's second-largest research partner in engineering and computer science and third-largest in materials and mathematics. Overall collaboration has quadrupled in a decade.

The workshops were led by Richard Mills and Will Hellon of the China SIN team. Participants heard how SIN can help universities to develop research links and collaborations through policy engagement, reporting, workshops and seminars. Case studies were provided on space science, low-carbon manufacturing and China's research and innovation systems.

Delegates raised a number of issues with the SIN team, including the importance of initial advice, particularly identifying opportunities and finance and in-country support. Also discussed were potential projects in engineering, biotechnology, nanotechnology, nuclear safety, marine sciences, health, stem cells, social sciences, and eco-cities and urban planning.

The workshops raised interest in the recent ministerial meeting in Beijing to discuss research priorities and how this provides high-level support for co-operation between UK and Chinese scientists. Concern was expressed that current UK research plans did not recognise the importance of developing links with China and that this required specific targeted funding. Participants felt opportunities needed to be grasped now in order for the UK to remain at the 'front of the pack' of international collaborators. Issues such as cultural differences, the importance of personal relationships and the very different research funding and awarding systems in China were discussed.

The Science and Innovation Network is jointly funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and works to facilitate collaboration and understanding in research and innovation. Further information can be found [HERE](#). It is anticipated further events will be held in 2011.

National High-Tech Research and Development Programme (863 Programme)

The Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) has recently published 43 calls through the National High-Tech Research and Development Programme (863 Programme) focusing on the application of cutting-edge technologies in certain key areas in the 'National Long-term Scientific and Technological Development Plan (2006-2020)'. It aims to strengthen the independent innovation capacity of China in high-tech fields and supports pre-commercial high-tech projects especially in IT and biotechnology. The deadlines for submission range from 08-24 December 2010.

Click [HERE](#) for more information or visit the MoST website [HERE](#). The lead applicant must be a Chinese citizen and will be required to register, submit standard application forms and other relevant documents online. Interested researchers are advised to find appropriate Chinese partners and consult them about the possibility of jointly applying for programme funds.

Salford and the Centre of Excellence for the Built Environment at Basra

The University of Salford is to set up an Iraqi Centre of Excellence for the Built Environment (CEBE) with the University of Basra, Iraq, to provide skills and knowledge as the country seeks to rebuild.

Salford will help the University of Basra to create its own research expertise specifically tailored to the needs of the Iraqi construction sector – helping Iraq's local authorities, industry and society work together with researchers.

'Multidisciplinary' work, relatively unknown in Iraq, will be a key feature of the project and it is hoped that innovative research can be undertaken by engineers, computer scientists and management researchers working together to significantly contribute to the rebuilding process.

In addition to research output, the new centre will train academic staff at the University of Basra to teach MSc programmes in areas such as project management. It is estimated that 5,000 students a year will benefit and academic staff at the centre will have the opportunity to take placements at Salford. CEBE will open late this academic year.

Research & Collaboration

UK universities working with developing countries

UK universities play an increasingly important role in the field of international development according to a report by Universities UK published last week. The report highlights examples of universities working with developing countries on a range of challenges facing the world.

In recent years there has been increasing recognition of the importance of higher education to development, with organisations such as the World Bank and United Nations emphasising the essential contribution universities make to economic and social development. Knowledge is undoubtedly a key driver of growth and development, and countries with higher-level skills are better equipped to adapt to challenges and maximise technological advances.

The report, 'Universities and development: global cooperation', highlights examples of collaboration across the UK, including the University of Strathclyde and the Malawi Millennium Project, Newcastle University's links with Bangladesh and Middlesex University and Uganda.

The report is available to download [HERE](#).

Liverpool and Laureate collaborate for online global EdD

The University of Liverpool, in partnership with the Laureate Online Education Group, B.V., has announced the launch of a new global Doctor of Education - Higher Education (EdD), one of the first professional programmes to be delivered completely online.

The programme, which has a first intake date of 21 April 2011, will offer professional educators, administrators and academics the opportunity to earn their advanced degree from the University of Liverpool in the UK.

The EdD offers students an international programme focusing not only on UK higher education, but on higher education as a global enterprise. The programme places great emphasis on the development of an understanding of universities operating in a global context. The focus is on the use of professional knowledge, academic and policy literature, and published and personal research to promote leadership at the heart of institutional development.

For more information about the Doctor of Education – Higher Education, click [HERE](#).

Teesside in global creative link-up

Teesside University is leading an international consortium looking to bridge the gap between education and the creative industries.

Funded by the European Union and the **US Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)**, the two-year **Atlantis programme** will see Teesside University's Institute of Digital Innovation (IDI) collaborate with colleagues at Gavle University in Sweden and the University of Iowa and University of South Carolina on the two-year €140,000 (£119,000) project.

The aim is to share best practice from Europe and the US for the delivery of education and training across a range of digital creative industries, and establish long-term networks and links between education and industry.

The findings from the Atlantis project will be delivered to the US Senate and the European Commission's Culture and Education Directorate General to help to inform policy development in educational partnerships with the creative industries and make students more employable. The first meeting of the partners takes place in Teesside in January 2011.

You, the EHEA and the Wider World - 01 February, London, UK

March 2010 saw the launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) following almost 10 years of the Bologna Process. The UK HE Europe Unit will bring together national, European and international experts to discuss the impact and the future of the EHEA in the context of the internationalisation of higher education. Confirmed speakers include Professor Colin Riordan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Essex; Dr Cloud Bai-Yun, Managing Director, UK NARIC; and Carolyn Campbell, Head of International Affairs, Quality Assurance Agency.

Date: Tuesday 1st February 2011. Location: The Westminster Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1

Early bird registration: £160 per delegate – book and pay before 23rd December 2010 (normal rate: £180).

Click [HERE](#) to download the conference programme and booking form.

Laws & Regulations

UK immigration: Does the cap fit?

The UK coalition government has spent considerable time over the last few months wrestling with the realities of its commitment to reduce net migration to the UK to the 'tens of thousands' by 2015. The commitment followed an election campaign in which immigration featured heavily among voter concerns.

As the government has uncovered the numbers previously buried deep within the Home Office, the parameters for action have emerged in a series of consultations, speeches and parliamentary statements.

First, while net migration covers mobility to and from the UK by UK, EU and non-EU nationals, the government can apply limits only to non-EU migration.

Secondly, workers form only a small number of non-EU migrants so a reduction in the largest-volume route – students – will be needed if the government is to approach its objective.

Thirdly, the government wants to focus on the migration of the 'brightest and the best' to the UK and restricting mobility by those who have limited value to add to the UK.

Finally, the restrictions on migration are to be accompanied by an emphasis on upskilling UK employees to reduce the need for migrant labour.

Yesterday's announcement by the Home Secretary provided more detail on the way in which non-EU work migrants will be limited from April 2011 and included a few comments on students.

The statement included a welcome recognition of the arguments put forward by Universities UK and other organisations about highly-skilled not solely being defined by salary through the creation of a new route for migrants of exceptional talent in 'sciences, academia and the arts'. However, this new route will have an arbitrary cap of 1,000 visas a year despite talent being a difficult thing to quantify.

The technical details as to how this route will operate are not yet available but the practical difficulties are all too apparent. Who will decide who has exceptional talent? Who will get the nod when it gets to the 1000th visa? An opera singer, a cancer researcher or a professor?

The limiting of Tier 2 to graduate-level roles is appropriate but the overall limit on Tier 2 visas to 20,700 visas for 2011-12 is quite low and is likely to continue the recruitment pressures that many universities are currently experiencing in relation to their interim allocation of Tier 2 certificates of sponsorship.

The Home Secretary also signalled that the consultation on student migration routes will soon finally start with a consultation document to be published shortly. The proposals are likely to seek to protect international students coming to study at universities and to protect progression routes from highly trusted sponsors into higher education, but subtle policy nuances may be lost on our overseas partners and prospective students and the UK again runs the risk of deterring international students.

While no numerical cap on international student appears likely, the consultation is likely to propose restrictions that will have the effect of reducing numbers by limiting mobility to programmes below degree level, limiting work entitlements and limiting dependant mobility.

As part of the consultation, it is crucial that the Home Office publishes its data on the different categories of international students coming to study in the UK. These have so far only been mentioned in ministerial speeches. It is important to know how many visas have been issued to students entering higher education, independent schools, further education colleges, English-language colleges and in the private sector and how students progress through different parts of the system.

This information is vital if the debate about the future student immigration policy is to be based on proper evidence and not anecdote.

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In Focus: IIE Open Doors 2010

International Students in the United States: Trends from IIE's Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange

On 15 November, the Institute of International Education (IIE) released the new Open Doors statistics, which are published annually with support from the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Overall, the trends are encouraging: the number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 3% to a record high of 690,923 during the 2009-10 academic year. However, the data reveal

a complicated picture of international student enrolment in US colleges and universities, with enrolment patterns varying widely according to place of origin and academic level. There were strong increases in the number of students from a few countries, but more than half of the top 25 sending countries showed decreases, resulting in a slower rate of overall growth than had been seen in recent years. Student enrolments were most certainly affected by decisions made in a period of economic downturn in many countries around the world.

While total enrolment grew, US colleges and universities did not experience the surge in new student enrolments they had seen during the prior three years of double-digit growth: according to Open Doors 2010, the number of new students enrolled in fall 2009 compared to fall 2008 increased by only 1%. With the robust intake of new students in recent years, however, more of those students stayed enrolled in US institutions in 2009-10 than those who graduated, so overall totals remained higher than the previous year at all levels of study.

Early indications of international enrolments for fall 2010, based on a 'snapshot' fall 2010 online survey conducted by IIE in cooperation with seven other higher education associations, show that campuses are seeing similar or higher rates of increase for both new and total international student enrolments compared to last year.

Countries of origin

Open Doors 2010 reports increases in foreign student enrolments from eleven of the top 25 leading places of origin, with double digit increases from China (up 30%) and Saudi Arabia (up 25%). Saudi Arabia is now the seventh leading sending country, moving up from tenth position last year and reflecting the Saudi government's substantial investment in study abroad scholarships. The top three sending countries—China, India and South Korea—comprise nearly half (44%) of the total international enrolments in US higher education.

Some other notable changes include: Increases in enrolments of 6% or less were reported from India, Vietnam, Turkey, UK, Brazil, France, Nigeria, Malaysia and Venezuela. Vietnam's 2% increase was relatively small compared to the more than 45% increases it had shown in the previous two years; Japan, with a 15% decline following a 14% drop the previous year; and Nepal's 3% decline in enrolment reverses the large increases of recent years, most recently 30% in 2008-09.

China and India

This year's growth in overall international enrolments was primarily driven by a 30% increase in

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Top 25 places of origin of international students in the US 2008-09 and 2009-10

Rank	Place of Origin	2008/09	2009/10	% of Total	% Change
	WORLD TOTAL	671,616	690,923	100.0	2.9
1	China	98,235	127,628	18.5	29.9
2	India	103,260	104,897	15.2	1.6
3	South Korea	75,065	72,153	10.4	-3.9
4	Canada	29,697	28,145	4.1	-5.2
5	Taiwan	28,065	26,685	3.9	-4.9
6	Japan	29,264	24,842	3.6	-15.1
7	Saudi Arabia	12,661	15,810	2.3	24.9
8	Mexico	14,850	13,450	1.9	-9.4
9	Vietnam	12,823	13,112	1.9	2.3
10	Turkey	12,148	12,397	1.8	2.0
11	Nepal	11,581	11,233	1.6	-3.0
12	Germany	9,679	9,548	1.4	-1.4
13	United Kingdom	8,701	8,861	1.3	1.8
14	Brazil	8,767	8,786	1.3	0.2
15	Thailand	8,736	8,531	1.2	-2.3
16	Hong Kong	8,329	8,034	1.2	-3.5
17	France	7,421	7,716	1.1	4.0
18	Indonesia	7,509	6,943	1.0	-7.5
19	Colombia	7,013	6,920	1.0	-1.3
20	Nigeria	6,256	6,568	1.0	5.0
21	Malaysia	5,942	6,190	0.9	4.2
22	Kenya	5,877	5,384	0.8	-8.4
23	Pakistan	5,298	5,222	0.8	-1.4
24	Venezuela	4,678	4,958	0.7	6.0
25	Russia	4,908	4,827	0.7	-1.7

Source: Open Doors 2010 Report on International Educational Exchange, Institute of International Education

In Focus: IIE Open Doors 2010

IIE Open Doors 2010 continued...

the number of Chinese students studying in the United States to a total of nearly 128,000 students, or more than 18% of the total international student population, making China the leading sending country. The number of undergraduate students from China at US institutions increased by 52% in the past year alone, and by 300% since 2006-07.

With the one-child policy in China, and a rapidly growing middle class, more and more parents are able to invest their considerable resources into securing a world-class education for that child. American undergraduate and graduate education is seen as the gold-standard by these parents, who feel that a US education will be the best preparation for a career in the global economy.

The number of students from India at US colleges and universities increased by 2% to a total of nearly 105,000. This was a much slower rate of growth than in the previous years, which saw increases of 9% in 2008-09 and 13% in 2007-08. As Indian higher education opportunities expand at home, and job opportunities are also expanding rapidly in India for locally trained graduates, it is not surprising that their numbers studying abroad is not increasing as rapidly as in the past. Recent reports also indicate that changes in the home country economy and higher education sector in recent years have encouraged Indian students to pursue graduate education locally or to enter the rapidly expanding job market in India once they secure their BA/BS degree locally.

Academic level

International enrolments at the graduate level increased by 4% to 293,885, and undergraduate enrolments increased by 2% to 274,431. The total number of international students in non-degree programs was up 6% to 54,803, despite the fact that enrolment in non-degree intensive English programs was down by 3%. However, looking at first-time enrolments, all of the increases occurred at the non-degree level. This indicates that more students are coming for shorter term certificate programs and exchanges.

Economic Contributions

International students contribute nearly \$20bn (£12.7bn) to the US economy, through their expenditures on tuition and living expenses, according to the US Department of Commerce. Higher education is among the United States' top service sector exports, as international students provide significant revenue not just to the host campuses but also to local economies of the host states for living expenses, including room and board, books and supplies, transportation, health insurance, support for accompanying family members, and other miscellaneous items.

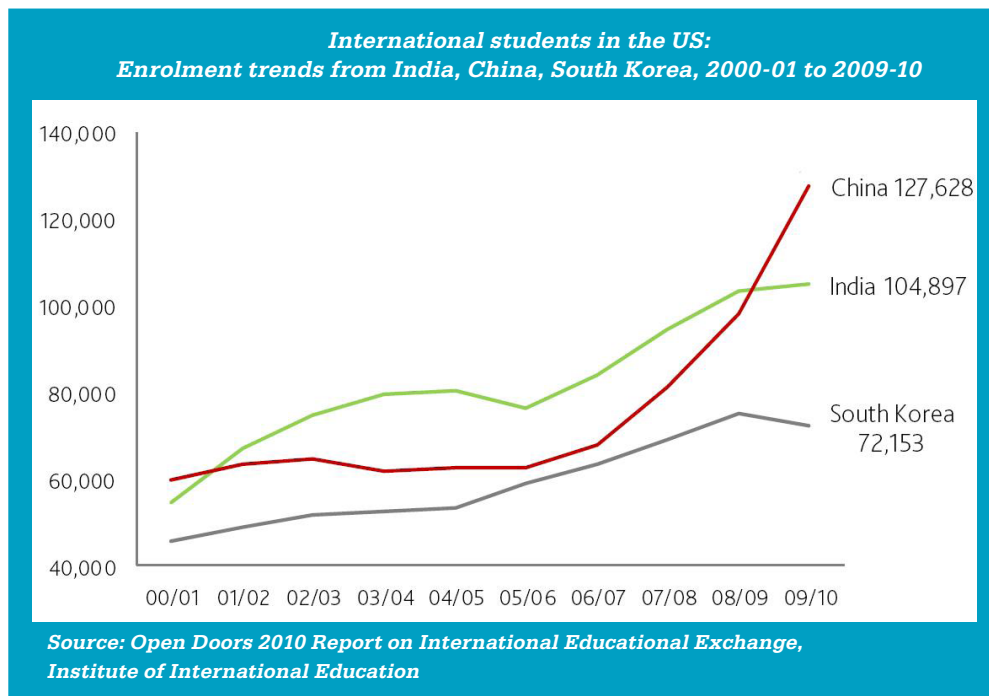
Click [HERE](#) for more information or to order the Open Doors 2010 print publication.

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In Focus: UK opportunities in the Middle East

Training Gateway to the Gulf

Education, training and skills in the Gulf have been identified as a key sector for education and training providers from the UK. For that reason a trade mission co-led by the **Training Gateway** and UK Trade and Investment will be visiting Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Qatar from 05-09 December 2010. The mission will have a particular focus on corporate training but will also provide the opportunity for delegates on the trade mission to meet with universities and colleges in the region.

Alongside 14 private training companies, the Training Gateway has six member universities and colleges attending the mission, namely Aston University, City University Law School, Loughborough College, Middlesex University, Teesside University and the University of York. This will be one of the largest groups of UK training organisations to visit the region.

The mission will be an excellent opportunity to showcase a wide range of expertise that the UK has to offer – both public and private – to companies and other organisations in the Gulf and there will be the opportunity to identify partnership opportunities.

The Gulf is an attractive region for UK universities, not only because of its relative ease of access in comparison to Asia but also because of the widespread use of English and large markets for leadership and management training.

For example, the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, which is responsible for training in the oil and gas industry, has recently modernised its training centre at a cost of £5m. KPC admitted 100,000 trainees between 2002 and 2008 and is continuously looking for international companies and universities offering new training courses in new and innovative methods.

In Abu Dhabi the training and development of the Emirati workforce is an integral part of UAE's strategic development plan known as Vision 2020. Besides conventional training opportunities in institutes of higher education, industry-based training is growing rapidly.

Good-quality tailored executive education programmes and training courses that are linked to specific industries and can demonstrate value in the present economic scenario are also of great interest in the region.

During the visit there will be networking receptions at the British Embassies in each country. In Kuwait and Qatar participants will be able to showcase their offerings to key HR and training managers at mini-exhibitions.

As well as opportunities for the delivery of corporate training by UK universities there will also be opportunities for university to develop a range of educational partnerships with universities in the region. Such partnerships can be for areas including staff and student exchange, curriculum development, joint degrees or staff training.

As government funding is reduced more universities are looking at ways to diversify their income streams and many are looking at the opportunities of delivering short courses, professional training and distance-learning programmes overseas.

The Training Gateway is helping support universities who wish to diversify or grow in this way by running missions to key regions across the world and facilitating access to commercial staff from overseas embassies and international training buyers when they visit the UK.

In partnership with UK Trade and Investment the Training Gateway has also developed a specialist training course, **Gateway to Export**. Its aim is to help university staff increase and develop their international CPD activity and to assist staff in researching, developing and implementing strategies to develop an international market for short courses and professional training.

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Future opportunities with the Training Gateway include:

Madrid: Business schools partnering event.
Jan/Feb 2011

Nigeria : HE mission to Nigeria for educational partnership development to support the growth of the Nigerian HE sector.
Spring 2011

Singapore: Corporate training mission to HR Summit Singapore, the largest HR and Training exhibition in SE Asia.
May 2011

Vietnam: Mission to identify and develop partnerships for the development and delivery of leadership and management training and other corporate training opportunities.
May 2011

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Recruitment

US international graduate enrolments increase

US graduate schools saw an increase of 3% in first-time enrolments of international students from 2009 to 2010. However, total enrolment was up only 1%, the smallest increase since 2006.

Over half of the institutions that responded to the US Council of Graduate School's International Graduate Admissions Survey in both 2009 and 2010 reported an increase in international first-time enrolments, with an average increase of 14%; for those institutions reporting a decrease, the average decline was 11%.

Changes in first-time enrolment varied widely by country of origin. First-time enrolment of students from China, one of the two countries that send the most graduate students to the US, increased by 20% and the Middle East also saw 7% growth. However, there was a 3% decline from India, the other largest sending country, though less than last year's 16% drop. South Korea also experienced a smaller decline this year (3%) compared to last year (13%).

The survey also included questions on a specific issue in graduate education; this year's respondents were asked to report on their admissions policies regarding applications from international students with three-year bachelor's degrees. Such policies vary widely but comparing the results to those from similar questions asked in the past show that acceptance of three-year degrees seems to be increasing. For 3-year bachelor's degrees from European countries, only 13% of respondents said they do not accept such degrees. However, for 3-year bachelor's degrees from non-European countries, twice as many institutions (26%), say they do not accept such degrees.

Change in international total graduate enrolment, 2006-07 to 2009-10

	Total Graduate Enrolment, 2006-07	Total Graduate Enrolment, 2007-08	Total Graduate Enrolment, 2008-09	Total Graduate Enrolment, 2009-10
International Total	7%	3%	2%	1%
Country/Region of Origin				
China	15%	10%	12%	13%
India	14%	3%	-4%	-6%
South Korea	2%	-2%	-5%	-6%
Middle East & Turkey	5%	7%	13%	11%

Findings from the 2010 CGS International Graduate Admissions Survey, Phase III: Final Offers of Admissions and Enrolment is based on the final phase of a three-part annual survey of international graduate student applications, admissions, and enrolment among CGS US member institutions.

Download the report **HERE**.