

FOR A FEW POUNDS AND MORE

A UK REPORT SHOWCASES GOOD PRACTICES ON HOW BRITISH UNIVERSITIES MANAGE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES. **SURBHI BHATIA** REPORTS



UK, one of the top destinations for international students, has entered a new phase of internationalisation. It is not only the money from international fees that UK universities are looking forward to, they are also keen to forge research partnerships and collaborations with other countries.

A recent report by the UK Higher Education International Unit, based at Universities UK, analyses how some of the universities in UK have been managing their international activities. The report titled, 'The Practice of Internationalisation: Managing International Activities in UK Universities,' takes up six case studies to present its analysis. The six institutes include University of Bath, University of Birmingham, Harper Adams University College, Napier University, Sheffield Hallam University and University College London (UCL).

"UK universities have become more internationalised compared to what they were 10 years ago. The report presents what individual universities can do to further internationalise," said Richard Trainor, president, Universities UK and principal, King's College London.

Internationalisation is defined as a

process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and services functions of an institution. But many institutes in various countries are not able to achieve this aspect. They recruit students only to generate money.

"In Europe there has been a debate on whether commercialisation of an education institute is good or bad. UK has moved beyond this debate. For many UK institutes, the commercial aspect of internationalisation can co-exist with maintaining academic excellence," said William Lawton, policy advisor, UK Higher Education International Unit.

This report presents how these institutes manage to integrate commercial and other dimensions of internationalisation. "In UK we are entering a new phase. We are leaving behind the idea that internationalisation is simply about recruitment and students from countries like India, China are just a source of income. The institutes are increasing research partnerships with these countries," Lawton said.

And what have these institutes done to manage their international activities? "We have presented a few good practices which these individual insti-

tutes take to manage their international activities. And it has largely to do with managerial and administrative aspects. The vice-chancellors of these institutes have taken initiative in terms of promoting internationalisation. The overseas offices of the universities have also moved beyond just operating as recruitment centres. One of the interesting models that we have suggested for the overseas offices is to appoint international students to run these offices in their respective country," informed Lawton.

The case studies also reveal that successful institutes have a clear policy on the development of strategic partnerships, showing what is expected of institutional strategic partnerships and the criteria to assess new ones. The university supports the development of strategic partnerships at the institutional and faculty level, provides funding where appropriate and monitors their performance.

"These are individual examples and there is no one formula for universities to achieve internationalisation. It has been only a few days since we have presented the report and we have to wait and see how other universities react," Lawton added.