**Benchmarking International Student Experience**

**TEMC Presentation**

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UNIVERSITY *of* TASMANIA AUSTRALIA

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**01**
# Benchmarking international student experience

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# Introduction and overview of literature

- Globalisation ⟶ alliances/networks with common interests/profiles (Debowski, 2012)
- Definition: Internationalisation can be defined as 'the *process of integrating* an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight, 2003, p. 2)
- Mission statements
- Organisational change strategy (Altbach & Knight, 2007)
- Conflicting ideologies/tensions: pragmatics of internationalisation, commercial motives, cultural ideologies, provide students with global competencies (Agnew, 2012).

- Very little reference to criteria to measure the quality of the internationalised student experience (Arkoudis, Baik, Marginson & Cassidy, 2012)
- Mapping/benchmarking tool for internationalisation- used for ranking purposes (Van Gaalan, 2009)
- Framework of internationalisation indicators- 5 dimensions (Krause, Coates & James, 2005)

# Gap in internationalisation literature

Explicit benchmarking of internationalisation <u>processes</u> and outcomes has not been undertaken for quality improvement and quality enhancement purposes

# International benchmarking project

**Universities of the West of Scotland (UWS) and
the University of Tasmania (UTAS)
February- July, 2014**

## The University of the West of Scotland
**Looking Forward: Strategic Plan 2008-2015**

For a University such as UWS, which has taken significant strides in recent years in increasing its international student recruitment and other activities, but is starting from a historically low base; this is a major challenge… Overseas, our principal approach must be to build our international activities through partnership working, ensuring that we use our institutional relationships to develop the whole range of our offering with our international partner **Internationalisation and Global Citizenship Strategy (2011-2015 p. 6).**

## The University of Tasmania
**Open to Talent: Strategic Plan 2012-Onwards**

International students compromise a relatively small proportion of our student body when compared to other Australian universities. By working in partnership with our schools and our state, we expect significant growth of this cohort (p.7).

**Engaged Globally (2013-2018)** outlines a set of goals focused on 3 themes: 1) engagement and partnerships; 2) internationalising the curriculum for global competency; and 3) international student recruitment.

# Comparison between UK and Australia

| | UK | Australia |
|---|---|---|
| **National drivers** | • Internationalise the learner experience to generate additional income<br>• Improve employability potential<br>• Improve position in university league tables | • Employability agenda<br>• Uncapping<br>• Global citizen agenda<br>• Recruitment of international students as a national economic indicator (New Columbo Plan $100 million initiative of the Australian government) |
| **Standards, quality and reference points** | • Higher Education Academy (HEA): Internationalising Higher Education: Framework for Action<br>• Self reflective tool<br>• Curriculum review tool<br>• Benchmarking and planning tool<br>• International Student Barometer (ISB)<br>• National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) | • Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF): Some examples:<br>• 1.3. 1 orientation program for overseas students<br>• 1.3.2 specific strategies to support transition including potential risks<br>• 1.4 Trends in rates of retention, progression, completion of student cohorts<br>• 1.5.1 Learning outcomes for each course of study are informed by national/international comparators<br>• 5.3.1 Students have opportunities to provide feedback on their education experiences to inform review and improvement activities<br>• International Student Barometer (ISB), University Experience Survey (UES) |
| **Regulatory policies** | • UK Borders and Visa Controls<br>• QAA Codes | • Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) and the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000)<br>• Institutions are routinely audited for compliance against the ESOS Act and National Code |

# Comparison between UWS and UTAS

| Contextual elements | UWS | UTAS |
|---|---|---|
| **Overview (size, location, student numbers, number of faculties/schools)** | • Innovative modern university dating back to 1897<br>• 16,000 students, 1400 international students<br>• 4 campuses<br>• 3 faculties: Faculty of Business & Creative Industries; Faculty of Education, Health & Social Sciences; Faculty of Science & Technology<br>• 8 schools | • Founded 1st January, 1890<br>• 30, 511 students (18,340 EFTSL), 5247 international on-shore fee paying international students<br>• 8 main campuses (3 Tasmania, 2 in Sydney, 3 off-shore (Shanghai and Hangzhou in China and one in Hong Kong)<br>• Faculties: Arts, Education, Law, Science, Engineering and Technology, and the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics<br>• 3 specialist institutes: Australian Maritime College, Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies; and the Menzies Research Institute |
| **Key targets** | • 2020 increase to 20% of students based in Scotland and by 2020 have 3000 students in TNE arrangements | • Increasing partnerships and agreements with high ranked universities, government agencies and increase state and private sector support for UTAS attracting overseas students<br>• Internationalising the curriculum<br>• International student recruitment of both onshore and offshore full fee paying overseas students |
| **Organisational structure** | • PVC (Internationalisation); Director of international Centre; Heads of International Recruitment and International Partnership; regional heads | • DVC (Students & Education; Global Engagement Unit; PVC Global Engagement; Associate Deans International in each faculty; Director, International Strategy; Associate Director, Future Students; Global Engagement General Manager |
| **Committees** | • International Committee<br>• Collaboration Forum and Due Diligence Group have responsibility but it is report through International Committee | • International Steering Committee<br>• International Consultative Committee<br>• Global Engagement Committee<br>• TNE Programs Sub-Committee |
| **Key regions** | SE Asia, Europe, China, Africa & Middle East | Asia, Latin America, China, Indonesia, Malaysia & Singapore |

# Methodology

- The methodological approach for the international benchmarking project is underpinned by the methodology used in the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and E-Learning (ACODE) (2007) e-learning benchmarks

- **Benchmarking  Aims**:
    - To compare internationalisation across two countries
    - To compare internationalisation processes across two universities
    - To identify areas of good practice, areas for improvement and areas for sharing potential developments
- **Methods**: institutional context statements; completion of online benchmarking self review survey and face-to-face peer review workshop, ISB
- UTAS has a customised online benchmarking tool for benchmarking purposes (secure site)

**Purpose of benchmarking internationalisation**
To understand three aspects of internationalisation
1. International student experience
2. External relationships and collaborations, and
3. Domestic students' internationalisation experience

# Key performance indicators in internationalisation

| Key performance indicators in internationalisation | Performance measures |
| --- | --- |
| International student experience | <ul><li>Application processes</li><li>Recruitment agents</li><li>Visa application process</li><li>Language testing and pre-entry language programmes</li><li>Pre-arrival support</li><li>Living experience</li><li>Support services</li><li>Learning experience</li></ul> |
| External relationships and collaborations | <ul><li>Government relationships</li><li>Collaborative initiatives</li></ul> |
| Domestic students' internationalisation experience | <ul><li>University exchange initiatives</li><li>Study abroad initiatives</li><li>International student internships/work placements</li><li>Resources, scholarships and grants</li></ul> |

**Performance Indicator 1: International Student Experience**

**Good Practice Statement**

The international student experience includes a range of university processes and initiatives which cover entry; pre-arrival information and support, arrival, living experience and learning experience.

**Performance Measures**:

1. Application processes for international student recruitment

2. Recruitment agents

3. Visa application process

4. Language testing and pre-entry language programmes

5. Pre-arrival support

6. Living experience

7. Support services

8. Learning experience

# Structured Questions

**Application processes for international student recruitment**

1. **What is the application process for international students?**
2. **How can international students apply to their current course?**
3. **How long is the wait between applying and receiving their offer from the university?**
4. **How are these response rates monitored?**

**b. How can international students apply to their current courses? (direct online, direct paper application, via an education agent, via another university, via supervisor/tutor, university representative office)**

| UWS Rating | Rationale | UTAS Rating | Rationale |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | Students can apply online or using paper application <br> • Use of paper applications is being reduced/eliminated. <br> • Students can apply via an education agent, supervisor or university representative. <br> • Online application is the preferred option and other external agents/university representatives can provide support in the online process. | a. Yes, but | a. Students can currently apply directly or through their education agents via a paper application or online. |
| c. How long is the wait between applying and receiving their offer from the university? | | | |
| No, but | • Service Level Agreement in place between Overseas Marketing Team and Admissions Office which sets out responsibilities, timelines and performance measures (see attached). <br> • Majority of applicants (90%) receive an offer letter with 5 working days. <br> • Aim to have all applications dealt with in 28 days although at times this can take up to six months. <br> • At times delays occur due to insufficient information being provided by student; assessment required in relation to award of prior academic credit; slow review process by academic departments. <br> • Tracking system does not always clearly identify delays occurring or who is responsible for delays. <br> • Where agents involved they may request action form UWS to resolve delay. Where no agent involved some applications may not be dealt with speedily. | Yes, but | a. Currently 90% of applications are turned around in 7 Business Days. Aiming to reduce this further to 5 Business Days through expected benefits realised through SLIMS |

SAMPLE

# Results:
# Shared challenges in internationalisation

- **Remote geographical location and multiple campuses:** Impact on student recruitment and variability of services (pre-arrival support, sports, pre-entry language programmes).

- **Agent recruitment:** Competing with other universities

- **Funding/resourcing:** Study exchanges, student mobility

- **Difficulty in obtaining data on international students:** IELTS, Internships/work placements

# Results:
# International student experience

**Similarities in:**

- **Application processes:**
  Target of 5 days turnaround; tracking??

- **Recruitment agents:**
  University visits; training; support; toolkits

- **Living experience:**
  Free health care; quality accommodation; range of student led activities (events, tours, clubs)

- **Support services:**
  Community support; academic advisors/personal tutors; peer mentoring

# Results:
# Domestic students' international student experience

**Similarities in:**

- Area for improvement and growth

- Setting targets for internships/placements

- Improving awareness of opportunities

- Evaluation of student exchanges

# Results: Areas of good practice

| UTAS | UWS |
|---|---|
| **P**eer **A**ssisted **S**tudy **S**essions<br><br>Community Friends and Networks | Student Ambassadors;<br><br>Buddy Project;<br><br>**S**tudents **T**aking **A**ction & **R**epresenting (Socialise/integrate/explore) |
| Campus accommodation | Campus accommodation |
| English language policy and strategy | Visa application process (hotline) |
| Intercultural events | Scholarships |
| Academic advisors embedded in Schools | Personal tutors embedded in Schools |

# Results: Areas for improvement

- Market intelligence

- Online application process

- Monitoring of agents

- Pre-arrival online support

- Employment for international students

- Resources to support placements/internships

| Areas for Sharing and Collaboration | |
|---|---|
| Institutional context statement | • Modelling economic impact of international students in local community |
| International student experience | • Students as recommenders/finders<br><br>• English Language policy and strategy<br><br>• Pre-entry English Language programmes (particularly online)<br><br>• Sharing of specific academic modules focused on support for international students<br><br>• Peer mentoring<br><br>• Community initiatives with local councils |
| Domestic students' internationalisation experience | • Consider development of study abroad area in Arts across UTAS/UWS |

# Five key lessons learnt

1. **Building capacity for internationalisation:** Bissonette & Wooden (2013) found internationalisation in community colleges highly complex – independent to disaggregated parts towards integrated or aggregated parts. Both universities are moving towards integration of internationalisation into institutional processes.

2. **Broadening the concept of an international student experience:** broaden experience to include domestic students' experience of internationalisation; study abroad initiatives, study exchange/internships. Approx. only 2% of Australian students study abroad (Daly & Barker, 2010). It also includes building regional and global identity of the university (working with local communities to develop programmes that uniquely fit with the regional identity of the host university).

3. **Recruitment of international students:** Key indicator in increasing revenue for universities. Importance of economic impact statement.

# Five key lessons learnt

**4. Implementation gaps in strategic planning**
- UWS: gaps in monitoring the recruitment agents; employment opportunities for international students; building a market intelligence process to support internationalisation; and resources to support student mobility.
- UTAS: gaps in opportunities for students for internships/placements/work overseas; improving agent-sourced commencements through better selection and vetting of agents and employment opportunities for international students.

**5. Monitoring and review system to improve quality:** Self review and peer review process on quality of internationalisation processes, inputs and outputs of each university. Both need to improve in evaluation of international and domestic student experience and also monitoring recruitment agents in terms of their experiences of internationalisation

# Conclusion

"The challenge for university leaders of Internationalisation is immense given the complexity of this multi-layered phenomenon" (Crossman and Burdett (2012, p. 227).

This challenge highlights the importance of building strategic partnerships with similar profile universities in order to find collaborative solutions.

This internationalisation benchmarking project has identified the importance of universities building alliances and networks with others on common interests and profiles (Debowski, 2012).

# Conclusion

**At international and institutional levels this benchmarking project has emphasised:**

- The importance of building capacity for internationalisation across higher education institutions

- Broadening the concept of an international experience to contribute to the regional and global identity of the university

- The importance of reviewing strategic plans for implementation gaps

- The need for monitoring and reviewing internationalisation processes to improve the quality of the student experience for both domestic and international students

# Invitations for international collaborators

**At international and institutional levels this benchmarking project has emphasised:**

- The importance of building capacity for internationalisation across higher education institutions
  - Benchmarking internationalisation processes to improve the quality of the student experience for both domestic and international students

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