

Preparing for Non-European International Students:  
Introducing Concrete Measures for Embodying PMI and PMI2 in the United Kingdom

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As it is known today, the United Kingdom hosts the second largest number of international tertiary students of any country (IIE, 2009:45); education is currently the fifth largest service export sector for their economy. International students make up 12 per cent of the total student population at universities in the United Kingdom, a sharp rise from 8 per cent eight years earlier, according to the Universities UK report *Patterns and Trends in UK Higher Education*, published on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The UK government has made a continuous and systematic effort to receive non-European Union (EU) international tertiary students since 1999 with the launch of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI, 1999-2005) and its second phase (known as PMI2, 2006-2011). During the period between 1999 and 2011, the UK government played a significant role in increasing and supporting receiving non-European international tertiary students and so do increased international mobility, for UK higher education is an integral part of a wider engagement of internationalizing its higher education system.

## **1. The First Example in the World of An Approach to International Education Marketing: PMI**

According to the *Education UK Positioning for Success: Consultation Document* (British Council, 2003: 3), the global higher education market was becoming increasingly complex and competitive. The Asian currency crisis of 1997-1998 also impacted the UK's traditional markets such as Malaysia. The fundamental weaknesses undermining the UK's competitive ability, however, had had a negative effect on its efficiency in serving its role as a truly world-class player in the global higher educational market. The report entitled *Realising Our Potential*, published by the British Council 2020, identified the weaknesses below (British Council, 2003: 3): (1) an absence of real vision and strategic thinking; (2) little detailed understanding of the markets in which the UK was operating and of their long-term potential; (3) little detailed customer or competitor research and analysis; (4) inadequate funding; (5) low levels of marketing experience and little or no marketing training amongst relevant staff; (6) unclear selling propositions and vague or non-existent positioning strategies; (7) little creative thinking and a tendency to stick to the well-established patterns of marketing behavior; (8) poor use of websites; (9) no real understanding of the cost and condition of overseas students; (10) poor process management of students and inadequate customer care; (11) obstacles in the form of visa application processes; (12) a failure to recognize the long-term recruitment benefits of strategic relationship building and the scope of staff exchanges; (13) a lack of awareness and an underestimation of the threat posed by competing countries in general but particularly that of the Australia and north America; (14) a general attitude of complacency.

In short, it could be said that the foundation for receiving international students was not yet

established. The UK did not plan its positioning strategies for the international higher education market competition, and there were no strategies with long-term vision. The funding provided to the UK education sector also seemed to be inadequate. The website usage and visa application processes were ineffective at the time. Namely, prior to the launch of the PMI, institutions were already facing the need for the education sector to change. More focused and recognized measures for institutions, therefore, were taken for granted in the UK.

### **1.1 Beginning to Receive Non-EU International Students as a National Strategy: PMI**

It was June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1999. The current Prime Minister, Tony Blair, gave a speech in the London School of Economics and Political Science. The first phase of PMI was originally launched as a 5-year national strategy which aimed to increase the number of international students in the UK and to increase collaboration between universities, colleges, the government, and other bodies to promote education in the UK to students in foreign countries. It set the target to attract an additional 75,000 non-EU international students studying in the UK by the year 2005, 50,000 in higher education (HE), and 25,000 in further education (FE). It is the first example in the world of an approach to international education marketing (British Council, 2003: 15).

### **1.2 Maximizing the Number of International Students Coming to the UK to Pursue Undergraduate and/or Postgraduate Studies**

The targets of PMI were set to attract an additional 50,000 international students to HE and 25,000 to FE by 2004/2005. The size of the global education market in 2000/2001 shown by *Education UK Positioning for Success: Consultation Documents* (British Council, 2003: 11) indicated that there were 578,288 HE students and 181,082 FE students in the major English speaking nations, and the number will grow to 620,000 HE and 220,000 FE students by 2004/2005. In other words, the numerical goal setting for PMI by 2005 was approximately 9.88% of the total international student number and 8.93% of the predicted number of international students in the major English speaking countries at that time. It seems that one-tenth of the total receiving number would be considered reasonable and proper for the target of PMI.

### **1.3 Who Are the Stakeholders?**

PMI strategy had taken partnership with UK institutions, government and the British Council (British Council, 2003: 4). The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) were given the task with leading the Initiative. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Ministry of Defence (MOD), Trade Partners UK (TPUK), the Home Office, the administrations of the National Assembly for Wales, and the Scottish Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly were all government participants. Basically, the initiative was implemented throughout the British Council's

network of 109 countries (British Council, 2003: 14). It was indeed the first example in the world of an approach to international education marketing.

#### **1.4 Non-EU Targets: Priority One and Priority Two Countries**

PMI led to the concepts of “priority one countries / area” and “priority two countries / area” to reach its goal.

Priority one countries / Areas setting for PMI were Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, Singapore. Priority two countries and areas were Australia, Brunei, Cyprus, USE and Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Kenya, Korea, Mexico, Pakistan, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, USA, Vietnam (British Council, 2003: 14).

These eight designated priority one countries / areas and fourteen priority two countries / areas became major focal points of the British Council.

#### **1.5 The Government’s Policy and the Value of Recruiting Non-EU International Students**

The government’s policy on recruiting international students was set in the 2003 White Paper below (Clark, 2006: 78):

##### Recruiting International students

5.26 We have a very strong record in recruiting international students, and as we expand our provisions we should build on this record. People who are educated in the UK promote Britain around the world, helping our trade and diplomacy, and also providing an important economic benefit. British exports of education and training are worth some eight billion pounds a year—money that feeds into our institutions and helps open up opportunities for more people to study. The Prime Minister has set us a target of attracting an extra 50,000 higher education students to the UK from outside Europe by 2005. Institutions are currently well on track to meet this, having already recruited an additional 31,000 in 2001-02. Working closely with the British Council, we are promoting our higher education across the world, including intensive work in many countries and bringing together all of the relevant.

British exports of education and training will benefit national interests at the political, economic, and diplomatic level, feed institutions, and provide more people with opportunities to study. The British Council is of great assistance to the UK government.

## 1.6 The Achievements and Successes of PMI

The targets of PMI were exceeded ahead of schedule, with an extra 93,000 in HE and 23,300 in FE. According to *Education UK Positioning for Success: Consultation Document* (British Council, 2003: 3), there had been notable achievements as a result of the PMI as follows: (1) the recruitment targets were generating over £ 1 billion for the UK economy; (2) UK non-EU international student numbers have grown at over 8% p.a. since the start of the marketing campaign; (3) amongst those considering the UK for their studies, high awareness of the Education UK brand was achieved; (4) the existing international market and institutions have re-prioritized their international activities due to an enhanced awareness of the Education UK brand; (5) promotional campaigns in priority markets had had generated significant media coverage; (6) new initiatives introduced such as the Education UK website had over 4 million visitors p.a.; (7) the visa process was streamlined and the opportunities to work were improved; and (8) PMI integrated the activities across government departments and other organizations.

**Table 1: Student Numbers at UK Institutions**

Domicile	UK	EU	Other overseas	Total
2000/01	1,759,755	94,575	136,290	1,990,625
2001/02	1,843,320	90,135	152,625	20,860,808
2002/03	1,899,850	90,580	184,685	2,175,115
2003/04	1,947,385	89,545	210,510	2,247,440
2004/05	1,969,140	100,005	218,395	2,287,540
% change	11.9%	5.7%	60.2%	14.9%

Source: HESA: Standard Registration population (Clark, 2006: 77).

In 2004/2005, students from ten new EU countries are classified as “EU”; in previous years they were classified as “other overseas”. % change is from 2000/2001 to 2004/2005.

PMI’s success in receiving international students can also be seen in table 1. It indicated that the number of non-EU students increased significantly compared to that of the UK and the EU students at an overall steady rate during these five years. In 2004/2005, the number of EU students studying in the UK was 100,005, and the number of non-EU international students was over 218,000, a fifteen-fold of that of EU students in the UK. In the final year of PMI, overseas student fees amounted to £ 1,275M, which comprised 8% of the total income for institutions in 2004/2005 (Clark, 2006: 59.)

MORI Report also identified PMI’s successful achievements and their results through a survey (British Council, 2003: 33-34): (1) growth in the number of students entering UK education and

in successful visa applications; (2) demonstrable awareness of Education UK and the brand; (3) brand value clearly reflected in student perceptions; and (4) profile of UK international education marketing was raised.

As for the regions of residency of international students, Asia (41.5%), EU (excluding UK, 27.9%), and Africa (9.2%) were the top three areas in 2004/2005, the final year of PMI.

**Table 2: Non-UK Domiciled Students by Region of Residency, 2004/2005, total 318,400 Students**

Region	% sharing
Asia	41.5%
EU (excluding UK)	27.9%
Africa	9.2%
North America	7.3%
Middle East	4.2%
Other Europe	3.8%
EU accession countries	3.5%
South America	1.3%
Australia	0.7%
Non-European Union unknown	0.4%

Source: HESA Student Record, figures are on a standard registration population basis, cited from Clark (2006: 79).

Another survey conducted on the basis of survey data of 5,000 international students indicated that respondents were very satisfied with their overall experience, and particularly with key components including the quality of teaching and academic facilities (Clark, 2006: 79). Meanwhile, there were some concerns about improving pre-arrival information and the key issues of integrating international students with UK students and residents.

### **1.7 What Are the Benefits? What Next?**

During the progress of PMI, international students brought an estimated £3.8 billion a year into the UK economy, and campuses and communities were enriched by the multiple perspectives and by the opportunities for encouraging mutual understanding. In the long-term, international students will act as advocates in the wider world both for the UK and the institutions they attended, according to David Green, the director-General of the British Council (British Council, 2003). Green also mentioned the reason for continuing PMI as follows:

There is a need for us to refine our strategic framework and produce a fresh initiative to build on the successes of the PMI when it ends in 2005. While we will achieve the overall targets, our performance in some individual markets remains patchy. We need to work harder to establish and maintain effective alumni networks. And we need to embed and sustain the successful features of the Education UK brand and its marketing initiatives. Without this, the significant investment already made could well be lost and the UK education could lose its position and reputation as a market leader in international education services.

Here, he pointed out that some PMI performance remains patchy, and the UK's position and reputation as a market leader in international education services are regarded as extremely important in terms of the implementation of PMI. Education UK, therefore, was produced in order to best position the UK's education and training offer in the meantime (2005-2010) for maximum impact, and set out why it is crucial to do so. Then, the second phase of PMI was built as the UK's future marketing strategy in the spirit of partnership that led the UK to its success so far.

## **2. Developing the Capacity for Competing Internationally and Constructing the Cornerstone of National Strategy: PMI2**

In 2003, IDP Australia issued *Global Change Drivers and Sample Forecasting Scenarios* that predicted the global business for international students enrolled in higher education programs.

According to the forecasts of IDP, this industry will grow from 1.7 million to 7 million students by 2025. The market for internationally delivered programs will also grow: demand for higher education programs from the UK is predicted to rise from 200,000 in 2003 to 1.4 million by 2025. The *Education UK Positioning for Success: Consultation Document*, published by the British Council in 2003, cited these numbers to analyze the limited capacity of UK institutions in those days.

The global business for international students enrolled on higher education programs will continue to grow, according to the forecasts of IDP. The demand for UK higher education, however, was slackening in the final year of PMI. In 2004/2005, enrollments grew by some 3%, in contrast to 13%, 23% and 12% in the previous 3 years (Clark, 2006: 79–80). Therefore, it is imperative for the UK government to maintain and enlarge the UK's enrollment rates. With regard to this issue, the UK government undertook comprehensive and constructive action during the years following.

## **2.1 The Focuses of PMI2**

The second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiatives for International Education (PMI2) was a five-year national strategy. It focused on building long-term relationships overseas through sustainable activities, and setting out a number of targets to be achieved by 2011: (1) an additional 70,000 international (non-EU) students in UK higher education; and 30,000 in further education; (2) double the number of countries sending more than 10,000 students per year to the UK; (3) demonstrable improvement to student satisfaction rating in the UK through steady increase in satisfaction rating given by international students in attitudinal surveys and positive change in perception of students considering the UK as a study destination; and (4) significant growth in the number of partnerships between the UK and other countries (DTZ, 2011: i).

To achieve its targets, the program funded a number of projects and a wide range of activities within each as follows: (1) marketing and Communications Project: the objective of this Project is positioning the UK as a leader in international education and increasing the number of international students undertaking UK education; (2) Student Experience and Employability Projects to support and ensure the quality of all aspects of the student experience, from the application and visa processes, pre-departure and induction to the period of studying and living in the UK; and (3) HE Partnerships and FE Partnerships Projects that aimed to build strategic partnerships and alliances with governments, education providers and industry (DTZ, 2011: i).

In January 2009, Department for Innovative, University, and Skills (DIUS, now BIS) commissioned DTZ to undertake an independent evaluation of the program, with the following key objectives: (1) to provide an independent assessment about Program efficacy, what has worked well and what has worked less well; (2) to promote further engagement, building capability and sharing of lessons and experiences with all partners involved (evaluation, monitoring and planning at Program and Project levels); and (3) to identify good practice and Program legacy such as what, where and how the PMI2 made a long-term impact (DTZ, 2011: i).

## **2.2 The Targets of PMI's Projects and the Degree of its Achievements**

In April 2006, the UK launched a successor to PMI, known as PMI2, to cover the period between 2006 and 2011. It was comprised of the interconnected projects below: marketing and communications, HE partnership, FE partnership, student experience, and employability. The program's targets to be achieved by 2011 were set to: (1) attract an additional 70,000 international students to UK HE and an additional 30,000 international students to UK FE, (2) double the number of countries sending more than 10,000 students per annum to the UK, (3) improve international student satisfaction in the UK, and (4) achieve significant growth in the number of partnerships between the UK and other countries. In other words, PMI2 was mainly intended to enlarge the capacity of the UK's education sector by increasing the number of international students, and



to construct a cornerstone of the system to receive international students, in order to secure the UK's position as a leader in international education services and to sustain the growth of the UK's international education delivered both in the UK and overseas.

**Table 3: PMI2's Projects and their Objects**

Project	The Objective of the Project
Marketing and Communication	Positioning the UK as a leader in international education and increasing the number of international students undertaking UK education.
Student Experience and Employability	Supporting and ensuring the quality and all aspects of the student experience, from the application and visa processes, pre-departure and induction, to the period of studying and living in the UK.
HE Partnership and FE Partnerships	Building strategic partnerships and alliances with governments, education providers and industry.

Source: DTZ, 2011: i.

Table 3 illustrates the objectives of the Marketing and Communication Project, Student Experience and Employability Projects, and HE and FE Partnership Projects.

To recruit an additional 100,000 international students, the UK focused on its marketing and communications projects, so that they could sell the benefits of a UK education, and could establish the basis of a reputation for a UK education in the long-term. According to the result of "Student Perceptions, British Council 2010 Survey", nearly 83 % of prospective students agree that "A UK Education offers an innovative study experience" (DTZ, 2011:12). The marketing project managed PMI2 support for staff in the network of priority country offices; the Education UK website, brand, and publication scheme; the PMI2 website brand, and publication scheme; PMI2 website, PR and media relations; campaigns to position the UK as a leading global provider of education across all sectors; and strategies such as the agents', ambassadors' and alumni strategies (DTZ, 2011:12). Furthermore, 91% of those who have used the Education UK website and are still studying in the UK would have considered studying there even if the Education UK website had not been available (DTZ, 2011:28). These results reflected the degree of the actual impact of the Marketing and Communication Project.

To increase student satisfaction, PMI2 placed much value on student experience and employability. According to the survey conducted by DTZ, "students appear to be attracted by the reputation and quality of courses provided by the UK education system as well as the reputation of specific institutions and a belief that employment and earning prospects will receive a boost (2011:45). A DTZ survey also shows that 71% of the respondents agree that it was the best choice

to study in the UK and only 8% feel that studying in the UK was not the best decision (DTZ, 2011:36-37). The satisfaction in choosing the UK as their destination was high; 51% of them did not regret their choice, and only 19% regretted it (12% slightly and 7% strongly). The choice of institution itself was rarely regretted, with 77% happy with their decision, compared to 7% being unhappy. With regard to employment, the same survey conducted by DTZ indicated that there were high expectations on salary increase resulting from a UK degree, as 85% thought that they had an opportunity to get a job that paid more. On the other hand, the expected salary increased resulting from a UK qualification varies. 71% of the respondents believed they would earn £2,500 to £4,000 more per year. The respondents of the same survey claimed that the overall perceptions of studying in the UK were good, and the UK provides higher quality courses; over half said it was good for improving salary (DTZ, 2011:45). It also indicated that employability is a major driver for these students. International students have an appetite for the opportunity to obtain work experience during or potentially for a limited time after completing their study in the UK. According to the I-graduate International Insight's report entitled *Measuring the Effect of the Prime Minister's Initiative on the International Student Experience in the UK*, satisfaction with employability had increased from 71% in 2008 to 78% in 2010 (UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2011:15). It seems to be essential that international students are given the chance to develop the skills which employers in their home country will value when the students return to home.

Furthermore, PMI2 aimed to establish partnerships between the UK education sector and foreign partners. In the fourth year, 42 projects with the US were funded; 8 projects related to Nigeria Collaborative Program Delivery, 5 UK-China Partnerships in employability and entrepreneurship, 19 US travel grants were awarded; there were 10 UK-US New Partnership Fund grants were in the progress of being awarded (DTZ, 2011:14). PMI2 steadily carried out measures to enhance the relationship between the UK and other countries with increasing focus on partnership with the US.

### **2.3 Strengthening the Foundation of the Receiving System: PMI2's Evaluation and All Activities**

In January 2009, BIS commissioned DTZ Consulting to undertake an independent evaluation of the Prime Minister Initiative for International Education Phase 2 (PMI2). According to the report released by DTZ (2011:1), the evaluation was run alongside the PMI2 program in three phases: phase one was comprised an initial review of the program in early 2009 to establish baselines and assess program design and systems put in place to deliver the program. Phase two covered interim evaluations of the program and monitored and assessed progress between 2009 and early 2010. It also identified early impact where possible. Phase three, from May 2010 to March 2011, consisted of a review of the impact and added value of the program and projects; it also identified lessons

learned, good practices, and recommendations toward furthering the success of the program.

There was a considerable amount of primary and secondary research and survey for the evaluation of PMI2. The final evaluation report undertaken by DTZ (2011) brought together all previous findings, provided updated information on the program targets and the various activities regularly performed by the program projects.

With regard to the Marketing project, there were 14 activities undertaken in preparation for PMI2. The audiences of English learner (1 activity), English language providers (1), students (3), agents (1), institutions (2), and the wider public (1). There were six activities focused on students. In the case of Student Experience, there were 5 activities, one of them intended for students, and the others were for institutions. The audiences of Employability were: students, institutions, employers, and Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) members. Of these, students took part in 8 activities, institutions were involved with 6 activities, employers joined in 5 activities, and AGCAS members participated in 2 activities. All in all activities reached 17 times. Students, institutions, employers and AGCAS member were the audiences during this period.

The evaluation has shown that a great deal of valuable work has been undertaken and has demonstrably enhanced the UK's reputation as an international education provider (DTZ, 2011: ii). However, with regard to doubling the number of countries sending more than 100,000 students, although the new initiative was funded at a higher level than its predecessor (Clark, 2006:80), the UK did not have direct linkages with any program areas, and it was not clear how this could be achieved particularly in the light of the set priority countries. The number, shown in Table 4, was not doubled as PMI planned.

**Table 4: Number of Non-EU Countries by Participating Students**

Students per Annum	2003/2004	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
> 10,000	5	5	4	7
8,000-9,999	0	2	1	1
5,000-7,999	3	2	2	3

Source: DTZ, 2011: 9.

## 2.4 Current Picture of the Education UK Brand

DTZ conducted a survey on the Education UK Brand in 2011. Nearly 83% of prospective students who were participants agreed with “A UK Education offers an innovative study experience” (DTZ, 2011: 12). Student perception about “UK as an innovative study destination” increased from 20% in 2004/2005 to 83% in 2010; and their perception of “UK education as relevant to the modern world and fulfilling potential” increased from 35% in 2004/2005 to 90% in 2010.

In relation to reach and engagement of institutions, 389 brand trademark licenses were issued to UK universities, colleges and schools (DTZ, 2011: 12-13). 1,241 subscribers to PMI2 in Focus and 199 UK Educational institutions had registered for webinars to date by this period. Moreover, 250,000 publications were distributed to students and influencers each year in 64 markets; approximately 10,000 agents were reached globally. Campaigns included “Let your English Grow,” “The Pitch,” “Dynamic Designs,” “Shine! International Student awards,” and “Dream Lab” were run in various countries and had created chances for participants and raised awareness of the UK as a study destination.

Furthermore, 81% of responses providing feedback on the Education UK website said that the site was either ‘quite helpful’ (56%) or ‘very helpful’ (25%), according to the DTZ report (2011). International students, who used the British Council Education UK website gained information mostly on institutions (70%), courses (66%), studying and living in the UK (62%), visa and immigration procedures (41%), scholarships (37%), qualifications to study at a UK institution in their own country (31%), researching international job vacancies (9%), and watching videos made by students in the UK (5%) (DTZ, 2011:27).

### **3. The Foundation of National Strategies: Higher Education Systems in the UK**

In the UK, most of higher education institutions are located in England. For instance, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were 169 institutions. Over 70 per cent of them were located in England (132, compared to 20 in Scotland, 13 in Wales, and 4 in Northern Ireland) (Clark, 2006: 13).

Higher education in the UK is provided mainly in universities and higher education colleges. Further education colleges amount to about 10% of the total institutions. All these institutions receive public funds but are self-governing, independent, and classified as part of the private sector for economic planning purposes. There is a very small group of private colleges, which provide academic programs for about 0.3-0.5% of all higher education students, which are not publicly funded. They are mainly in medical-related, business or theological fields (Clark, 2006: 11).

#### **3.1 Pre-1992 and Post-1992 Institutions**

1992 was a watershed in the history of UK higher education. The introduction of the concepts of “pre-1992 institutions” and “post-1992 institutions” was closely related to the abolition of the Binary Line in 1992. The so-called pre-1992 institutions included the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the federal University of London, the number institutions of the University of Wales, the ‘civic’ universities founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the former university colleges which awarded degrees for the University of London, the group of

universities founded in the 1960s, and the Colleges of Advanced Technology, which achieved university status following the Robbins Report of 1963. Most of the pre-1992 institutions were established by a royal charter granted through the Privy Council, with an associated set of statutes; a very small number of the pre-1992 institutions were established by a specific Act of Parliament, the operative part of which is a set of statutes. The forms of organization are known as a chartered corporation and a statutory corporation, respectively (CUC, 2004: 1-3).

The post-1992 institutions operate mostly under the articles of government. Most of them are former polytechnics which until 1988 (or 1992 in Wales) were part of, and funded by, local education authorities and awarded degrees validated by the Council for National Academic Awards. These institutions became independent corporations and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council has been established since the UK government issued the Education Reform Act in 1988; the Act took over responsibility for funding the post-1992 institutions in England. Subsequently, the Further and Higher Education Act in 1992 enabled these institutions to award degrees in their own right, and to acquire the title of university (CUC, 2004: 1-6).

### **3.2 The Development of Markets in UK Higher Education**

An historical overview of the development of markets in UK higher education is provided in annex of this paper. The key developments pointed out by Brown are as follows: (1) the introduction of selective funding of research based, since 1986, on a state supervised peer review process; (2) the introduction of loans to support students' living costs while studying, from 1990, initially to supplement maintenance grants then, from 1998 to 2006, to replace them (grants were restored after 2006); (3) the introduction of "top-up" fee in 1998 and, in 2006 (in England and Wales), variable fees; (4) the replacement, from 2012, of most direct state support for university teaching by a full cost tuition fee regime accompanied by price competition between institutions; (5) the development, from 1992, of sector-wide performance indicators and, from 1999, of sector-wide statistical benchmarks; and (6) the generation from 2001, and especially after 2005, of increased information to inform and guide student choice (Brown, 2011: 14).

### **3.3 Expanding Category: Graduate School**

UK postgraduate education in the institutions had marginalized during the years of expansion of undergraduate programs (UKCGE, 2011: 13). 1993 was a turning point for the UK postgraduate. In that year, *Realising our Potential: a Strategy for Science, Engineering and Technology* was issued. On one hand, the enlargement policy in undergraduate students turned to keeping the status quo in that year. Many universities incorporated methods of increasing the number of graduate students so as to expand their university's scale, because the number of graduate students was not limited (Hata, 2001:183). The expansion of graduate schools in the UK was driven in part by this

reason. In the UK, the higher education system is supported by public funds. The student number, therefore, will be regulated in some form by quotas. When the participation rates doubled between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, the government prepared to increase public expenditure due to increasing demand (Thompson and Bekhradnia, 2011: 10-11). On the other hand, the expansion of graduate schools in the UK was also driven in part by the need for life-long learning and developing and ensuring higher level human resources in economic growth (Hata, 2001: 183-184). In 1994, the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) was formed to promote the interests of postgraduate education. In December 1994, 33 per cent of HEIs already had graduate schools and another 30 per cent were considering planning to establish them (UKCGE, 2010: 7).

*A Review of Graduate Schools in the UK*, which was conducted in 2009 and was published by UK Council for Graduate Education in 2010, largely repeated and updated previous surveys undertaken by UKCGE in 1994 and 2004. The general concept of graduate school evolved in the UK has been mainly influenced by the North American model, as well as Mainland Europe, Australia, China and Japan (UKCGE, 2010: 15). The 2009 survey indicated that graduate schools are thriving and proliferating in that sector (UKCGE, 2010: 10).

According to this national survey, improving the quality of graduate schools, improving student experiences, improving research progression and completion rates, and sharing good practices on research supervision are the main aims ranked in the top four (UKCGE, 2010: 24). The prime focus in UK graduate schools is the postgraduate research community. Postgraduate schools in the UK have both significant research and taught components, in contrast to those in US that are predominantly taught programs (UKCGE, 2010: 35).

Furthermore, according to the same survey, postgraduate provision has continued to expand in the UK (UKCGE, 2010: 7). For instance, the majority of responding HEIs in 2009 have at least one graduate school; 76 % of the total number compared with 67% in 2004. Within these HEIs, 63% and 89% respectively for the pre-1992 and post-1992 HEIs adapted an institution-wide graduate school. All of these graduate schools serve research students and most serve Professional Doctorate students. Many fewer serve postgraduate taught students.

Postgraduate research student numbers have risen steadily, and the majority of this increase has been due to the increasing of international student numbers. Over 30% of the total growth in postgraduate research student was due to overseas students. Another feature is that research students continue to be concentrated within specific parts of the sector with 80% located in only a third of HEIs, the majority of these being pre-1992 institutions. Moreover, graduate provision has also grown in its diversity with a range of Professional Doctorate courses appearing, although the traditional doctorate still dominates the scene.

### **3.4 The Introduction of the Tier 4 Student Visa System and Chance of Working after Receiving PhD**

When Tony Blair took over as Prime Minister in 1997, the entire visa system was in shambles. The introduction of point-based visa system in his final term played a role in streamlining and modernizing the system with new technology (Wagner, 2011: 35). The Home Office, furthermore, published the report titled “A Point-based System: Making Migration Work for Britain” in 2006 in response to Tony Blair’s promise of a point-based visa system. During Gordon Brown’s term (2007-2010), he dealt with the issues concerning the new point-based visa system, and he made major changes to his policies during his single term, adding legitimacy to Tony Blair’s three terms (1997-2007) (Wagner, 2011: 39).

The scheme of the system was phased in between 2008 and 2010. It is composed of five tiers and administered by the UK Border Agency. A Tier 4 General visa is the study visa for the UK; it is a point-based visa. The student needs to score 40 out of 40 points to apply for the visa. 30 points are for confirmation of acceptance for studies, previous/most recent qualification, English language proficiency, and ATAS certification; 10 points are for ensuring a student can support themselves for a year.

A survey conducted in 2011 by the student union of 8,000 international students found that nearly 70% of them would not choose Britain as their study destination without the post-study work option (Labi, 2011). In other words, the opportunity for work after they graduate from the institutions in the UK is very important for them to commit to study in the UK.

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Home Secretary announced that the UK Government plans to introduce a new immigration category in April 2013. It allows students who complete a PhD in the UK to stay for one year in order to find work or to set up a business.

### **3.5 Another Type of Receiving Non-EU International Students: Transnational Education**

There is one more type of program. Some UK HE institutions cooperate with foreign universities to receive non-EU international students. This is called “transnational education (TNE)”. In the words of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), TNE covers: “All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the educational system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national system.” The British Council, furthermore, defines it as “education provision from one country offered in another”(UKCISA, 2009c: 4).

As Kevin van-Cauter of the British Council writes, within the university sector in the UK, the term TNE is not widely used. Most universities use the umbrella definition ‘collaborative

international provision' or more commonly describe TNE by its component parts such as 'franchised provision' or 'distance learning' and so forth. Key target audiences engaging in the local delivery of TNE, as well as students and other stakeholders, do not know the term well enough and typically use 'distance learning' to describe the program they undertaking or involved with (UKCISA, 2009c: 10-11).

The British Council has set up a Transnational Education Service beginning in a number of countries in South East Asia and building on their Malaysian pilot in 2007 (UKCISA, 2009:7). The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), moreover, undertook its second review of higher education delivered in mainland China in 2012, following its first visit to mainland China and the report of its review in 2006. In 2010-2011, China was the third most popular destination for UK TNE students, after Malaysia and Singapore; there are almost 36,000 UK TNE students in China. Following its review of TNE in mainland China in November and December 2012, QAA has compiled a set of four case studies: Oxford Brookes University and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Staffordshire University and the International College of the Global Institute of Software Technology, The Northern Consortium UK and the Sino-British College, The University of Wales and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. These deal with different aspects of setting and maintaining academic standards: (1) use of a subject benchmark statement in designing a degree program linked to a professional qualification, (2) progression routes from diploma to degree, (3) collaboration through a university consortium, and (4) assessment in a foreign language (Review of transnational education in Mainland China 2012 (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>)). For some Chinese students who are involved with Sino-UK TNE, some semesters on UK home campuses will become part of their university life.

### **3.6 Current Pictures: Studying in the UK**

In 2010-2011 there were 165 higher education institutions in the UK (Universities UK, 2012: 4). DTZ conducted a survey on which factors have influenced decisions about studying in the UK (DTZ, 2011: 31-33). According to the results of this survey (Table 5), major factors influencing decisions about studying in the UK are: (1) the reputation of the UK educational system (92%, the total percentage of "agree slightly" and "agree strongly"), (2) the reputation of the special UK education university, college or language school (89%), (3) studying in the UK would help get a better job in the future (83%), (4) belief that studying in the UK would help get higher pay in the future (73%), (5) the language/the opportunity to develop English language skills (71%), (6) employer perceptions of UK qualification (68%), and (7) British culture or lifestyle (58%). In the other words, reputation, the possibility of getting a better job and higher pay, and British culture attract the students to study in the UK.



**Table 5: Extent to Which Factors Have Influenced Decision about Studying in the UK**

	Agree slightly	Agree strongly	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly	Neither agree / disagree	Don't know
The reputation of the UK education system	28%	64%	2%	0%	0%	5%
The reputation of the specific UK university, college or language school	28%	61%	1%	0%	1%	9%
British culture or lifestyle	41%	17%	8%	5%	1%	27%
Influence of friends and family	32%	14%	9%	10%	1%	34%
The low cost of study or low fees	12%	10%	17%	42%	3%	16%
The language / the opportunity to develop your English language skills	28%	43%	5%	10%	1%	14%
Friendliness of British people	26%	11%	11%	11%	2%	39%
Employer perceptions of UK qualification	31%	37%	5%	6%	4%	16%
Studying in the UK would help get a better job in the future	34%	49%	3%	1%	0%	13%
Belief that studying in the UK would help get higher pay in the future	34%	39%	3%	3%	1%	20%
Relatives / friends in the UK already	21%	16%	11%	22%	3%	27%
Having studies in the UK before	9%	6%	7%	45%	11%	21%

Source: DTZ, 2011: 31-33.

This survey also pointed out that “an enjoyable experience” (82%, the total of “agree strongly” and “agree slightly”), “easier to get a job” (60%), “UK is welcoming to people from other countries” (53%) and “the UK education system is hard to understand” (52%) were the perceptions of studying in the UK (DTZ, 2011:35).

**Table 6: Perceptions of Studying in the UK**

	UK is welcoming to people from other countries	The UK education system is hard to understand	Studying in the UK is an enjoyable experience	Easier to get a job due to having studied in the UK
Agree strongly	17%	5%	44%	24%
Agree slightly	36%	11%	38%	36%
Neither agree / disagree	28%	31%	14%	28%
Disagree slightly	11%	32%	3%	5%
Disagree strongly	6%	20%	0%	4%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	2%

Source: DTZ, 2011: 35.

To encourage international students to study in the UK, some scholarships are provided to international students who need financial support. Chevening Scholarships, one of the most famous, were introduced in 1983. Cheveing Scholarships are the UK government's global scholarship program, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organizations. It provides full or part funding for full-time courses at postgraduate level, normally a one-year Master's degree, in any subject and at any UK university. This program, moreover, gives awards to outstanding scholars with leadership potential from around the world to study postgraduate courses at universities in the UK. Nowadays, it has developed into a prestigious international scholarship. Chevening scholars come from over 116 countries worldwide, excluding the USA and the EU. In 2013/2014 the Scholarships will support approximately 700 individuals. There are over 41,000 Chevening alumni around the world who together comprise an influential and highly regarded global network (<http://www.chevening.org/>).

Moreover, there are a number of partnership-building projects for specific countries or regions, funded or managed by the British Council. For instance, there were over 160 separate partnerships between China and the UK as of 2006 (Clark, 2006: 80). There are also International Strategic Partnerships in Research and Education (INSPIRE), Development Partnership in Higher Education (DelPHE) in Africa and Asia, and the UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) links between India and the UK as a five-year program and so forth (Macready and Tucker, 2011: 74).

According to the world university rankings in 2012-2013, the University of Oxford ranked second, and the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London ranked 7th and 8th respectively. There were 7 British universities ranking in the top 50 universities in the world (World University Rankings 2012-2013 (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>)). The Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) are the UK government's evaluation of research quality in British

Universities. The Quality Assurance for Higher Education (QAA) assesses undergraduate teaching. QAA is an independent body established by the UK's higher education institutions in 1997. QAA was under contract to the Higher Education Funding Council for England to assess quality for English universities. The reputation of the UK's universities' quality under the assessment of its government will create the lure to attract international students to study in the UK.

As pointed out above, PMI and PMI2 reached their goals as planned by the UK government over more than a decade. There has been common recognition around the world that the UK education sector has been successful in international student recruitment. It can be seen in the concerted national efforts to improve, and in consistent and positive national messaging to overseas governments, particularly in the development of building and sustaining the reputation of the UK education sector as a world leader.

The UK government changed in 2010. The new Education Ministers in the new government are at least as committed as their predecessors to internationalization and learning from the experiences of other countries (Macready and Tucker, 2011:72). UK higher education institutions are still facing a range of significant challenges and opportunities associated with internationalization and globalization.

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## **Annex**

### **Key Dates in the Marketization of UK Higher Education**

- 1980 Full cost fees for overseas students
- 1984 *Report of the Steering Group on University Efficiency* (Jarratt Report) marks first step towards the corporatization of university governance
- 1985 Green Paper *The Development of Higher Education into the 1980s* sets out a government "agenda" for higher education, with the greatest emphasis being on the need for universities to serve the economy.
- 1986 The first Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) introduces selectivity in research funding for the first time (subsequent exercises in 1992, 1996, 2001 and 2008). First new private university (Buckingham).
- 1988 Incorporation of the polytechnics. New funding councils and contractual funding of teaching.
- 1989 Speech at Lancaster University by the Secretary of State (Kenneth Baker) setting out the Government's vision of an expansion of higher education on the American model, with greater "engagement" of private resources.
- 1990 Increase in the fee level and reduction in the level of teaching grant to institutions (though both continue to be paid in full by the government). Introduction of student loans for maintenance alongside grants.

- 1992 Abolition of the “binary line” between universities and polytechnics. Development of system-wide performance indicators.
- 1993 Introduction of Teaching Quality Assessment (Subject Review) as intended complement to RAE.
- 1996 First private non-university institution to receive degree awarding powers (Royal Agriculture College)
- 1997 Dearing Committee recommends significant fees to help meet institutions’ teaching costs. New Labour Government emphasizes universities’ role in social mobility.
- 1998 Introduction of means tested “top-up” tuition fees. Abolition of maintenance grants.
- 1999 Publication of first HEFCE statistical performance benchmarks.
- 2001 Reforms to quality assurance regime. Teaching Quality Information replaces Subject Review.
- 2004 Modification of rules for university title. New “teaching only” universities. Extension of degree awarding power to FE college.
- 2005 First National Student Survey.
- 2006 Introduction of variable fees and income contingent fee and maintenance loans. New Office of Fair Access to monitor institutions’ widening participation plans. Partial reintroduction of maintenance grants. More private institutions gain degree awarding powers. New Office of the independent Adjudicator to handle student complaints.
- 2010 Government accepts the recommendation of the Browne Committee that in future most teaching in English universities should be funded through the tuition fee, with direct funding of teaching confined to a small number of strategic subjects.
- 2011 Government publishes a White Paper proposing new arrangements to facilitate the market entry of private colleges.
- 2012 Introduction of higher fees and reduction of direct funding of teaching. Further concentration of public funding for teacher and research.

Source: Brown, 2011: 23.

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