International students and access routes into UK higher education

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Top-line numbers

- 2010-11, UKCISA/UCAS/HESA
- EU total students in UK HE: 130,115
- Non-EU total: 298,110
- Overall total: 428,225
- Only 14% of full-time first degree students (but 70% of taught postgrads and 48% of research degree!)
- Non-EU students in UK HE on full-time first degree courses: 108,000 (out of 1.9 million total students – so only 5.7% of total – but disproportionately valuable)

International students by sector

- HE: 428,000 (HESA)
- English language: 600,000 (IPS/English UK)
- Public/boarding schools: 26,000 (ISC 2012 Census)
- State sector FE colleges: 50,000 (BIS/AoC)
- Private sector FE/HE colleges: 300,000 (BAC/Study UK)
- Total: 1,400,000+

Value

- Total spend by students (BIS 2011)
- State HE: £8 billion
- State FE: £1 billion
- English language (private sector): £2 billion (NB state English language is included in previous two figures – approx £0.5 billion)
- Public/boarding schools: £0.75 billion
- Private FE/HE & professional training: £2+ billion
- Total: £14+ billion (2009 prices)

Non-financial value

- International students tend to be from upper socio-economic groups in their own countries – they become opinion-leaders and leaders in politics, education and business
- Education in UK produces long-term affinity benefits: business, trade, diplomatic links and support, world opinion
- They recommend UK education – ambassadors
- They usually use British English!

International students: routes into UK HE from within the UK

- Public/boarding schools (A levels/IB): 4,000
- State FE colleges (vocational courses and IFY programmes): 5,000
- English language centres (IFY programmes, pre-sessional English courses): 30,000+
- Universities' own on-campus IFY/pre-sessional English courses: 10,000+

Routes into UK HE (1)

- Knowledge Partnership analysis of UCAS data for 2008-10 (applications & acceptances) for non-EU students to UK first degree courses
- 200,000 applications
- 59% come from within UK (inc IFY/pathways)
- Applications more likely to originate in UK than home country: Russia 6x, China 4.5x
- Applicants from within UK more likely to succeed than home country applicants in 14 of top 20 subjects chosen by international students

Routes into UK HE (2)

- International students applying from within UK TWICE as likely to convert into enrolments as home country applicants: better English, UK qualifications, usually more proof of funds
- Direct link between ‘feeder’ routes’ ability to recruit international students and HE enrolment rates: “measures which artificially shrink market interest and recruitment at pre-university level study in the UK will have an impact on international recruitment at undergraduate level, because it will reduce the volume of applications...through this route” (Knowledge Partnership 2012)

Protecting the English language route

- Shared interest across the sectors
- Remove international students from ‘net migration’ – IPPR report says USA/Canada/Australia do not count students, and with 5-year stay cap outflows will equal inflows by approx 2017 so no need for short-term cut
- ESVV – special concession for English language courses only, up to 11 months – review later this year – vital to preserve
- Review of visitor visas – battle for more tourists
- Level playing field for all HTS on work rights
- ‘Mood music’ (like USA)
- Knight-style student visa review – by the sector?

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