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MARKET NEWS BULLETIN

22 October – 4 November

Compiled by Nastja Pusic

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Summary Section

UK

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EU applications to UK universities down 9% after Brexit vote (27 October)

By Chris Havergal: THE: 27 October

Ucas data for early deadline courses are first sign of possible reaction to referendum result.

The number of European Union students applying to early deadline university courses in the UK has fallen by 9 per cent in the wake of the country's vote in favour of Brexit.

Ucas said that 6,240 EU-domiciled students applied for courses starting in 2017 that had an application deadline of 15 October – medicine, dentistry and veterinary degrees, plus programmes at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge – compared with 6,860 for 2016 entry.

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Campaign launched to market UK education, TNE to int'l students (2 November)

By Natalie Marsh: The Pie News: 2 November

A new, government-backed international student facing campaign has been launched to convey the value of a UK education to prospective students around the world.

As well as promoting the UK as a study destination, the £6m [Study UK Discover You](#) campaign also aims to promote UK transnational education.

The initiative is part-funded by a £3m commitment from the UK government's existing GREAT Britain campaign, which markets the UK in a number of areas including innovation, culture and business. The British Council has matched this amount, bringing the total funding to £6m.

Jacqueline Jenkins, senior advisor – education engagement at the British Council, said the campaign will be looking at what UK education means to international students.

“It’s really about inspiring international students to realise the knowledge, confidence, skills that they gain while studying in UK education, and what kind of future that would lead them to,” she told *The PIE News*.

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UK’s Russell Group forges new opportunities with Chinese counterparts (4 November)

By Study International Staff: Study International: 4 November

The [Russell Group](#), an association of the UK’s top research-intensive institutions, has signed an agreement with Chinese universities to boost research and innovation between the two nations.

A delegation of eight Vice-Chancellors from the group paid a visit to Shanghai recently to meet with representatives of the China 9 (C9) League, the Chinese equivalent of the U.S. Ivy League.

The Russell Group-China 9 Dialogue was co-chaired by Zhang Jie, president of [Shanghai Jiao Tong University](#), and Professor David Greenaway, chair of the Russell Group and Vice-Chancellor of the [University of Nottingham](#).

During the dialogue, university leaders discussed how to best tackle challenges and seize opportunities shared by the universities through the partnership.

Some of the topics covered included student and faculty mobility, knowledge sharing, and new approaches to complex global challenges, such as food security and the digital economy.

Greenaway said he believed the two groups have an important role to play.

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USA and Canada

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How a Chinese company bought access to admissions officers at top U.S. colleges (22 October)

By Alexandra Harney: Reuters: 22 October 2016

Dipont is accused by ex-employees of helping students cheat on their college applications. The company also has spent widely to get its clients in front of schools such as Vanderbilt, Wellesley and the University of Virginia.

A major Chinese education company has paid thousands of dollars in perks or cash to admissions officers at top U.S. universities to help students apply to American schools.

And according to eight former employees of Shanghai-based Dipont Education Management Group, the company's services didn't end there.

Six told Reuters that Dipont employees wrote application essays for students. Another said she altered recommendation letters that teachers had written for students. One student was given access to his high school transcript and erased bad grades, one of the former employees said.

Dipont denies the allegations of application fraud but boasts of its special relationship with some 20 U.S. colleges, which include Vanderbilt University, Wellesley College, Tulane University and the University of Virginia. Their admissions officers have visited China since 2014, personally advising Dipont students at an annual summer program on how to successfully apply to U.S. colleges.

"Just once a year, current admissions officers become your exclusive consultants," an ad from Dipont tells prospective clients. The same ad features a Wellesley student crediting the Dipont program for her early acceptance.

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US: SEVP issues final guidance on pathway programmes (31 October)

By Beckie Smith: The Pie News: 31 October

Pathway programmes that prepare international students for degree-level study in the US must incorporate for-credit work and offer guaranteed entry to a degree, according to final guidance issued by the government branch responsible for overseeing international student visas and study programmes.

In the long-awaited [document](#), which builds on draft guidance issued more than two years ago, SEVP aims to clarify existing legislation concerning pathway programmes.

For regulatory purposes, SEVP considers a pathway to be a language training programme, the guidance notes. Programmes must therefore be accredited by a relevant accrediting agency ([usually ACCET or CEA](#)).

Because of this classification, the guidance applies only to pathways that include an element of English language teaching.

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74% int'l students in Aus apply through agents (4 November)

By: Natalie Marsh: The Pie News: 4 November

Almost three quarters of international students starting university in Australia applied to the institution through an education agent, according to benchmarking data from the [Australian Universities International Directors' Forum](#).

Based on responses from more than 30 universities, the 2016 edition of the benchmarking data finds that in 2015, 74% of students were enrolled through education agencies – 16% were located within Australia and 58% based offshore.

The data, which was presented at the 2016 Australian International Education Conference, was gathered from international offices at 34 Australian universities.

The responses to the survey also illustrate that the proportion of applicants to Australian universities that convert into commencements is decreasing.

“The average conversion rate across Australia is 19.4% across all study levels and source countries, down marginally from 2014,” said Will Archer, CEO of i-graduate, presenting the data.

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Foreign students: Indian agents want poaching curbs to stay (26 October)

By: John Ross: The Australian: 26 October

Indian agents say Australia should not water down requirements for international students to persevere with their enrolments, warning it could trigger a fresh round of onshore poaching.

Under current arrangements, students must stick with their principal colleges or universities for at least six months before jumping ship. But the rule is being reconsidered as part of a review of the national code attached to the recently amended Education Services for Overseas Students Act.

The HES understands a move is afoot to abolish the six-month requirement, which is seen as curtailing students' consumer rights. But agents warn this could damage Brand Australia.

“Countries like India and China view Australia as a very strong and stable ground for education,” said Rahul Gandhi, president of the Association of Australian Education Representatives in India.

“Students have the right to train (elsewhere) within the same level, but they need to be locked in for some period of time.”

Poaching of onshore students is nothing new, with colleges openly advertising for students from rivals, reportedly luring them with iPads and cash handbacks. But insiders warn the practice is subverting the student visa regime, with students — many driven solely by the desire to work in Australia — enrolling with low-risk providers and switching to cheaper alternatives once they arrive here.

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Asia

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China seeks more students from southeast Asian countries (25 October)

By: The Jakarta Post staff: The Jakarta Post: 25 October 2016

In a bid to improve collaboration in education and culture with ASEAN countries, the Chinese government has revealed it hopes to see more students from Southeast Asia studying in China.

"Foreign students from Southeast Asian countries are the bridge and future of the relationship between ASEAN [countries] and China," ASEAN-China Center secretary-general Yang Xiuping said in a public lecture at Nanjing Normal University in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, China, on Sunday.

As reported by *Antara* news agency, currently 68,000 students from Southeast Asian countries are studying in China. For this year, the Chinese government wants to increase the number to at least 100,000. "We want to see more exchange students from ASEAN countries in China," Yang stressed.

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Singapore introduces regulation overhaul for private providers (26 October)

By: Sara Custer: The Pie News: 26 October 2016

Singapore, a hub for international branch campuses, has released a [string of rules](#) for private education providers including mandatory participation in a graduate employment survey and obtaining a four-year quality assurance certificate.

The regulations are aimed at private education providers offering external degree programmes as well as those that articulate into foreign degree courses, including pathway and foundation programmes.

Institutions will now be required to participate in the Committee for Private Education's annual Graduate Employment Survey. Results from the survey will be published on each institution's website to allow students to see their employment outcomes.

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No. of foreign students studying in S. Korea tops 120,000 in Sept (26 October)

By: Yonhap news agency staff: Yonhap news agency: 26 October 2016

The number of foreign students studying in South Korea topped the 120,000-mark for the first time last month, the justice ministry said Friday.

It was tallied at 122,082 as of the end of September, up 3.8 percent from the previous month and up 19.6 percent from a year earlier.

China topped the list of native countries from which foreign students had come with 70,508 or 58 percent, trailed by Vietnam with 13,004, Mongolia with 5,814, Japan with 2,773, Uzbekistan with 2,232 and the United States with 1,672.

In terms of purposes of stay, overseas studies accounted for the lion's share with 85,473 students, training in Korean language skills with 36,597 students and training in foreign languages with 12 students.

During the mentioned month, the number of foreign residents gained 2.3 percent from the previous month to 2.03 million.

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International

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South Africa to allow visa extensions due to student protests (17 October)

By Study International Staff: Study International: 17 October

Final-year international students at South African universities whose studies have been affected by the ongoing student protests should have no problem applying for visa extensions, as the government has agreed to ease the process.

The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) said that as a result of student protests, which have sparked outbreaks of violence, university campuses across the country have seen temporary closures which have set back their academic calendars by weeks, affecting thousands of students.

Should the protests continue to disrupt academic activities, students may have to finish up the rest of the academic year in 2017.

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New minister signals change for Russian higher education (24 October)

By ICEF Monitor Staff: ICEF Monitor: 24 October

- Russia's newly appointed Minister of Education and Science has announced a review of the landmark Project 5-100
- The Minister has also suspended a wide-ranging programme of mergers among Russian universities, and has announced plans for curricula reform as well as a new mandatory Russian-language exam for foreign students

Russia has a new Minister of Education and Science and she sees change ahead for the country's universities. Appointed to the post in August, Olga Vasilyeva replaces the previous minister, Dmitry Livanov, who has been reassigned as trade envoy to Ukraine.

Ms Vasilyeva made headlines early in her tenure when she indicated in a 28 September briefing that the government would move to suspend mergers among Russian universities, a prominent initiative of her predecessor, and could also introduce changes to the landmark Project 5-100.

The project brings significant additional funding to [a group of 21 universities](#), with the express goal of placing five Russian institutions among the world's top 100 universities by the year 2020. It aims to do so by strengthening each institution, increasing research activity, and accelerating internationalisation efforts through increased student mobility, scholarly collaboration, and joint programmes with partners abroad. The programme is reportedly operating with a budget allocation of 60.5 billion rubles (US\$973 million) for the period 2013-2017.

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Four megatrends that are changing the competitive landscape of international education (1 November)

By ICEF Monitor Staff: ICEF Monitor: 1 November

Slowing growth, a booming middle class, shifting destination market share, and new regional study destinations are helping to set a new competitive dynamic in international education.

1. Slower growth, new destinations

Roughly five million students are studying abroad today – an increase of nearly 67% since 2005 – and the OECD projects that eight million students will be studying abroad by 2025. The big question is, what happens to the growth curve after that?

A major driver of student mobility to date has been unmet demand for higher education in developing countries: when students can't access quality education at home, they become motivated to go abroad. This trend has spurred astonishing growth in the numbers of Chinese and Indian students that travel overseas to study over the past decade.

But the relative popularity of destinations is changing all the time. Asian higher education systems are steadily strengthening, to the point where several universities in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia now rank among the world's best. A growing number of students in these countries are choosing to stay within the region to study, and students from other countries – including African ones – are adding Asian destinations to their list of attractive options.

As Asia increases its capacity to absorb students from the region and expands its recruitment of international students, countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand may well see demand for places in their institutions slow, especially from major sending markets such as China and India.

TAKEAWAY: Pursuing greater diversification in international enrolments will become ever more important for institutions outside of Asia. This is underlined not only by Asian institutions' climb up the rankings, but also by the fact that the number of Chinese university-aged students will be notably smaller 15 years from now: demographers expect China's population of 20-24-year-olds to decline by 20% from 2010 to 2020.

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2016 Agent Barometer survey reveals important shifts in destination appeal and student perception (31 October)

By ICEF Monitor Staff: ICEF Monitor: 1 November

- *The 2016 Agent Barometer gathers responses from 1,111 agents in 108 countries*
- *The survey reflects some important shifts in the appeal of major destinations*
- *It also shows a pronounced shift in student concerns, with less concern about financial issues in 2016 and more with respect to study visas and personal safety*
- *Responsiveness to inquiries and admissions files continues to be a top-rated tactic for institutional marketing this year, but the survey responses also show the growing importance of online services and training supports for agents*

Key findings from the 2016 ICEF i-graduate Agent Barometer were released yesterday at the ICEF Berlin Workshop. Now in its tenth year, the Agent Barometer remains the industry's most comprehensive survey of education agents.

The survey ran over September and October this year and drew responses from 1,111 agents in 108 countries. As in previous years, the respondents were widely distributed by market, with only India (12%), Brazil (7%), Nepal (5%), Canada (5%), and Russia (5%) accounting for 5% or more of the total sample.

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