

The many faces of provision and assessment: stakeholders in an EAP context

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The economic impact of universities is clear to see and extends far beyond our campuses, reaching deep into local communities and the national economy.

Professor Robert Van de Noort – Vice Chancellor
University of Reading

Contentions

We (EAP professionals) are key players in success for the UK HE sector

we are key players in our institutions

we are key players in the UK's economic and socio-political success

we have great expertise- look at our qualification ranges!

our contributions are sometimes not fully recognised-TEGs?



Contentions (2)

We are gatekeepers for access to our institutions

we face students

we face accreditation bodies (course quality and staff eligibility)

we face our academic departments (a range of expectations)

we face the UK government

we face each other



A variety of stakeholder perspectives

international

national

local

institutional

individual- student and practitioner



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The term stakeholder

First used by Freeman (1984)

Some contestation as it can imply land expropriation

Used here in its wider sense- anyone/anything associated with the ***venture of EAP***



An international perspective

Current numbers of international students over 7 million

Most popular **destinations**

USA (circa 1,000,000)

UK (c 750,000- 2022/2023- (HOC library 2024)

Australia (c 400,000)

Germany (c 350,000)

Canada (c 300,000)

Country of origin- China is the biggest- 16% (2021) difficult to get exact numbers for 22-24

India has overtaken China for IS to UK (126,00) 22/23)



Comment

4 out of 5 host countries are English speaking

Financial implications are considerable

Soft power is also a key issue

Don't ignore sending countries' changing needs/positions



A national perspective

Post pandemic UK international students at around 690,000 (Universities UK 2022- C750,000 23/24)

Total revenue C £41 billion + (Universities UK 2023)

This represents C 4.6% of UK GDP

Each student brings in around £60,000 + per year (fees/accommodation/spends)



A national perspective (2)

Fee income from IS £11.8 billion (22/23) 23% of universities' total income

In the mid 1990s it was 5%

Fees not capped

Implications for cross-subsidy- funding deficits of £5.3 billion research and £1.7 billion for teaching domestic undergraduates (*Observer* 16/02/25)

Public not opposed to international student recruitment (61% happy with current or increased levels – *British Future* “Think tank” 2025)



A national perspective (3)

Soft power- hard to quantify but important

57 serving world leaders educated in the UK (HEPI
2024- ***1/4 of all world leaders!!***)

At least some if not all exposed to our EAP expertise

International students cross-subsidise many UK
university courses (Universities UK 2023)



Comment

Hard issues- we (the UK) need the money - vital to UK economic success and growth- cross subsidies vital for keeping fees low/ enabling research

Soft issues- we (the UK) need influence on the world stage- is there a better way?

Some (serving) world leaders educated in the UK

Ana Brnabic - President of Serbia - University of Hull

Joseph Ngute - President of Cameroon- University of Warwick
Queen Mary London

Petr Pavel- President Czech Republic- Kings College London

Nana Akufo Addo- President of Ghana- New College Oxford



Some (non serving) world leaders educated in the UK

Bill Clinton

Aun Song Su Kyi

Imran Khan

all Oxford



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A local perspective

Influence upon the city

Influence upon the immediate local area

Local perspectives can sometimes be overlooked



Local impact

20/21 figures (Universities UK 2021)

Average spend £58 million per parliamentary constituency

Average £560 per resident

Glasgow central £292 million, £2,700 per resident



Local impact (2)

Newcastle East - £2560

Edinburgh Central - £2,470

Nottingham South -£2190

Sheffield Central – £1930

Holborn and St Pancras- £1730



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Local impact (3)

UOB 1 billion turnover expected in 2025

UOB 1030 preessional students 2024

UOB 470 foundation students 2024

(One in fifty jobs in Brum depend on the UOB)

£46 million off-campus spend- University of Reading



Overlooked issues

Supports 200,000 jobs (Universities UK 2018)

High level of public support for international students (Russell Group Briefing 2024)

Figures suggest only 1% say they should be a main target to reduce immigration

58% say universities should continue to use international student fees to support the university sector



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An institutional perspective

Cross-subsidies cover government funding shortfalls

Between 2019/20 and 2021/22 UK student numbers increased 10%
international students grew by 11%

A 10% reduction in international student numbers would reduce UK universities' collective income by £500 million a year

Russell Group Briefing (2024)



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Institutional location of EAP provision

In academic department- English?

- Humanities?
- Modern languages?
- Education?
- any other?

In non- academic departments- Academic Services?

- any other/s

2/3 international students pay yearly salary of 1 full-time staff member



Comment

Implications for our (EAP providers) influence

Status

Institutional prominence of our expertise

Cash cows? (Drucker 1967)



An individual perspective- practitioner

What are we?

Experts?/ consultants?/teachers?

Semi-experts?

Non- experts? / deliverers?



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A large range of qualifications and expertise

First degree/ Higher degree

PhD

Teaching qualification- RSA- PGCE- FHCEA/SFHCEA

Publications

Conference presentations

We are a multifaceted profession

We have teaching expertise and qualifications few others may match

A unique blend of applied skill and theoretical knowledge- deployed in

The classroom

Syllabus and materials design

Programme management

Assessment- examples to follow



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Assessment (1) square the circle

We are the bridge between externally imposed levels of English competence and the practical levels needed in a UK HE institution

With appropriate IELTS/CEFR level- students may still need guidance/ support

Without the above – EAP programmes, especially preessionals need to synchronise their test schedules and criteria to external assessment frames (IELTS/CEFR)

Explain this to departments and make student competencies explicit



Assessment (2)

What aspects of the prescribed levels can we say students can do?

Example - end of course **writing** assessment

It is often said that in order to combat fake news, students should be taught to think critically. Using the sources provided, define what critical thinking is and suggest how it can be taught.

Use the short texts provided to support your answer

You should aim to write approximately 500 words



Assessment (3)

Example of marking

Criterion – vocabulary

Marks 17/20 IELTS 7.5 CEFR Mid C1

Comments- There is a wide range of vocabulary and although there are some errors such as “This essay mainly focus on ...” and “ A number of researcher engaged in this area...” they do not significantly impact communication

Departments can understand this



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Assessment (4)

Criterion- grammatical range and accuracy

Marks- 17/20 IELTS 7.5 Mid C1

Comments- There are a wide range of complex sentences for example “ ***In order to enhance students’ critical thinking, it is necessary to define what they are***” and “... ***it should be noticed that although students might realise the importance of critical thinking, they often have trouble using it***”

There are frequent error-free sentences

Departments can understand this



Assessment (5)

Criterion- text organisation

Marks 17/20 IELTS 7.5 CEFR Mid C1

Comments- The text is very well structured, it is easy to read and coherent. The ideas are well sequenced

Departments will be pleased to know this



Assessment (6)

Criterion- Task achievement, argument and analysis
Marks 15/20 IELTS 7.0 CEFR low C1

Comments ... a convincing answer with arguments well developed and good integration of sources “... ***the former focus on clarifying and making unbiased judgements, while the latter emphasises that being a critical thinker needs to ask key questions, evaluate information and draw well reasoned conclusions and solutions***”

Departments may be impressed by this



Assessment (7)

Overall mark 66/80 (82.5%)

IELTS 7.5

CEFR Mid C1

Refer departments to criteria if they like



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Conclusions

As long as we keep up with developments (recruitment patterns, AI issues etc)

Our institutions will continue to need us

Our local communities will continue to need us

The UK's future success partly depends on us

We can only become more important



Stakeholder model- reverse order of presentation

individual- student and practitioner

institutional

local

national

international



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“Anecdotes”

Where do you stand in your institution’s status hierarchy?

Someone once kindly said “Are you the English teacher?”

Another person said “English teacher! Huh”

To which I replied

“Very ‘umble sir, very ‘umble” (Charles Dickens)



References

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