Connecting Scotland – how Scottish organisations engage internationally

Perth College UHI

College International Activity

It is important for Perth College UHI to build up a portfolio of international partners to enhance the international reputation of Perth College and the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), increase the diversity of our student population and increase our income from this activity.

Historically we have had some success working in India developing articulation agreements with a range of partners, however a number of factors have resulted in this market diminishing steadily over the last three years. The main factors affecting recruitment in India being the global economy (India is a particularly price-sensitive market) and the removal of post-study visas by the UK Government. This is a pattern across all of our sector.

To mitigate the impact of this on our international recruitment, we have been working over the last four years to develop a number of partnership agreements in China. Whilst the complexities of working with the Chinese Government and Ministry of Education should not be understated, we have found a model that appears to meet their requirements and provide us with a potential recruitment stream for the next five years.

We have three international partners in China at various stages in their development. The most mature of these is with Henan Institute of Engineering (HIE) where we have just concluded the delivery of year three of our university’s engineering degree to a cohort in-country. The intended outcome is that a small number of these students will now come to the UHI for their fourth year. Successful completion of either year three or year four will result in a ‘dual’ degree, giving the students an award from both HIE and from UHI. This has been hugely challenging and rewarding in equal measure. Much credit goes to the staff who have travelled regularly to China to deliver to a very eager audience, the staff in HIE who have worked very hard to complement this delivery to ensure the students have the best possible chance of passing the UHI degree exams, and to the students themselves who have worked so hard to improve their English.

Bureaucracy and the demands of international travel aside, the single biggest obstacle has been getting the Chinese students to the right level of English to come to study in the UK. All of our partners now recognise the criticality of this and are putting significant effort in the early years of their programmes to teaching English. This will be of benefit to all of their students whether they come to the UHI or not in the future.

Other partnerships are more straightforward 3+1 articulation agreements where we provide some guest lecturing input in year three but only those progressing to the UK in year four will be able to achieve a UHI degree.

Our other partners are:
Zhoukou Normal University – articulation agreements for both music and visual communications. Students are entering year two of their programmes now.

Hunan University of Urban Construction – articulation agreement for engineering. Students are entering year three of their programme now.

Dawne Hodkinson
International Director

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