



## Overview

The Australian higher education sector is subject to a national quality assurance framework which positions it well in the international marketplace for education services. The Education Services for Overseas Students Act (2000) and the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students are significant achievements and are, in many cases, the envy of other countries.

However, given the current slowing down of growth in international student enrolments, Deakin considers that greater coordination is required across Australia to promote the export of education services in the most effective manner.

The reduced growth in international recruitment which many universities have experienced is clearly caused by a variety of factors and is not uniform across all universities and all states. It has in part been the result of the appreciation of the Australian dollar and the increased cost of Australian higher education in key overseas markets. For example, while there have been rises in the British Pound against regional currencies, the gap between the cost of studying in Australia and the cost of studying in Britain does not appear as great as it once was. Australia is now not an obvious choice for parents and students who are value conscious.

Another cause for the reduced growth is the lack of a more coordinated and coherent approach to the generic marketing of Australian education internationally. When compared with Australia's chief competitor, the United Kingdom (as represented overseas by the British Council), Australia's institutional representation abroad appears confusing:

- o The promotion of Australia as a study destination for international students and the coordination of international student recruitment activities abroad are currently undertaken by a range of government and non-government bodies, including the Commonwealth Government, the State Governments, peak sectoral bodies, IDP Education Australia and individual institutions;
- o The Commonwealth Government and the State Governments promote the export of educational services through both education and trade arms, including Australian Education International (DEST), Austrade (DFAT), State Government education departments (such as Queensland Education and Training International (QETI)) and State Government business and trade export offices (such as the overseas network of Victorian Government Business Offices), and
- o In addition to these activities, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs is actively engaged overseas in the provision of visas and the Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is successfully involved in fostering cultural relations between Australia and overseas countries.

Evidently there are clear links between educational promotion and the broader projection of Australia, especially into our region, and Deakin therefore believes that greater coordination is required of generic marketing and promotional work for the export of Australian education services.

One option which Australia might want to pursue is the creation of a statutory authority within the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Science and Training, bringing together other aspects of the Australian Government's promotional work for Australia overseas. An excellent model for such a body is the recently-created Tourism Australia. Whichever method is used, however, there must be a release of greater resources to promote Australia abroad and, in particular, its education.

Yours sincerely



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