

# International Recruitment 101

# Today's session

- Who are we?
- What is international recruitment
- Current trends within international recruitment
- Recruitment channels
- Typical roles within international recruitment
- Key skills and mindset
- Q&A

# Brian Greenwood

2006 – Student ambassador (York St John)

2009 – PG Admissions (Edinburgh Napier)

2010 – Immigration Advisor (Royal Conservatoire)

2011 – Recruitment & Conversion Officer (Reading)

2012 – International Officer (York St John)

2013 – Regional Manager (Bath)

2017 – Deputy Head of International Recruitment (Bristol)

2022 – BUILA Executive Board Member

2024 – Associate Director of International Recruitment (Exeter)



# Andy Cotterill

- Started as a student ambassador at uni
  - Supported international visits to campus
- First job as a student recruitment assistant in 2015 at Nottingham
- Domestic recruitment at Birmingham and City 2016-21
  - Took part in two European tours, two Cyprus trips and UKI visits
- Heading up global undergraduate student recruitment and access at Keele since September 2021



# What is International Recruitment?

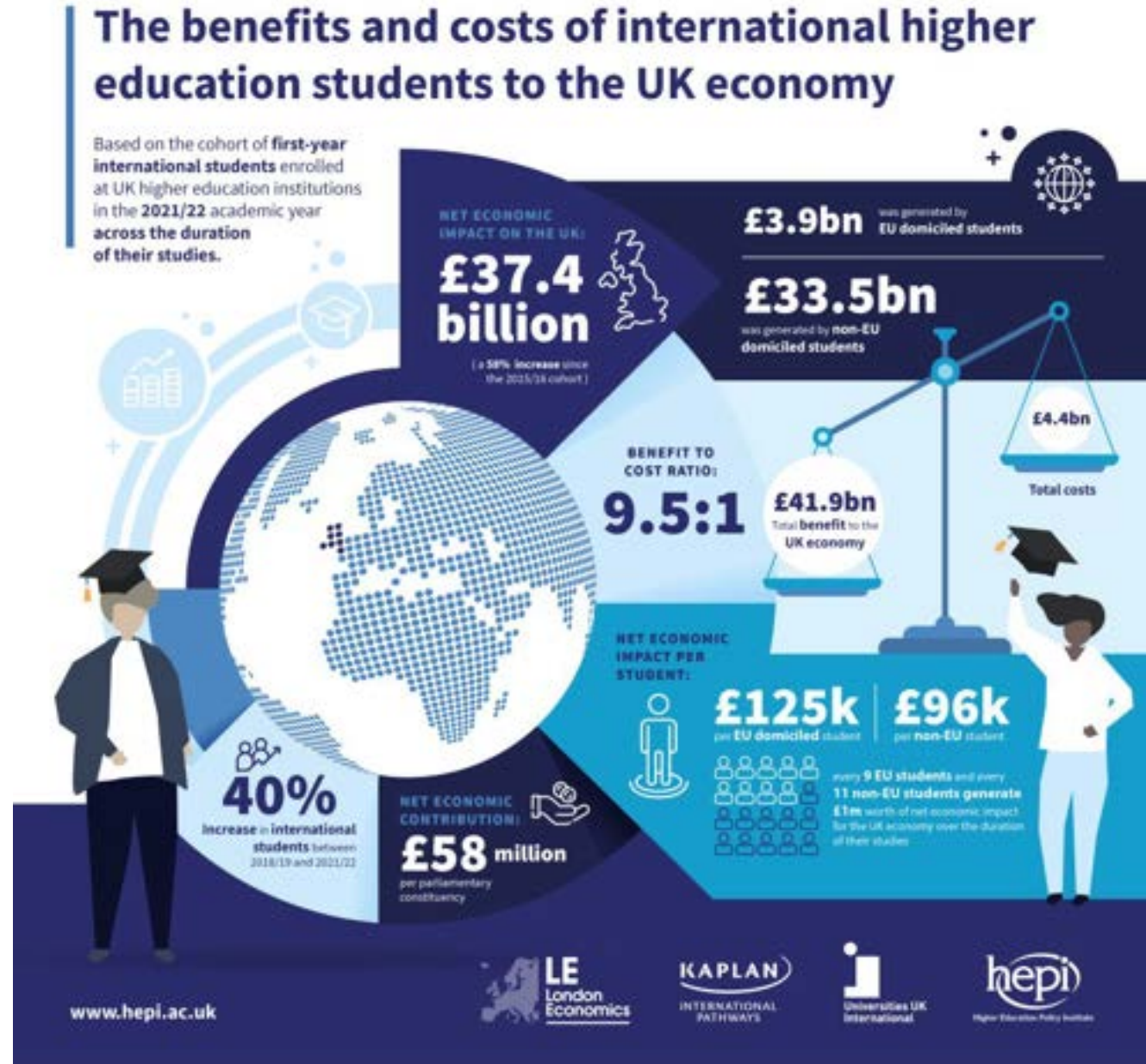
Any student who does not qualify for UK fees - strict criteria based on residency status and length

An industry worth £37bn+ to the UK economy

The planning and developing of activity to attract and welcome international students to institutions across the UK

Working with government and sector organisations to promote the sector within the UK and internationally

Supporting a diverse range of activity across the world to support students and facilitate institution's strategic objectives



# A brief history

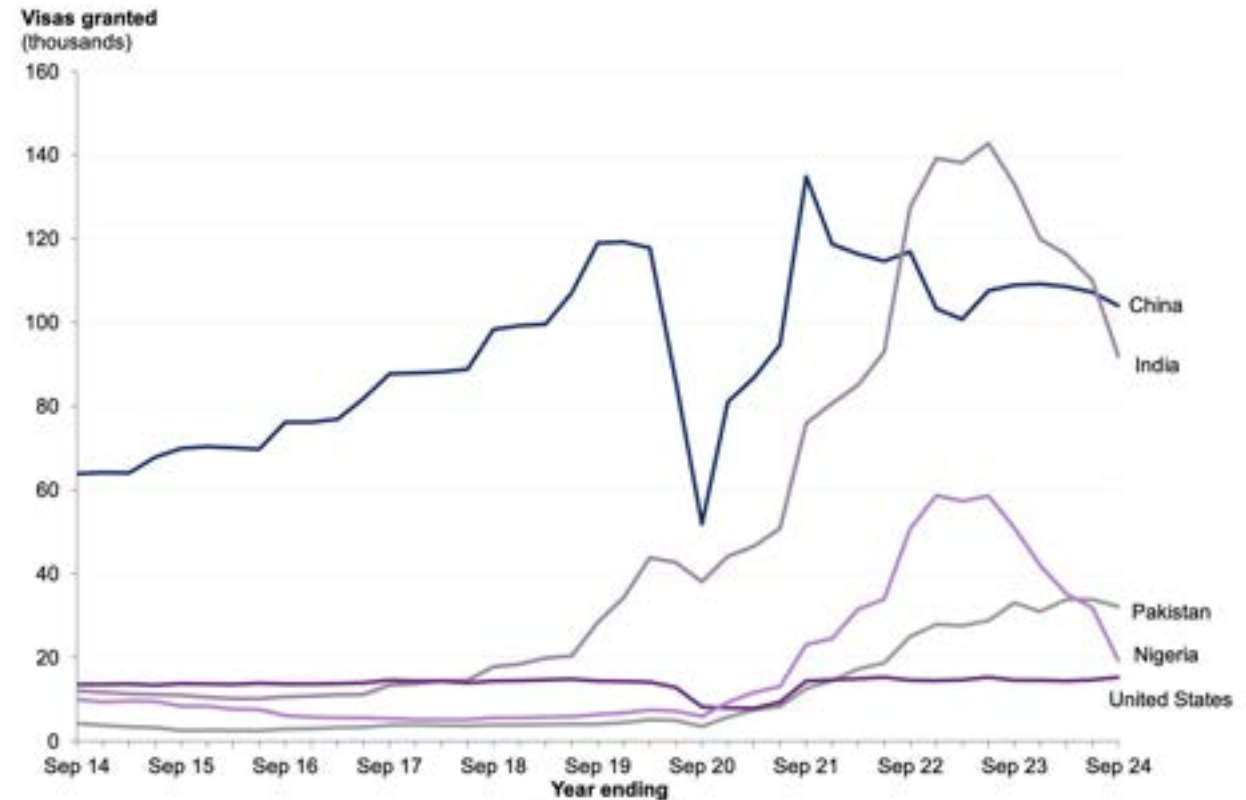
- 1977 – 123,000 international students – free fees
- 1978 – fees introduced
- 1984 – 56,000 international students
- 1999 – Tony Blair’s Prime Ministers Initiative to increase international students in the UK
- 2010 – Coalition government mandate to reduce net migration and loss of post study work visa
- 2019 – Conservative government re-introduce post study work visa
- 2019 – Conservative government recruitment target of 600,000 by 2030
- 2020 – target met a decade early, causing concern about immigration
- 2023 – new visa rules make it difficult to bring family members and stay after post study work visa. Numbers fall by 17%
- 2024 – continues to be challenging

# International student recruitment trends

Challenging outlook with large falls seen in 2024 and expected to continue for 2025

Mixed messages from successive UK governments creating uncertainty

Cost of living and graduate employability weighing down on choices



Source: Home Office

# Global Student Recruitment

The global outlook for student recruitment is more challenging

## Visa changes

- Fewer students expected by 2025
- 1 In 4 students are less likely to consider the UK due to Government changes to dependent student visas.
- Some confidence is returning post MAC and new government

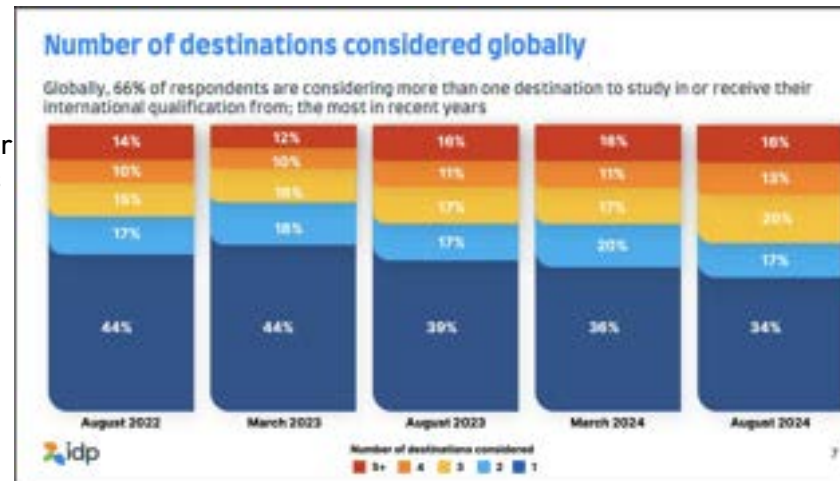
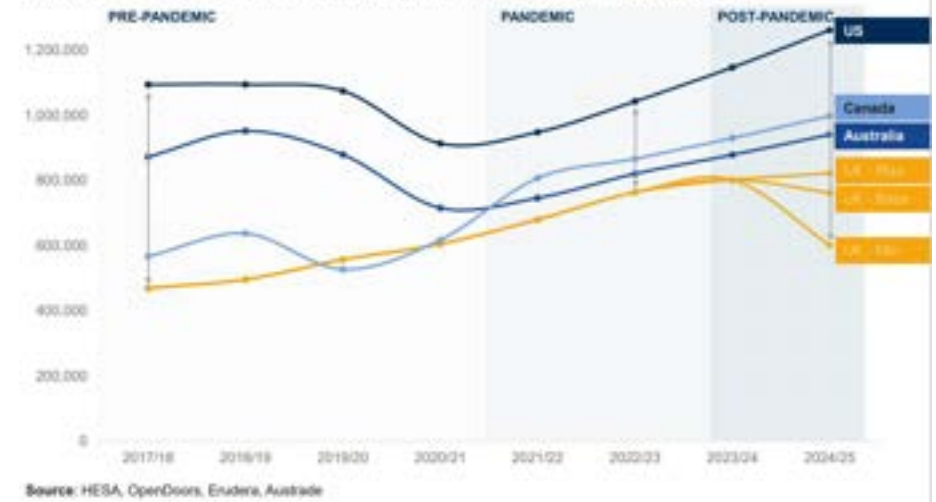
## Competition

- Increasing both within the UK and other destinations. US now top choice amongst English speaking countries (up from 3<sup>rd</sup> a year ago), UK is 3<sup>rd</sup>
- The number of institutions students are applying to is increasing with 5 remaining the most common number of universities to apply to.
- The number of students interested in 6,8,10 and 10+ is increasing year on year.
- Changes to competitor visa rules may create opportunities for the UK – Australia and Canada capping numbers with various controls, US looking at visa rules.

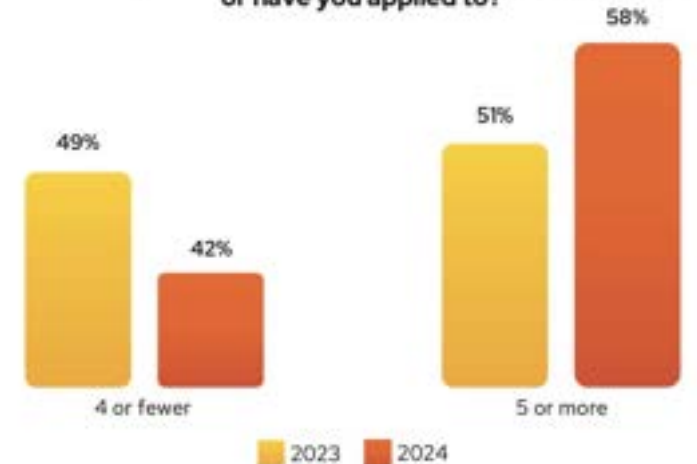


## The impact of government visa restrictions could cost the UK economy £10bn per annum

This would be equal a reduction in total international students of 200k by 2025



## How many universities are you considering applying to, or have you applied to?





## Global policy changes affecting student choice

Australia and the US overtake Canada as the preferred destination of choice while caps continue to stay in place in Canada and new caps are proposed in Australia.



idp Percentages of students considering top study destinations from Emerging Futures 4 (August 2023) compared with Emerging Futures 6 (August 2024)

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## Concerns over immigration are not just a UK issue



Introduction of an international student number cap in 2024. Cap reduced by 10% to 437,000 for 2025 & 2026 and expanded to include master's and doctoral students.



Introduction of an international student number cap (known as the National Planning Level). The NPL for 2025 is 270,000 with 175,000 for higher education and 95,000 for VET and will be reviewed annually.



Election of Donald Trump on a pledge to restrict immigration and introduce a way of mass deportation policies, leading to significant concern amongst international students.

# Global Student Recruitment – what is important

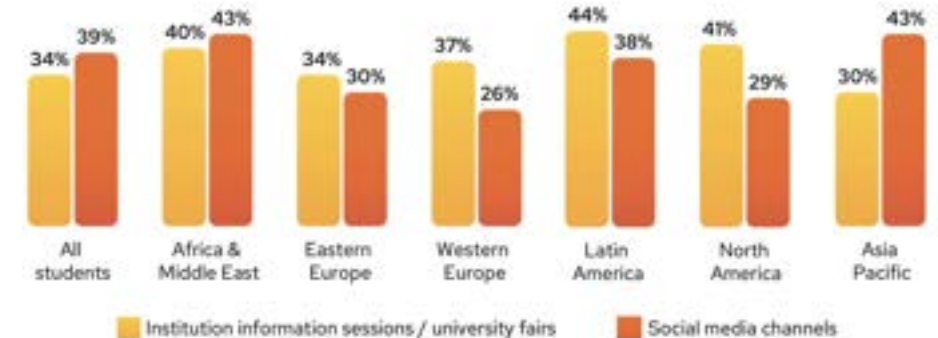
## Rankings

- Rankings and reputation continue to be an important factor in student decision making
- Teaching quality and overall reputation is the most important factor when choosing a University and course (QS ISS 2024)
- Exeter's reputation has improved with international prospects, is strong with international agents but has seen a weakening with international academics (see graph source: W100 tracker)

## Connection / profile / marketing

- Face to face interactions are important for finding out about potential institutions.
- 88% of students expect a quick response to enquiries with most students expecting a response within one month.
- Email and whatsapp continue to be the main channels of communication preferred by students
- Instagram and Youtube continue to be the main social media sites used for research about universities
- 49% of QS ISS respondents stated the ability to ask questions from existing international students is useful when making study destinations

Which of the following are most useful to you when making decisions about your studies?  
(Students interested in studying in the UK)



Source: QS International Student Survey 2024

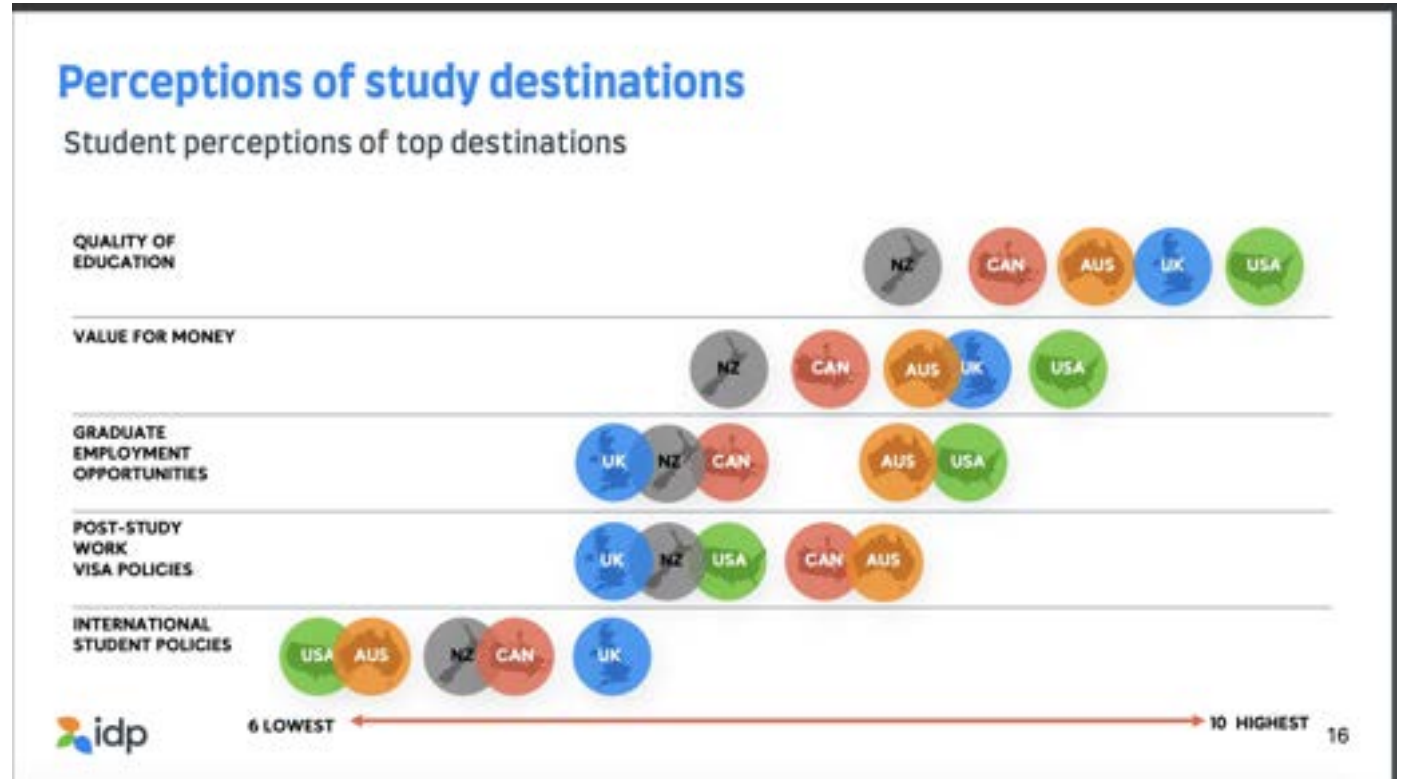
# Global Student Recruitment – What is important

## Graduate employability

- Good employment opportunities were stated as the second most important factor when choosing the UK for IDP survey respondents.
- An obvious link to a chosen career is an important factor when choosing a course (QS ISS 2024)
- 48% of QS ISS 2024 respondents claimed that it was useful to have information on work placements and links to industry

## Cost of living / funding

- Cost of living was the number one concern for students according to the QS ISS 2024, higher than safety and accommodation
- Whilst scholarships were not as important, they can play an important part in reducing the overall cost of studying
- Scholarships continue to be a common question to staff at education fairs and from agents



# Discussion

- Anything here surprise you?
- What are the key messages/ trends for UK students? Are they different or similar?

# Three main recruitment channels



Direct



designed by freepik

Agent



Partner

# Direct – how to reach them



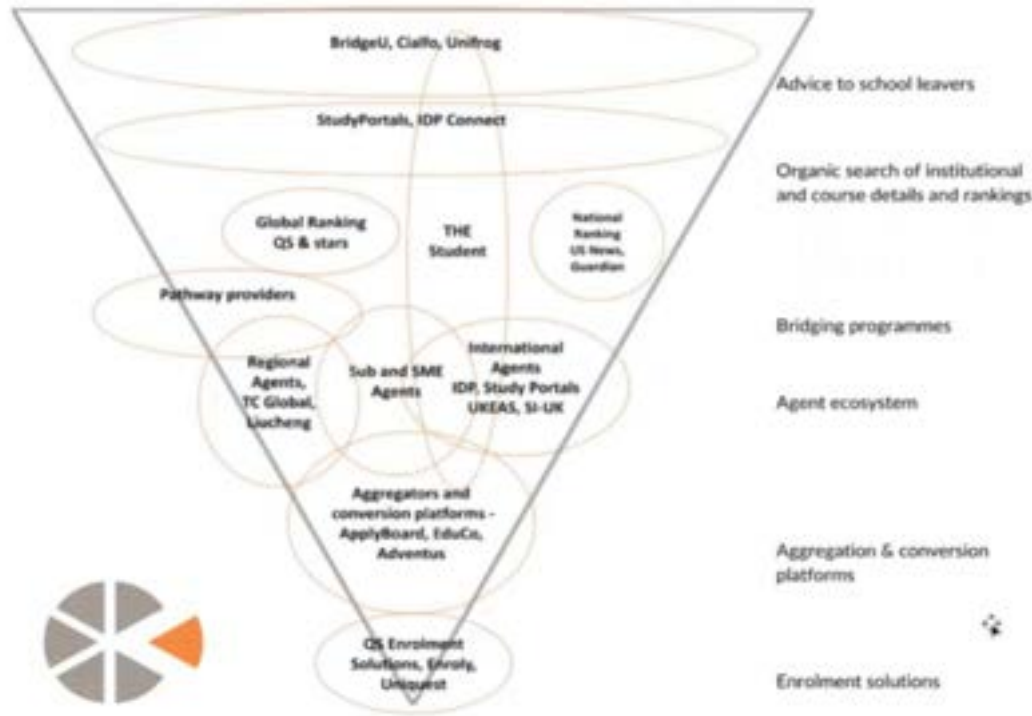
Schedule of organised activity depending on region / market and could include:

- Sponsors
- Scholarships
- Academic visits
- Applicant and offer holder events
- Overseas presence
- Attraction and conversion





# Digital platforms and edtech





# Agents

- Support students from initial enquiry to enrolment
- Often act as problem solvers and can also get involved in accommodation, visas and flight booking
- In some countries they are 'the norm' culturally and students expect to pay for the service
- Can be massive, such as 2500 members of staff, or can be small family run business
- Can be specialised or general, focussed just on the UK or multi destinations
- Tend to be focussed on PGT recruitment but many support all levels of study including foundation, UG and PhD.



# Recruitment Partnerships

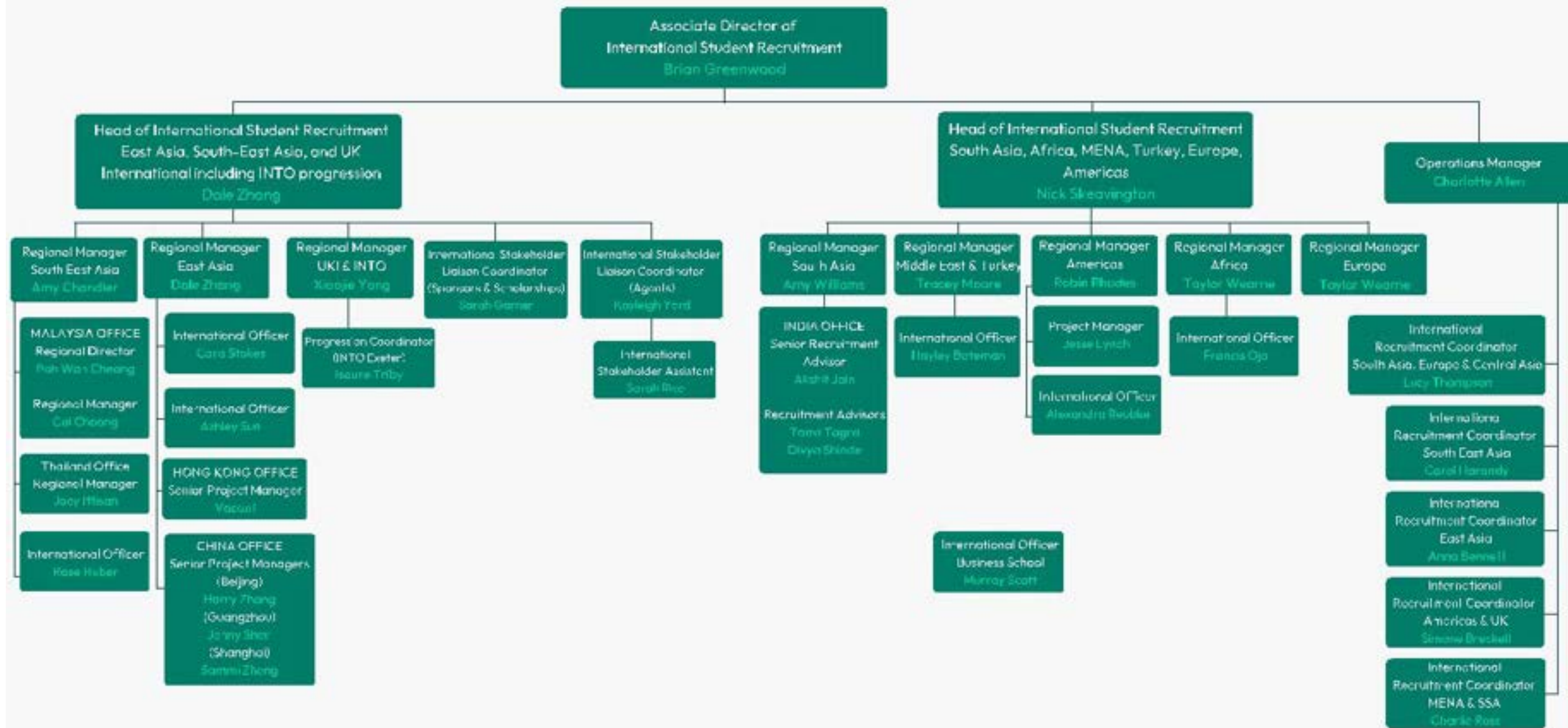
- A signed agreement for students to progress or study part of their degree at your institution.
- Different to an exchange or study abroad agreement.
- Can take many formats – 1+1, 2+1, 2+2, 3+1.
- Can be packaged together, or an advertised option for cohorts at the partner institution
- Can be significant pipeline of students or add handfuls across the institutions to contribute to diversity
- Often helps with other aspects of collaboration such as joint research and ranking submissions
- Can be referred to as TNE

# Pathway providers



# Typical International Office set up

- Some senior staff members who may or may not travel, responsible for setting strategy and liaising with wider university
- Regions split between staff, usually based on geographical locations and number of students – i.e. East Asia, South Asia, Europe, etc.
- Support staff for regions and wider international office functions such as finance, marketing, administration etc.





# Typical roles within international recruitment

Entry level: International Recruitment Officer, International Recruitment Coordinator, International Office Assistant

Manager level: Regional Manager, County Manager, International Officer, Senior International Officer, International Development Manager, International Student Recruitment Manager

Senior level: Head of International, Deputy Head of International Student Recruitment, Director of International Recruitment, Associate Director of International Student Recruitment



# Associated roles

International Agent Manager

International Stakeholder Manager

International Sponsors and Scholarships Manager

International Operations Manager

International Marketing Manager

International Admissions Manager

International Foundation Manager

# Discussion

- What do you think are the key skills and mindset for an international office role?
- What are the main differences between UK recruitment and International recruitment?
- What do you think you can do to make the most of your transferrable skills?

# Key skills / mindset

- Cultural sensitivity
- Independent / calm under pressure
- Can work alone / with minimal supervision / resilient
- Quick thinking
- Being able to understand and interpret data
- Friendly / outgoing / public speaking
- Enjoy talking with public
- Able to pull information together and work out a plan
- Happy with being away from family / friends
- Enjoy travelling

# Where to look for jobs

University websites

[www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)

These are the two main places to look for IO jobs

Remember if you're new to the sector, it is always worth contacting the named contact and asking for a chat

# Top tips

- Say yes – whether it's France, Peru or India, or even Brighton, have a go and gain some experience
- Be curious – engage with your international colleagues!
- Think outside your immediate team – visa, admissions, support teams all deal with international students
- Look for collaborative opportunities – think UCAS stand!
- Learn about the world of international HE – check out HEPI, the PIE, THE, ICEF, British Council