

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Welcome to our occasional newsletter about customer service within Higher Education where we review topical issues of interest to the sector.

Student fees at English HEIs
Local and international student fees
International student visas
Indian students boycotting Australian universities
THE World Rankings
Tune in and find out
Telephone numbers
- and email addresses

Student fees at English HEIs

At the moment it looks like many universities in England will be charging the maximum £9,000 per year for UK/EU undergraduate fees for entry in September 2012. However, the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) has recommended that HEIs spend up to 30% of fees above £6,000 encouraging and supporting students from poorer backgrounds through outreach projects and fee subsidies.

For universities that currently have few such students, the contribution could, therefore, be up to £900. Institutions that presently attract more students from lower income groups will be able to keep more of the £9,000.

Some interesting comparisons show that 46.6% of Oxford University undergraduates were educated at independent schools compared with 1.0% at Wolverhampton. The percentage claiming free school meals at secondary school (FSM index) was 24.7% at London South Bank and 0.8% at Oxford and Cambridge.

If fees are set at £9,000, the government might have a difficulty raising the amount needed for student loans as present plans are based on fees of £7,500 per year.

Local and international fees

Professor Steven Schwartz, VC of Macquarie University in Sydney, has questioned whether it is morally right to charge different fees for local and international students taking the same course. Should one customer subsidise another?

International student visas

A number of countries are juggling a difficult balancing act of trying to increase the number of overseas students whilst, at the same time, restricting the number of student visas.

They are also getting tougher on cancelling the visas of students not achieving high enough attendance.

Indian students boycotting Australian universities

The recent bad publicity caused by some students from India being attacked and mugged in Australia has created a noticeable drop in

timrussell

applications from the sub-continent for Australian universities.

This has been exacerbated by revelations of unregistered education agents and by the very strong Australian dollar making it more expensive to study and live there. As tertiary education is the third biggest export earner, the Australian government is rightly concerned.

THE World Rankings

The Times Higher Education has just released its world university rankings for 2010/2011 and shows 3 British universities in the top 10. The National University of Singapore comes in at 34 and the highest ranking Australian university is Melbourne at 36.

LSE dropped 20 places from last year to 86 and that was before the controversy over Libyan connections that caused the Director to resign.

However, there are such huge differences between the two years that all such league tables have to be considered carefully.

Tune in and find out

Last week Imperial College, London launched its new channel on iTunes U, offering more than 700 pieces of audio and video content covering all areas of the College's research,

teaching and student activities. The channel allows users to download audio and video clips, which include gems from the Imperial archive, scenes of modern campus life, and interviews with academics explaining their research.

Imperial on iTunes U can be accessed on: <http://bit.ly/hqPJAp>.

Telephone numbers

We are still finding UK university websites showing telephone numbers that might not be accessible from overseas. Numbers beginning 0800 and 0845 are fine within the UK but cannot always be called from abroad or from mobiles.

The IDD access code '00' is for international calls from the UK, so '0044' won't work from another country with a different IDD code.

- and email addresses

We are also finding that some university email addresses shown on websites do not exist and that enquiry emails are bouncing back.

It might be a good idea to check these addresses, telephone numbers and named personnel occasionally to ensure that they are up to date.

Or we can do it for you!

Tim Russell and Annelise Cruickshank are currently consulting with a number of UK and overseas universities in areas related to customer service. We can be contacted by:

email: info@TimRussellGroup.com
tel: +44 (0) 20 7638 5357 (London office)
+61 (0) 8 9285 0265 (Australian office)
+44 (0) 797 777 3365 (mobile)