



# **Innovative Marketing Strategies for International Student Recruitment at UK Pathway Providers**

A Five-year strategy plan for Student Recruitment

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The objective of this paper is to describe the successful model of pathway providers in the UK and how they recruit international students for their university partners. The goal of this thesis was to develop a five-year strategic plan for a successful student recruitment of international students. For this purpose, I will use a holistic design, in which many aspects of the literature review and practical techniques will be covered and analysed. The research conducted for this dissertation was applied in its nature, although not original. Data was collected and analysed in both qualitative and quantitative forms from personal experience and data, collected through my work at the University, as well as from attending different events, related to international student recruitment and organized by the British Council, as well as other HE providers. The literature review answered the research questions of this thesis, and opened space for the strategic question to lead the research from that point on.

The study aimed to make the strategy plan authentic and unique for many HE organizations in the UK, but not only, as this strategy could be implemented within many forward thinking, HE institutions in Europe and North America. The strategy plan's structure was presented in the theoretical framework. The framework was authenticated for this particular purpose by combining different strategic models to come together as a strategy plan. The strategy plan integrated the insights from the literature review, theoretical concepts, and research analysis into a different and innovative tool for developing and implementing knowledge for the recruitment of international students.

Based on this approach, an assessment of the current situation and changes in the UK higher education in general and different marketing strategies for the recruitment of international students, answering the following questions:

- What is the current structure of the higher education system in the UK?
- Which are the successfully developed marketing strategies and implemented practices?
- How this strategic marketing plan compares to the current plans used by other HE providers in the UK and what makes it more successful?

The research helped ensure the authenticity of the strategy plan's outcome. This study utilized existing recruitment strategies, strategic marketing techniques and my professional experience and knowledge to build the five-year strategic action plan for international student recruitment. The operational plans are appropriate for the specified time frame, as markets and the HE industry are constantly changing. Furthermore, to give an actual example of how this plan could be successfully implemented, I will be focusing on one of the newest pathway college,

established in the UK, called KUIC and how their model of marketing and recruitment is operating, in partnership with one of the leading research universities in Britain, Keele.

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Key words: Marketing strategy, student recruitment, planning, building successful collaborations and partnerships

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	6
2	LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
3	METHODOLOGY.....	13
	3.1 Research Design and Data Collection Methods.....	13
	3.2 Practical and Ethical considerations.....	14
4	PRACTICAL MARKET ANALYSES .....	15
	4.1 Historical context of international markets.....	15
	4.2 External/internal analysis .....	15
	4.3 Post-pandemic generation .....	17
	4.4 The International education experts' perspective .....	18
	4.5 International students state of play.....	18
	4.6 Predicting the future for international recruiters .....	20
	4.7 Economic contexts .....	22
	4.8 UKVI, compliance and the nature of international students coming to the UK .....	23
	4.9 Operational plans and Stakeholders relationships .....	24
5	THE STRATEGY PLAN .....	27
	5.1 SWOT ANALYSIS.....	27
	5.2 Risk Management .....	28
	5.3 Vision and Mission .....	29
	KUIC Vision: .....	29
	KUIC Mission: .....	29
	5.4 Communication and Stakeholder Engagement.....	30
	5.5 KUIC Goals .....	31
	5.6 KUIC Strategic Objectives.....	32
	5.7 Customer strategy.....	33
	Strategic initiatives or projects for 2024-2025 .....	33
	5.8 Segment identification and predicted targets .....	35
	5.9 Resource Allocation .....	37
6	OPERATIONAL PLANS.....	38
	6.1 Initiative I: Recruit high quality genuine students .....	38
	6.2 Initiative II: Create resilience and diversity by developing routes into two new markets .....	38
	6.3 Initiative III: Drive up attendance and retention of genuine but financially weaker students .....	39
	6.4 Initiative IV: Create a more attractive offering to genuine students	

6.5 Initiative V: Enhance KUIC provision to improve retention and outcomes .....	39
6.6 Initiative VI: Complete the full system set-up and integration within Keele University .....	40
7 REVIEW AND EVALUATION .....	41
8 CONCLUSION .....	43
REFERENCES .....	46
APPENDICES .....	48
Appendix 1 .....	48
Appendix 2 .....	49

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Education is a key factor in the existence and development of a society. From the extent to which the educational level has been reached, the acquired knowledge and skills of the population build a skilled workforce. Education is provided to the entire population of the world, as the level of education subsequently determines a person's place in the society, as well as their social and economic significance. When we talk about education, we must put its characteristics first, such as the quality, equality and affordability.

According to a recent UUKI report, “International students bring great benefits to the UK. Much research has focused on the economic and financial contribution of students through tuition fees, living costs and tourism. Additionally, studies have shown that international students have a positive impact on the overall student experience and students’ personal development, as well as a country’s soft power, by building networks, creating cultural understanding and influencing perceptions of the UK. Universities and government therefore have a keen interest in the UK’s attractiveness as a study destination” (UUKI Report, 2021).

The aim of this paper is to describe the successful model of pathway providers in the UK and how they recruit international students for their university partners. The purpose of this thesis was to develop a five-year strategic plan for a successful student recruitment of international students. This strategy plan is mainly focusing on the successful cases of UK Pathway providers, as well as the UK HE system, as a successful example, but could also be implemented in other similar international environments. Based on this approach, an assessment of the current situation and changes in the UK higher education in general and different marketing strategies for the recruitment of international students, answering the following questions:

- What is the current operational structure of the higher education system in the UK?
- Which are the successfully developed marketing strategies and implemented practises?
- How this strategic marketing plan compares to the current plans used by other HE providers in the UK and what makes it more successful?

This study aims to utilize the existing literature, describing successful student recruitment strategies with deep and innovative knowledge of modern marketing techniques and local techniques to build the 5-year strategic plan for Pathway college education.

Furthermore, I will be focusing on the newest pathway college, established in the UK, called KUIC and how successful their model of marketing and recruitment is, in partnership with one of the leading research universities in Britain, Keele. Launching Keele University International College pathways and re-launching Keele University internationally in highly volatile socio-economic local and global times while the international education market is becoming hyper-competitive is a very exciting and rewarding challenge and opportunity. At the heart of this 5 years' strategic plan is the need to create a 'pull' for KUIC and Keele University that actually considers where we want to be in 20-30 years from now and how we spend the next 5 years getting to there. Thus, the focus over the next 5 years is to embed the seeds of a long-term strategic competitive advantage.

Keele University International College (KUIC) is part of Navitats UPE and is the on-campus international pathways provider of Keele University. The partnership was established in 2021 and the College formally launched in January 2022. KUIC provides pathways at Foundation, International Year one (IYO) and Pre-Master's level to international students who are not eligible for direct entry to Keele University. Candidates apply to KUIC and are processed by the College using its own admissions process and system, before requesting a CAS from the University. Keele University then, upon successful verification, issues a CAS. Applicants receive one CAS for their entire time at KUIC and Keele University.

Upon successful completion of their pathway programme students' progress to study their chosen award at Keele University.

The programmes currently offered by KUIC include:

- Foundation in Business
- Foundation in Computing
- Foundation in Health and Science
- Foundation in Law, Humanities and Social Sciences
- International Year One in Business

- International Year One in Computing
- Pre-Master's in Business
- Pre-Master's in Computing

These pathways provide access to over 230 awards at Keele University. This list is constantly under review and is revised in close collaboration between the College, Navitas UPE and the University.

The overall approach taken to the student journey is that they are Keele University students from day one. This means that they are based on campus, have access to all Keele University student facilities, services, processes, and systems. The aim is to limit any unnecessary transition experience to provide a continuous progression journey that is based on a solid foundation and induction to Keele by the College.

The vision is to be a leading international pathway college, providing exceptional educational opportunities and empowering students from around the world to achieve their full potential and thrive at Keele University and in a globalized world. The mission is to provide a transformative educational experience to international students, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and cultural understanding to succeed at Keele University and beyond.

To achieve the vision and mission of Keele and KUIC, the following goals should be developed:

- **Student Enrolment:** Increase student enrolment to achieve the set annual target number of international students entering the KUIC pathway programmes, aiming to attract genuine high-quality students from diverse countries and regions to contribute to Keele University's ambitious growth plans.
- **Academic Quality:** Establish a reputation for academic excellence by ensuring high-quality curriculum, faculty, and student support services, and achieving positive outcomes such as high retention rates and successful progression to Keele University.

- **Program Expansion:** Expand the range of programmes offered to provide diverse and meaningful options for international students and partners.
- **Partner University Relationships:** Continue to build strong relationships with Keele University to ensure high quality student experiences and outcomes and facilitate seamless progression for college students.
- **Student Success:** Implement comprehensive support programmes to ensure the academic success, personal development, and well-being of KUIC students, including academic mentoring, tutoring, cultural integration, and career development services.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Foster a diverse and inclusive campus community that promotes cross-cultural understanding, inclusivity, and equity among international students, faculty, and staff.
- **Marketing, Branding and Recruitment:** Develop effective marketing strategies to raise awareness, enhance the College's and University's brand, and attract a wider audience of international students, including targeted recruitment efforts, digital marketing, and promotional activities.
- **Admissions:** Embed a robust KUIC admissions team and process to identify high quality applicants to provide outstanding customer services and prevent processing of non-genuine applicants and ensure enrolment of genuine students.
- **Compliance and Accreditation:** Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and accreditation standards to maintain legal and regulatory compliance, and to play a positive part in Keele University's ability to retain its sponsor licence.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Establish a sustainable financial model that ensures the College's long-term financial stability, including managing costs, increasing and diversifying revenue streams.
- **Resources and Infrastructure:** Maximise utilising Keele University's modern facilities, technological resources, and infrastructure to support effective teaching, learning, and student services.

To achieve the outlined goals, there must be developed specific objectives, action plans, and performance indicators that will guide our implementation efforts over the next years. There is a commitment for continuous improvement, evaluation,

and adaptation to ensure that the University and the College are meeting the evolving needs of our students and stakeholders.

Overall, the purpose of this strategic plan is to provide a clear roadmap for the College's future direction, align resources and efforts, guide decision-making, and facilitate effective communication and coordination, ultimately driving KUIC and Keele towards their desired long-term outcomes.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

International student recruitment has become a pivotal aspect of the successful higher education strategy for many British universities in the 21st century, driven by the globalization of education and the increasing mobility of students across borders. This literature review aims to offer a thorough understanding of the key trends, strategies, challenges, and future directions in the field of international student recruitment in the UK. The intertwining of higher education and globalization is a central theme in international student recruitment. As explored by Knight (2017), the internationalization of higher education is not merely a trend but a strategic necessity for institutions seeking to stay competitive. The study delves into the impact of globalization on curriculum development, faculty exchange programs, and the overall transformation of university campuses into global learning environments.

Many British and Western universities would apply various strategies to attract and retain international students. The work of Johnson and Smith (2019) outlines the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive campus environment. It highlights successful initiatives such as mentorship programmes, cultural exchange events, and academic support services tailored to the unique needs of international students. Furthermore, when we speak about trending and effective marketing strategies, certainly the branding plays a crucial role in attracting a diverse pool of international students. Smith's (2021) research explores the impact of social media campaigns, virtual campus tours, and personalised communication in shaping the perception of universities among prospective students. The study underscores the need for institutions to cultivate a strong online presence to remain competitive in the global education market.

While the benefits of internationalization are evident, challenges persist in recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and countries. Jones and Leask (2021) identify visa policies, language barriers, and cultural differences as significant challenges for many international students. The study emphasises the importance of targeted support mechanisms and policy advocacy to address these challenges and ensure a smooth transition for the international students coming to study in the UK. For many experts in this field, the international students contribute to the rich availability of diversity on university campuses. Wang (2020)

examine the role of international students in fostering a culture of inclusion. The study discusses the positive impact of cross-cultural interactions on both domestic and international students, emphasising the role of universities in creating spaces that celebrate diversity.

Nonetheless, in the digital era we are all experiencing, technology plays a pivotal role in reaching and engaging with prospective international students. Chen and Wang (2021) investigate the effectiveness of online platforms, social media, and virtual events in the recruitment process. The study provides insights into the preferences of the tech-savvy generation and suggests strategies for universities to leverage technology in their recruitment efforts.

Looking ahead, the landscape of international student recruitment in the UK is poised for further evolution. Research by Lee and Martinez (2022) anticipates increased competition, the emergence of new education hubs, and a growing emphasis on sustainable and inclusive practices. The study provides recommendations for universities to adapt to these changes, emphasising the need for agile and responsive recruitment strategies.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed highlights the dynamic nature of international student recruitment, shaped by global trends, institutional strategies, marketing efforts, and the challenges of fostering diversity. As universities navigate this complex landscape, ongoing research and proactive measures are essential to ensure the continued success of internationalization efforts in higher education.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design and Data Collection Methods

For this thesis, I will use a holistic design, in which many aspects of the literature review and practical techniques will be covered and analysed. The research conducted for this dissertation was applied in its nature, although not original. Data was collected and analysed in both qualitative and quantitative forms from personal experience and data, collected through my work at the University, as well as from attending different events, related to international student recruitment and organized by the British Council, as well as other HE providers. During my time working for different British universities, I had the chance to attend many local and international events, as well as interact with a significant number of experts and colleagues from the HE sector, observe their work and exchange data and ideas with them. All this combined with numerous of literature, written about the topic of a successful marketing strategy for student recruitment, such as the article written by Melissa James and Jemma Derrick (2019), "Export marketing in higher education: an international comparison" gave me the opportunity to create my own overview and guidance on successful student recruitment strategy, which I hope could be used not only for academic purposes and my MEL thesis, but ultimately by other practitioners from the HE sector and my current employer. My aim will be to apply an interdisciplinary approach in the research, where a combination of research and practical analytical methods will be used. One of the primary benefits of this approach is that it enables a more comprehensive understanding of the researched issue compared to relying solely on quantitative or qualitative methods. In order to satisfy the objectives of the dissertation, qualitative research was held.

According to Collis & Hussey (2003) "The main characteristic of qualitative research is that it is mostly appropriate for small samples, while its outcomes are not measurable and quantifiable. Its basic advantage, which also constitutes its basic difference with quantitative research, is that it offers a complete description and analysis of a research subject, without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of participant's responses".

Furthermore, the case study design adopts an interpretive approach to data, studies and research within their context.

### **3.2 Practical and Ethical considerations**

As stated, I am not planning to conduct any officially recorded interviews and use access to specialist database, apart from what I have indicated in my literature review. Therefore, I don't anticipate any ethical issues and confidentiality concerns.

Wentz have stated that "ethical research extends into many areas but includes falsifying data, manipulating results, and plagiarizing words. The implications of scientific misconduct impact the reputation of everyone involved from the institution to the individuals" (Wentz, E.A., 2014).

## **4 PRACTICAL MARKET ANALYSES**

### **4.1 Historical context of international markets**

Over the past 25-30 years the HE industry has evolved in terms of destinations, source countries, channels and student motivation, forcing the sector to adapt and reinvent its offerings.

As argued by some experts in the UK in a recently published UUKI report, “In a world where education is quickly becoming more globalised, specialised and competitive, many countries have developed international education strategies to help their sectors become more adaptive, innovative and internationally connected to respond to the opportunities and challenges that arise in this fast-paced environment and in the context of a growing pool of international students” (UUKI Report, 2021).

While initially the US and UK were the early adopters, followed- by Australia and then Canada, we are today seeing that some of the original source markets have become destination countries (e.g. China, Japan, Malaysia). International students can choose from at least 50 destinations.

The initial recruitment markets we started with were East Asia, North Asia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Japan. Then the volume moved from North Asia, South East Asia to mostly China. The Middle East joined with their scholarships programmes. Africa (especially Nigeria became big) and then South Asia. All markets have experienced fluctuations and they will continue to do so over the coming years.

### **4.2 External/internal analysis**

In terms of channels, we started with “Mum and Dad” agents, then we went to supermarket agents and in 2012 onwards we see growth of what is called aggregators which has resulted today in a complete ecosystem of digital platforms (e.g. Applyboard, Leverage, Enroly).

Looking at what agents tell us in the Navitas agent perception survey (October 2022) the UK came out top for being a destination that is safe and stable and

open and welcoming and as generated more interest as an education destination than other countries. The top 4 cited factors of influencing student choice were: cost of study, access to post study work rights, quality of education, and opportunities to work while studying. However, deeper analysis shows that each region has its own unique set of top priorities that not only influence their destination but also their subject choice. In terms of visa processing the UK emerges as the clear winner amongst the major destinations (Chew 2022).

According to a PWC summary report from 2017, it is predicted that “today’s advanced economies will continue to have higher average incomes, but emerging economies should make good progress towards closing this gap by 2050. This will open up great opportunities for businesses prepared to make long-term investments in these markets. But this will require patience to ride out the storms we have seen recently in economies like, for example, Brazil, Nigeria and Turkey, all of which still have considerable long-term economic potential based on our analysis” (PWC report, 2017).

Thus, if we are to consider these analyses for the purposes of the development in the international HE sector, we are likely to see a significant increase of the international students coming to the UK from emerging economies, rather than traditional markets, such as China and Europe.

According to most of the agents, their clients are most concerned about: finding a job on completion of study, cost of tuition fees and cost of living; which according to agents means that their clients are most likely to respond to the current global economic climate by: considering less expensive institutions within the same destination country; Plan to work more during studies to cover living expenses; switch of studies to something more in demand in the job market.

Overall, the responses suggest a really positive outlook in that they believe that over the next ten years there will be a much larger number of students from their country studying abroad and possibly selected the UK as their study destination.

### 4.3 Post-pandemic generation

The post-pandemic recovery is well under way. Our sector is likely to be the sharp-dip and catch-up rebound shape. The UK saw a 33% increase in sponsored study grants between 2021 and the first 3 quarters of 2022. In terms of KUIC key markets India saw 76%, Nigeria 142%, Pakistan 111%.

The issue of unfinished learning/ learning loss will shape future cohorts of international students, potentially for many years to come. Many students have something called a Covid achievement gap which severely affects their ability to get into future education. This tends to leave them with three options: 1) enter a course at the level they are now at; 2) find a university that has lowered its requirements; or 3) choose a pathway that will get them back on track.

Experts like Ethan Fogarty from the senior management of Navitas is describing this situation as “resulted in levels of collegiality across the international education sector not previously seen. The pandemic led to increased sector collegiality and collaboration in their countries. Universities that have historically seen each other as competitors in a global market, became allies with a shared purpose and concern. This collaboration resulted in the effective coordination of student return programs, better engagement with government and working together to solve shared problems” (Fogarty and Shahani 2022).

In terms of immigration in the UK, international students are a key driver of immigration growth between 2019 and 2022. Within that the share of dependents amongst sponsored study grants has grown from 5% to 20%, driven by Nigeria and India. In the context of the current high cost of living and housing shortages, record large arrivals of ‘foreigners’, simmering discontent, limited options for the government, this may lead to significant increased risks of negative policy intervention by the UK government. There are already examples of public statements and mutterings on anti-international student policies being planned.

Another expert from Navitas, Chew has stated that “At the outset of the pandemic, concerns around COVID-19 cases, safety, and access to healthcare became more pressing concerns. But over time, international students have started to turn their minds back to the age-old issue of cost and affordability. The most recent Navitas Agent Perception report found that cost of study is in fact the number one factor influencing choice of study destination across many regions” (Chew 2022).

#### **4.4 The International education experts' perspective**

The Global Survey of IE leaders (GSIEL) indicates that IE leaders themselves recognise that we are entering the most competitive period in international education. Furthermore, UK IE leaders anticipate increased investment in marketing and recruitment staff over the next 2 years (80%), while a third expect to see a reduction of investment in scholarships (35%). The clear underlying pattern is that investment will be driven by higher ranking universities, with UK universities outspending Australian and Canadian ones in staffing and promotional activities. The data suggests that current levels of agent commissions and incentives will remain stable. In terms of fees, the UK will see more aggressive fee increases in the coming years, and in terms of entry requirements the trend is that they will either stay the same or increase (40:40:20 rule).

Many risks to their institutions internationalisation agenda weigh heavily on the mind of IE leaders. In the UK the predominant concerns are: macroeconomic factors (72%), geo-political tensions (69%), and especially anti-immigration sentiment (59%).

On the other hand, according to Finn “employment opportunities in destination countries influence subject choice for international students. A recent survey of international education students tend to focus on the factors that impact choice of study destination. Following requests from their university partners, Navitas’ conducted an Agent Perception Survey, which introduced a new measure to assess the most important factors influencing international students’ subject choices. Not surprisingly, the survey results indicate that opportunities for employment in destination country is the most important factor in determining subject choice” (Finn 2022).

#### **4.5 International students state of play**

In terms of students, demand is projected to grow but so has supply. Students today have more choice than ever before. A student wanting to do a Bachelors from somewhere on the planet can choose from 107K+ options. There are 25K options to choose from in the UK alone (e.g. 600+ options just in computer science). This puts the onus on the universities/ pathways provider to differentiate. Thus, students have never had so much choice and many options at their fingertips as today (StudyPortals).

In general, the predominant factors currently influencing students' choice of study destination include:

- Cost of study (fees and living costs)
- Availability of post-study work rights
- Quality of education
- Prospects for part-time work during studies

Australia and Canada appear to be “winning” on the 3-5 most cited factors influencing choice of destination, however this data is contradicted at least for now by the actual growth rates and student visas issued, where the UK has come out on top over the past two years. There is a risk thought that as these markets are now fully open and recruiting aggressively, we will see a shift away from the UK.

Considering KUIC’s key markets the data from the survey shows us that the key priorities for our key markets in SA and WA are:

- Cost of study
- Access to PSWR
- Prospects for part-time work during studies
- Prospects for permanent migration

Current student segments in the market will continue to exist, but the student segment of ‘immediate returners will grow.

- Segment 1: ranking first
  - Focus on university brand
  - Typically, medium to high GPA
  - Career oriented
- Segment 2: immigration prospects first
  - Aspires to relocate
  - Typically, medium/ low GPA

- Cost over reputation
- Interested in courses that maximise employment opportunities in destinations
- Segment 3: Lifestyle first
  - Location key criteria
  - Family/ friends influence
  - Less cost conscious
- Segment 4: Employment first (but in home country)
  - Self-driven and aware
  - Typically, high GPA
  - Critical of course structure
  - Interested in employment opportunities back home

#### **4.6 Predicting the future for international recruiters**

With this increase in competitive intensity the differentiators of the past are not likely to be the 'winners' in the future especially not as the sector matures and providers become more sophisticated. The key differentiators that have worked so far include:

- (relatively) attractive PSWR
- Agent network and service
- Social media and digital support
- Application turnaround time
- Scholarships
- Omni channel presence

British Council's analysis suggests that all of these things provided some kind of edge as recently as 3 to 5 years ago, but the challenge is that they are the baseline today. Current talk in the sector on how to respond to this includes ideas such as: deeper in-country presence through offices and staff; use of local language, AI chat-bots to improve response times; personalised response and support to students; use of scholarships; social media student ambassadors; virtual 'walking' tours. These recruitment levers are necessary, but they some argue that they are tactical and only incremental. There is a risk that these only provide short-term gains.

Therefore, they do not provide any kind of competitive edge going forward in a way that is as much as possible resilient to exogenous changes. Each provider will need a pull, more so than ever in the past.

Beyond this we are in an era where too many providers offer the same product to the same target customer. Not enough differentiation when it comes to nuances around job markets and what are the trends in those markets?

The key challenge in building a sustainable future is to balance the internationalisation aspiration, growing student needs, competitive pressure and resourcing and capability. Getting this balance wrong risks being blindsided by the competition, neglecting the greater mission, or setting up students for failure. The time is right for providers to invest in building long term competitive advantages (Chew 2022).

What are some of the ways in which a provider may create that pull?

**Universities could consider:**

- TNE (set-up branch campuses, partnerships in source markets)
- Go to newer markets
- Go to smaller markets in Africa, Latin America, Asia
- Diversification
- Go online
- Target mature learners

**Three key areas to consider:**

- New markets – the race to diversify, small individual markets that become more than the sum of their parts
- New customer segments – upskilling/ lifelong learning, tap the massive opportunity to serve working adults in emerging markets
- Aligning course offering with job markets/ skill shortage needs of the destination country to look at what our source markets need

This latter point also links into one of the abovementioned international student segments (segment 4), that is emerging in source markets, is currently

underserved and will grow fast over the next 5-10 years as their socio-economic contexts evolve. These are international students who:

- can and are looking to study abroad
- do not want to continue staying in the UK
- are thus looking for a product that has a home market fit

When considering many of the UK universities current key markets this segment makes up to 45% of the entire international student population who are looking to study abroad. Within this 15-20% look to return home immediately and another 25% within 2 years.

However, we must be mindful that this group has distinct needs and that current data suggests that the sector is not meeting these yet (UUKI Report 2021):

- Lack of course offering to meet local/ regional socio-economic needs
- Lack of support with coping with reverse culture shock
- Lack of employment help [770K Indians studied abroad in 2022; but between 2015/19 only 22% of students were able to secure employment upon returning home

#### **4.7 Economic contexts**

The global economic order is changing rapidly. As stated by the PWC report “The World in 2050” (2017):

- “Emerging markets will dominate the world’s top 10 economies in 2050 (1. China, 2. India, 4. Indonesia, 5. Brazil, 6. Uzbekistan and 7. Mexico)
- Vietnam, the Philippines and Nigeria could make the greatest moves up the rankings
- Global economic power will shift to the E7 economies (they were around the same size as G7 in 2015 and could be double the size of G7 by 2040)”

For our purposes each major emerging market economy is expected to take a different glide path.

#### **4.8 UKVI, compliance and the nature of international students coming to the UK**

As discussed already, there has been significant growth in international students coming to the UK. We have also seen the different types (segments of students) that these can be categorized by (UUKI Report, 2021).

When the initial Tier 4 system was devised the intention and its purpose was to identify those international applicants who had the legitimate educational qualifications, financial means and intention to come and study in the UK. While this was overall successful, more recently this system has begun to struggle as is evident in the very low visa refusal rates yet rapidly rising termination, withdrawal and non-retention rates across the UK HE IE sector.

What has come to light is we are no longer faced by the original dichotomy. Instead we are face predominantly with the challenge of distinguish between two applicants that on paper look identical. They have both got verifiable high quality educational qualifications, can evidence the financial means to study, and pass all of the narrative and interview requirements too. Yet, one will come and study and the other will come and 'disappear', presumably into work. At the heart of the matter is the change in 'motivation' of these applicants coming and the current systems' inability to filter effectively between 'genuine students' and migrants. Something further burdening the sector is the loophole permitting these non-genuine students to switch, legally, from their student to a work visa upon arrival to the UK.

Based on UKVI and sector reporting key nations considered of high risk are:

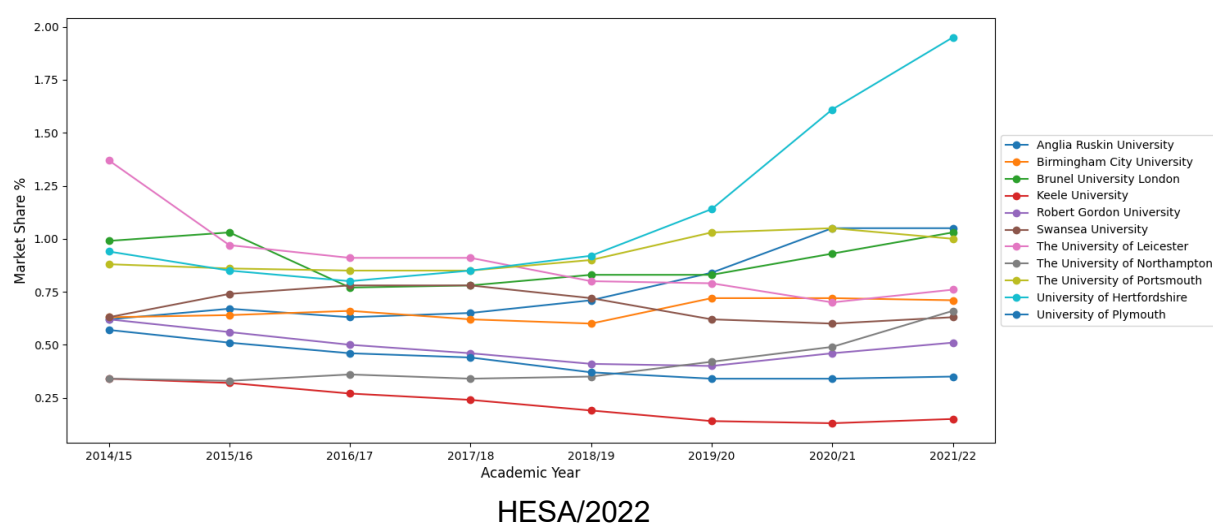
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Bangladesh
- Ghana
- India

This development is putting several university sponsor licences and financial models at risk and the ability to attract and convert genuine students while

repelling non-genuine ones has become a business critical undertaking. Examples of some early action include some UK universities drastically limiting recruitment in Bangladesh, and the UKVI openly beginning to speak about wanting to investigate certain regions and providers.

#### 4.9 Operational plans and Stakeholders relationships

Following on from looking at market share for the international student market in the latest HESA release, here is an overview of the performance of Navitas partners, from 2014/15 to 2021/22.



Academic Year	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>HE provider</b>								
University of Hertfordshire	0.94	0.85	0.80	0.85	0.92	1.14	1.61	1.95
Anglia Ruskin University	0.62	0.67	0.63	0.65	0.71	0.84	1.05	1.05
Brunel University London	0.99	1.03	0.77	0.78	0.83	0.83	0.93	1.03
The University of Portsmouth	0.88	0.86	0.85	0.85	0.90	1.03	1.05	1.00
The University of Leicester	1.37	0.97	0.91	0.91	0.80	0.79	0.70	0.76
Birmingham City University	0.63	0.64	0.66	0.62	0.60	0.72	0.72	0.71
The University of Northampton	0.34	0.33	0.36	0.34	0.35	0.42	0.49	0.66
Swansea University	0.63	0.74	0.78	0.78	0.72	0.62	0.60	0.63
Robert Gordon University	0.62	0.56	0.50	0.46	0.41	0.40	0.46	0.51
University of Plymouth	0.57	0.51	0.46	0.44	0.37	0.34	0.34	0.35
Keele University	0.34	0.32	0.27	0.24	0.19	0.14	0.13	0.15

HESA 2022

Between 2019 and 2021 Keele University implemented a Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) which entailed the re-professionalisation of professional services, and a new Programme Portfolio. The Vice Chancellor then instigated

an Academic Delivery Plan (ADP) which aims to grow student numbers from 10 to 15K and at the heart of it has 6 growth areas:

- 1) Growing as business as usual
  - a. Refers to organic growth as the sector is coming out of the generation dip
- 2) Significant growth areas
  - a. Data HE identified 4 key areas that are due to see significant growth over the next 5 years, mostly at UG level
  - b. Business and Management; Law; Computing; Psychology
  - c. These areas have developed action plans for 23/24 onwards
- 3) High demand capacity constraint [e.g. government policy, placement capacity, availability of capital funding]
  - a. 12 areas
  - b. Medicine, criminology, paramedic science
  - c. Growth plans include quick response to government policy changes
- 4) Keele University International College KUIC
  - a. Original plan was based on 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50% growth
  - b. 30% growth was put into the ADP
- 5) International PGT
  - a. Some of the initial growth will take the University back to where it used to be
- 6) Portfolio Development
  - a. 2022-2026 up to 80 new programmes across FY, UG, PG, Degree Apprenticeships
  - b. 2 thematic areas:
    - i. Digital and Data
    - ii. Sport [Sports Business and Management; Psychology and Sports;
    - iii. E-Sports; Sports Exercise Science] + investment in sports facilities and new sports centre

In terms of international recruitment, the University's ambition is that by 2026/27 the overall student population is to reach 15,000 of which 20% will be international. Of these 15,000 a total of 6% would be KUIC (either with KUIC or progressed from KUIC and enrolled on KU course).

If we compare the ambitions of Keele University with the global position of the UK, here is what a recent report produced by the UUKI agency outlines.

“Since the early 2000s, the UK has been the second most popular study destination in the world, but this position has become increasingly vulnerable as the UK’s recruitment performance has notably declined. The UK’s international student numbers showed slowed growth of under 1% between 2014 and 2017 and only 3.8% in 2018, while other countries, such as Australia, Canada and Germany have demonstrated steady year-on-year growth. Australia, which ranks behind the UK, demonstrated year-on-year growth in its international student numbers since 2014, reaching 16.6% in 2018. The difference in total numbers between the UK and Australia in 2018 was very slim, with a difference of only about 7,600 international students” (UUKI Report, 2021 TABLE 1).

The unexpected key challenge amongst the expected ‘start-up’ challenges for KUIC was around the significant number of terminations of its Indian and Bangladeshi Foundation in Business and International Year One in Business students. Investigations show that KUIC has been severely affected by the development described in the previous section and had to take considerable timely and ongoing action in order to contain and in the future hopefully minimise these.

Consequently, KUIC will be able to continue its growth in numbers and reputation by living its vision and mission.

## 5 THE STRATEGY PLAN

### 5.1 SWOT ANALYSIS

Here are the outcomes of the internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, supporting in the identification of KUIC's internal and external factors that could influence the strategic plan.

#### Strengths:

- Skilled work force
- Ethos of workforce
- Level of embeddedness with partner
- Keele University's vision and desire to create 'pull'
- Navitas' regional and divisional resources and expertise

#### Weakness:

- Inadequate systems integration
- Lack of strength of brand recognition in market
- Location of Keele University
- Reliance on high-risk markets
- Current lack of real traction of portfolio other than IYO Business
- KUIC/ KU currently attracts mostly segment 3 applicants

#### Opportunities:

- Keele University's FSP / ADP
- Emerging markets and channels
- Segment 4 students
- Strategic partnerships [e.g. Mid-East sponsors, feeder schools]
- Favourable regulatory changes [e.g. education policy, immigration]

#### Threats:

- Hyper-competitiveness of sector
- Political situation in UK and abroad
- Economic downturn: inflation, cost of living
- Legal and regulatory challenges: Immigration policies
- Negative public perception

## 5.2 Risk Management

Potential risks that KUIC may face when implementing its marketing and recruitment strategic plan:

- Regulatory and legal risks:
  - Changes in regulations or laws that could impact the international education industry, such as changes in visa policies or right to study and dependants, could affect the ability to attract and enrol international students.
  - Failure to comply with regulatory and legal requirements could result in fines, legal action, or reputational damage.
- Financial risks:
  - Fluctuations in currency exchange rates could impact revenue and profit margins.
  - Failure to accurately project and manage costs could result in financial losses.
- Reputation risks:
  - Negative publicity or feedback from students, faculty, or stakeholders could damage KUIC's reputation and affect enrolment numbers.
  - Failure to meet students' expectations could result in lower student satisfaction and retention rates.
  - Negative student outcomes could damage KUIC's reputation and affect enrolment numbers and future opportunities.
- Competition risks:
  - Increased competition from other international education providers or UK institutions offering similar programmes could impact enrolment numbers.
  - Failure to differentiate KUIC's programmes and brand could result in decreased brand recognition and enrolment.
- Technology risks:

- Failure to keep up with technological advancements and trends could result in decreased efficiency and competitiveness.
- Data breaches or cyber-attacks could result in loss of sensitive information, reputational damage, and financial losses.
- Operational risks:
  - Inadequate planning and execution of the strategic plan could result in delays, missed deadlines, and ineffective implementation.
  - Failure to effectively communicate the strategic plan to stakeholders could result in misunderstandings and lack of buy-in.

To mitigate these risks, KUIC should conduct a thorough risk assessment, develop contingency plans, and continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan. KUIC should also stay up-to-date with regulatory changes, maintain strong financial management practices, prioritize student satisfaction, differentiate its programs and brand, invest in technology and data security, and ensure effective communication and implementation of the strategic plan.

### **5.3 Vision and Mission**

#### **KUIC Vision:**

"To be a leading international pathway college, providing exceptional educational opportunities and empowering students from around the world to achieve their full potential and thrive at Keele University and in a globalized world."

#### **KUIC Mission:**

"Our mission is to provide a transformative educational experience to international students, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and cultural understanding to succeed *in higher education* at Keele University and beyond. We offer comprehensive academic programs, personalized support, and a diverse, inclusive community that fosters academic excellence, intercultural

competence, and personal growth. We are committed to empowering our students to become global citizens, ready to make positive contributions to society."

#### 5.4 Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

- The target audience is:
  - International students looking to study in the UK
  - Parents of international students
  - Recruitment agents and agencies
  - Foreign Government agencies and policymakers
- The communication goals are:
  - Increase brand awareness and recognition
  - Communicate the value of the institution's pathways programs
  - Expand partnerships with UK and overseas institutions and recruitment agents
  - Improve engagement with foreign government agencies and policymakers
  - Increase enrolment of international students in pathways programs
- The communication tactics include:
  - Social media campaigns targeted towards international students and parents
  - Regular newsletters featuring institution news, updates, and success stories
  - Direct campaigns to targeted recruitment agents and agencies
  - Partnership events with Keele University
  - Thought leadership content showcasing the institution's expertise in pathways programmes
- Responsibilities and timelines are:
  - KUIC Marketing and Admissions team will lead social media and direct campaigns, and thought leadership content development.
  - KUIC College Services team will oversee enrolment webinars.

- KUIC Marketing and Admissions team will organize partnership events and oversee engagement with Keele University and recruitment agencies.
- Evaluation metrics are:
  - Increase in website traffic and social media engagement
  - Number of new partnerships with overseas institutions and recruitment agencies
  - Increase in enrolment of international students at KUIC
  - Feedback from Keele University, Navitas UPE regional/ divisional teams, agents and other partners
- Budget and allocate resources information:
  - The relevant budgets for the various key teams are set as part of annual budgeting.
  - Identify cost-effective channels and tactics.
  - Evaluate ROI and adjust resources as needed.

By following this communications plan, KUIC will be able to effectively communicate its strategic plan to its target audiences and achieve its goals of increased enrolment, partnerships, and engagement with government agencies and policymakers.

## 5.5 KUIC Goals

- **Student Enrolment:** Increase student enrolment to achieve the set annual target number of international students entering the KUIC pathway programmes, aiming to attract genuine high-quality students from diverse countries and regions to contribute to Keele University's ambitious growth plans.
- **Academic Quality:** Establish a reputation for academic excellence by ensuring high-quality curriculum, faculty, and student support services, and achieving positive outcomes such as high retention rates and successful progression to Keele University.
- **Program Expansion:** Expand the range of programmes offered to provide diverse and meaningful options for international students and partners.

- **Partner University Relationships:** Continue to build strong relationships with Keele University to ensure high quality student experiences and outcomes and facilitate seamless progression for college students.
- **Student Success:** Implement comprehensive support programmes to ensure the academic success, personal development, and well-being of KUIC students, including academic mentoring, tutoring, cultural integration, and career development services.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** Foster a diverse and inclusive campus community that promotes cross-cultural understanding, inclusivity, and equity among international students, faculty, and staff.
- **Marketing, Branding and Recruitment:** Develop effective marketing strategies to raise awareness, enhance the College's and University's brand, and attract a wider audience of international students, including targeted recruitment efforts, digital marketing, and promotional activities.
- **Admissions:** Embed a robust KUIC admissions team and process to identify high quality applicants to provide outstanding customer services and prevent processing of non-genuine applicants and ensure enrolment of genuine students.
- **Compliance and Accreditation:** Ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and accreditation standards to maintain legal and regulatory compliance, and to play a positive part in Keele University's ability to retain its sponsor licence.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Develop a financial model that is sustainable and ensures the long-term financial stability of the college, including managing costs, increasing and diversifying revenue streams.
- **Resources and Infrastructure:** Maximise utilising Keele University's modern facilities, technological resources, and infrastructure to support effective teaching, learning, and student services.

## 5.6 KUIC Strategic Objectives

- **Student Enrolment Objective:** Increase international student enrolment by 30% annually over the next 5 years, with a focus on attracting students from diverse countries and regions.

- **Academic Quality Objective:** Achieve a minimum 85% retention rate, while maintaining high-quality curriculum and faculty, and ensuring successful minimum 70% progression rate to Keele University.
- **Program Expansion Objective:** Develop and launch at least two new pathway programmes in high-demand fields of study within the first 3 years, and explore opportunities for expanding to additional modes of delivery and types of products [e.g., summer schools, blended delivery].
- **Student Success Objective:** Implement a comprehensive student support program, including academic mentoring, tutoring, cultural integration, and career development services, and achieve a 90% student satisfaction rate with support services.
- **Marketing, Branding and Recruitment Objective:** Develop a targeted marketing plan that includes digital marketing, social media, and other promotional activities to raise awareness, enhance the College's brand, and increase the number of inquiries and applications from high quality prospective international students. Specific focus is on identifying high quality applications in our key markets [e.g., establish a minimum of 3x highly trusted agents in each], create links with a minimum of 5 feeder schools, and 3-5 opportunities for segment 4 students
- **Admissions Objective:** Embed a robust admissions process that results in average of 48 hrs turnaround time, 90% enrolment, and 85% retention of KUIC students.

## 5.7 Customer strategy

As part of the annual review of its plan, KUIC will set strategic initiatives and projects to undertake to achieve its goals and objectives.

### Strategic initiatives or projects for 2024-2025

- Recruit high quality genuine students in order to significantly increase our retention rate while growing our overall numbers by diversifying channels and product mix in KUIC's existing key markets (India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan). Key activities to achieve this:

- Identifying 3-5 trusted agents in each market and providing detailed regular training and feedback to and share insights with them.
  - Identifying a minimum of 1 feeder school in each market.
  - Identifying 3-5 KU programmes that offer meaningful opportunities for segment 4 type students for each key market and push them.
  - Fully implement and keep current the KUIC Admissions Manual
- Create resilience and diversity and grow our numbers by developing routes into two new markets (LATAM and Middle East [sponsor]). Key activities to achieve this:
    - Identifying 3-5 trusted agents in each market and providing detailed regular training and feedback to and share insights with them.
    - Identifying a minimum of 1 feeder school in each market.
    - Identifying 3-5 KU programmes that offer meaningful opportunities for segment 4 type students for each market and push them.
- Drive up attendance and retention of genuine but financially weaker students and to attract new genuine students by establishing means to meet employability needs of our students. Key activities to achieve this:
    - Engaging with local trustworthy employers to create employment opportunities (30-50) for our students while they study with us and advertise these as part of pre-arrival comms and events.
    - Prepare supporting materials, guidance and explore in country support mechanisms for segment 4 students to enable success when returning home.
    - Identify 3-5 opportunities in our existing product portfolio where we can use KUIC and KU provision to upskill the labour force in a source market.
- Create a more attractive offering to genuine students, especially divert away from Foundation and IYO Business, and make our business more

resilient and attractive to new markets by expanding our existing product portfolio. Key activities to achieve this:

- Launching Pre-Master programme in Education.
  - Expanding our pathways to cater to all 1<sup>st</sup> yr KU courses. Especially in health and sciences.
  - Identify gaps in KU/ KUIC portfolio in line with socio-economic needs of source markets.
- Enhance our provision to improve retention and outcomes by using quality assurance and review tools after the first year of delivery to reflect on our existing curriculum and approach. Key activities to achieve this:
    - Assessment strategy review
    - Review of language and academic and functional skills modules
    - Other required enhancements at individual module level
  - Complete the full system set-up and integration within UPE and KU and between both. Key activities to achieve this:
    - Integrating StudyLink and KU systems
    - Establishing the correct permissions and IT accounts for KUIC staff on KU systems.

## 5.8 Segment identification and predicted targets

This section defines the key performance indicators (KPIs) and other metrics that will be used to track progress towards the strategic goals and objectives, and setting targets for each metric.

- **Student enrolment:** This KPI measures the number of CAS issued to students and the students enrolled at the college. The number of CAS is based on year on year 30% growth. The minimum enrolment % of those who have been issued a CAS is 90%. The enrolment targets for KUIC are as follows:

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
CAS	250	325	423	550	715
Enrol	225	292	381	494	642

- **Student retention rate:** This KPI measures the percentage of students who completed their KUIC programme successfully is 85%.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Retain	191	248	324	420	546

- **Student satisfaction:** This KPI measures the satisfaction of students with the college and its services. It can be measured through surveys or feedback forms. The minimum overall score is 90%.
- **Diversity of students:** This KPI measures the diversity of the student population at the college. Diversifying the student body to encompass a broad spectrum of nationalities and cultural diversity is crucial for the college's growth and global presence. The minimum number of nationalities in the college shall be 15, and no group shall be greater than 40%.
- **Student progression to Keele University:** This KPI measures the percentage of KUIC graduates who go on to pursue higher education at Keele University. The minimum progression rate is 70%.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
progress	133	174	226	294	382

- **Financial performance:** This KPI measures the financial health of the college. The minimum EBITDA shall be 20%.
- **Staff satisfaction:** This KPI measures the satisfaction of staff members with their jobs and the college as a workplace. It can be measured through surveys or feedback forms. The minimum overall wellbeing score is 80%.

## **5.9 Resource Allocation**

All resources, including financial, human, and technological resources, that will be allocated to support the strategic initiatives will be reviewed and captured in the annual budget review and plan.

## 6 OPERATIONAL PLANS

Below is a detailed plan on how the strategic initiatives will be implemented, including timelines, responsibilities, and actions required, to ensure successful execution.

### 6.1 Initiative I: Recruit high quality genuine students

- Timeline: April 2024 - January 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC Admissions Team, KUIC Regional Student Recruitment Managers, KUIC Director of Marketing and Admissions, KUIC Marketing Coordinator
  
- Key Actions:
  - Q2 2024: Identify 3-5 trusted agents in each market and provide detailed regular training and feedback to and share insights with them.
  - Q3 2024: Identify 3-5 KU programmes that offer meaningful opportunities for segment 4 type students for each key market and push them.
  - Q2 2024: Fully implement and keep current the KUIC Admissions Manual.
  - Q4 2024: Identify a minimum of 1 feeder school in each market.

### 6.2 Initiative II: Create resilience and diversity by developing routes into two new markets

- Timeline: July 2024 - June 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC Admissions Team, KUIC Regional Student Recruitment Managers, KUIC Director of Marketing and Admissions, KUIC Marketing Coordinator
  
- Key Actions:
  - Q2 2024: Identify 3-5 trusted agents in each market and provide detailed regular training and feedback to and share insights with them.
  - Q3 2024: Identify 3-5 KU programmes that offer meaningful opportunities for segment 4 type students for each market and push them.

- Q4 2024: Identify a minimum of 1 feeder school in each market.

### **6.3 Initiative III: Drive up attendance and retention of genuine but financially weaker students**

- Timeline: July 2024 - June 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC College Services team, KUIC Marketing Coordinator, KUIC Director of Marketing and Recruitment
- Key Actions:
  - Q3 2024: Engage with local trustworthy employers to create employment opportunities (30-50) for our students while they study with us and advertise these as part of pre-arrival comms and events.
  - Q3 2024: Prepare supporting materials, guidance and explore in-country support mechanisms for segment 4 students to enable success when returning home.
  - Q4 2024: Identify 3-5 opportunities in our existing product portfolio where we can use KUIC and KU provision to upskill the labour force in a source market.

### **6.4 Initiative IV: Create a more attractive offering to genuine students**

- Timeline: July 2024 - June 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC Director of Marketing and Admissions, KUIC Manager of Academic Programmes, KUIC College Director and Principal, KUIC Regional Student Recruitment Managers
- Key Actions:
  - Q3 2024: Launch PMP Education.
  - Q3 2024: Expand our pathways to cater to all 1st yr KU courses, especially in health and sciences for launch in AY 2025.
  - Q4 2024: Identify gaps in KU/KUIC portfolio in line with socio-economic needs of source markets.

### **6.5 Initiative V: Enhance KUIC provision to improve retention and outcomes**

- Timeline: July 2024 - June 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC College Enhancement Team CET, KUIC Manager of Academic Programmes, Sessional Teaching team
- Key Actions:
  - Q2 2024: Review the assessment strategy.
  - Q2 2024: Review language, academic and functional skills modules.
  - Q2 2024: Implement other required enhancements at individual module level.

#### **6.6 Initiative VI: Complete the full system set-up and integration within Keele University**

- Timeline: July 2024 - June 2025
- Responsibility: KUIC IT team
- Key Actions:
  - Q3 2024: Integrate StudyLink and KU systems.
  - Q3 2024: Establish the correct permissions and IT accounts for KUIC staff on KU systems.

## 7 REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The below outlines the process for regular review and evaluation of the progress of the strategic plan of KUIC, and how adjustments and improvements will be made as needed:

- The review schedule:
  - the schedule overall aligns to when key KPIs become available throughout the year and are reported on.
  - Typically, these fall into marketing and recruitment, admissions, academic, service, financial performance evaluations.
  - All stakeholders will be aware of the review schedule(s) and the importance of participation.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs):
  - KPIs that align with the goals of the strategic plan, such as enrolment numbers, revenue, student satisfaction.
  - The appropriate data sources and tools needed to track and measure progress towards the KPIs include: StudyLink, PowerBI, KU
- To conduct a comprehensive review, KUIC will:
  - Gather and analyse data on progress towards the KPIs, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.
  - Solicit feedback from stakeholders, such as students, faculty, staff, and partners, on their perceptions of progress towards the goals of the strategic plan.
  - Identify any barriers or challenges that may be impeding progress towards the goals of the strategic plan.
- Adjusting and improving the strategic plan:
  - Based on the results of the review, identify areas that require adjustment or improvement in the strategic plan.
  - Develop specific action plans to address any barriers or challenges identified during the review.

- Implement the necessary changes and improvements to the strategic plan.
- Communicate any changes or improvements to all stakeholders.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress:
  - Continuously monitor progress towards the adjusted goals and KPIs.
  - Adjust the action plans and make improvements as necessary.
  - Repeat the review process on a regular schedule to ensure the strategic plan remains effective and relevant.

By following this process, KUIC can ensure that its strategic plan is regularly reviewed and evaluated, and adjustments and improvements are made as needed to achieve the desired outcomes.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Education is one of the vital factors for the existence of society. The importance of science for the development and current and future state of an urban structure predetermines the inseparable community-education relation. In addition to moral and ethical values, the young generation must have a continuity of new knowledge, skills, additional qualifications, use of technology and implementation of innovative systems. Only in this way can it be competitive and exist in a living environment with a high standard of living.

This thesis presents and summarizes innovative marketing and recruitment strategies, as well as diversifying models for UK universities and their pathway colleges in the current economic and political climate.

As outlined by the recent report from UUKI, “In a world where education is quickly becoming more globalised, specialised and competitive, many countries have developed international education strategies to help their sectors become more adaptive, innovative and internationally connected to respond to the opportunities and challenges that arise in this fast-paced environment and in the context of a growing pool of international students” (UUKI Report 2021).

This thesis presents and summarizes the current marketing and recruitment strategies for international students in the UK HE institutions, comparing them with a specific 5-year strategic plan for one of the newest Pathway provider, KUIC.

In addition, the UUKI Report highlights key findings indicating that although the UK remains a highly attractive study destination for numerous international students, there are opportunities for the UK government and the university sector to enhance its appeal even further. Additionally, there are four essential recommendations for collaborative efforts between the UK government and the university sector to address the above-mentioned needs:

- Guarantee the success of the Graduate route programme.
- Enhance the promotion of the UK as an inclusive, diverse, and accessible study destination.
- Reduction of financial obstacles for international students by introducing a broader range of innovative funding options.
- Enhance the development of English language ability.

As for KUIC and Keele University, Over the next 3-5 years, the aim will be to achieve a significant growth and diversification in key markets, while also improving student outcomes and enhancing their offerings. The main strategic initiatives over the coming year include:

1. Recruit high-quality genuine students: To focus on diversifying our channels and product mix in key markets (India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ghana, Pakistan) and increasing the retention rate by identifying trusted agents, feeder schools, and meaningful opportunities for students.
2. Create resilience and diversity and grow the numbers by developing routes into two new markets (LATAM and Middle East): To expand reach by identifying trusted agents, feeder schools, and meaningful opportunities for students in these markets.
3. Drive up attendance and retention of genuine but financially weaker students and attract new genuine students by establishing means to meet employability needs of the students: To engage with local employers to create employment opportunities for the students, prepare supporting materials and guidance, and upskill the labour force in source markets.
4. Create a more attractive offering to genuine students: Expand the product portfolio by launching PMP Education, expanding pathways to cater to all 1st yr KU courses, and identifying gaps in the current KU/KUIC portfolio.
5. Enhance the provision to improve retention and outcomes: To use quality assurance and review tools to improve curriculum and approach, focusing on assessment strategy, language and academic skills modules, and individual module enhancements.
6. Complete the full system set-up and integration within KU: To integrate StudyLink and KU systems and establish the correct permissions and IT accounts for KUIC staff on KU systems.

By implementing these strategic initiatives, the aim for KUIC is to achieve the long-term goal of becoming a leading international pathway provider, while providing genuine students with high-quality education and meaningful opportunities for success.

With the analysis and conclusions, the current thesis has scientific, but most importantly practical value and could be used for a more detailed future study. In addition, the relevance of the topic and its value could contribute for the possibility of its application to improve the successful marketing and recruitment outcomes not just for KUIC and Keele University, but equally for other providers in the UK with a similar profile.

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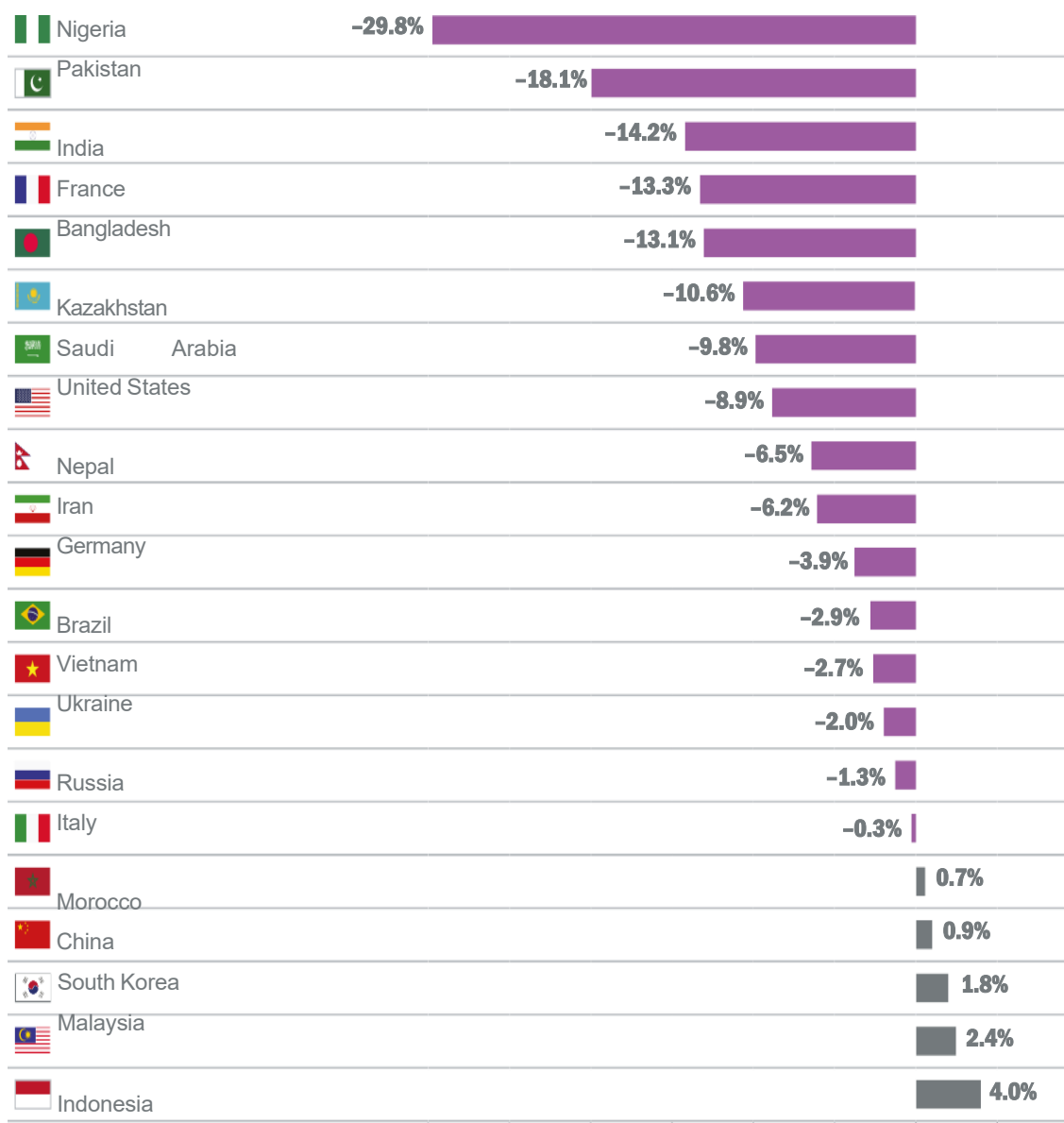
## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1.

<b>TABLE 1: TOP 10 GLOBAL STUDY DESTINATIONS, STUDENT NUMBERS AND MARKET SHARES (2018)</b>				
<b>RANK</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS 2018</b>	<b>% CHANGE 2017-2018</b>	<b>INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MARKET SHARE 2018</b>
<b>1</b>	 United States	<b>987,313</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>2</b>	 United Kingdom	<b>452,079</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
<b>3</b>	 Australia	<b>444,514</b>	<b>16.6%</b>	<b>8.0%</b>
<b>4</b>	 Germany	<b>311,738</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>5</b>	 Russia	<b>262,416</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>
<b>6</b>	 France	<b>229,623</b>	<b>-11.1%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
<b>7</b>	 Canada	<b>224,548</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>8</b>	 Japan	<b>182,748</b>	<b>11.2%</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
<b>9</b>	 China	<b>178,271</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>10</b>	 Turkey	<b>125,138</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

Data source: UIS.Stat, June 2021

## Appendix 2. CHANGES IN UK MARKET SHARE IN THE WORLD'S TOP 21 SENDING COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES (2010–2018)



Data source: UIS.Stat, June 2021