

EDUNIVERSAL WORLD CONVENTION

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New world map of student mobility: the challenges ahead

A few words about Campus France and its role in the student mobility

Campus France Agency was created in 2010 but has existed for more than 20 years. It is a public institution in charge of promoting higher education and managing the reception and international mobility of students, researchers, experts and guests. The institution is under the supervision of the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. French higher education and research institutions contribute to the policy guidelines of the agency through the “Campus France Forum”. The Agency has 3 purposes:

Promoting French higher education worldwide: thanks to its global network of 200 Campus France Spaces, the agency informs international students about French higher education, guides them on their choice of training, helps them complete their application form and gain a student visa.

Supervising the mobility of students, researchers, French experts and guest stakeholders: the agency oversees the mobility of students benefitting from French government scholarships of researchers and experts on a mission and stakeholders invited to France. It is also in charge of managing scholarship programs from foreign governments and public and private institutions. With this, the agency works on several levels: designing training projects, positioning in institutions, linguistics training, reception and help to find housing, managing a student's stay in France and following it up to gather feedback.

Backing up French institutions: Campus France supports higher education and research institutions in their international development through events of higher training promotion in France and overseas, reactions to international calls for tender, services for Campus France Forum members and studies and analysis on student mobility and higher education systems worldwide.

Campus France has a global network of 200 Campus France Spaces around the world. In the United Arab Emirates, we have two offices (1 in Dubaï, 1 in Abu Dhabi). This extensive network of offices allows us to have a global vision of student mobility.

Introduction (Romain)

Our subject today is about the new world map of student mobility. New as opposed to the traditional map of student mobility. In fact, the student mobility started 800 years ago: students came from all over Europe to study in two famous universities: University of Paris in France, and University of Bologna in Italy. Thanks to the reputation these two universities had acquired, they attracted students from other European countries.

In fact, student and professor mobility started with the establishment of the first universities in Europe: Bologna in 1088, Oxford in 1167, Modena in 1175, Paris, Cambridge... But we also must underline that the early stages of student mobility were developed in two Arabic countries with Al Quaraouiyine University in Morocco (founded during the 9th century) and Al-Azhar University in Egypt (10th century).

Lately, student mobility was mainly about Western Europe, Northern America and Australia. The USA, the UK, Australia and France are still the 4 most popular destinations for students going abroad (in 2017, 41 % of international student chose to study in one of these 4). It may be explained by numerous reasons, including universities ranking, the language (if we put aside France) and the early development of higher education institutions in those countries.

However, we have seen a major development during the last decade: the top 10 countries of origin of international students are no longer

the same as 20 years ago: The Big 5 of countries of origin (China, India, Germany, South Korea, Saudi Arabia) is completely different than the Big 5 hosting countries (USA, UK, Australia, France, Russia). The 2017 top 10 of countries of origin reflects the new world map of student mobility: China, India, Germany, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, France, Nigeria, USA, Kazakhstan, Malaysia. The growth of Asia, Middle East and Africa is striking. It means student mobility is more and more balanced between Asian, African, Arabic, American and European countries.

This new world map of student mobility is also influenced by the growth of the student population. In 2002, 2.1 million of students studied abroad. 12 years later, in 2014, more than 4.3 million of students did. The increase of international mobility is a unique opportunity for universities from all over the world to attract new students and to develop their potential. Some countries have undertaken tremendous efforts to attract students, such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Japan.

However, it is not as simple as it looks, and certainly does not last forever. Attracting students from foreign countries requires continuous efforts. Attractivity is the only challenge of the new world map of student mobility. But it relies on several factors: universities rankings, the student visa, the cost of studies, local structures, cultural influences.

I. Ranking

The ranking is the starting point to choose a university. Let's face the truth: a student willing to study abroad has a million possibilities. If you have never been to a student exhibition, I encourage you to do so. It's basically a trial, where universities and higher education institutions try to convince students thanks to the quality of their degree and the fame of their professors. The better plea you produce, the more students you'll get. Amongst those institutions, students feel sometimes lost. The fastest way to select amongst them is to check rankings: doing so allows the student to think that he / she has been the only actor of his / her choice. The student feels that his choice is logical, because rankings are impartial. But are they impartial?

We all know two famous rankings: The Academic Ranking of World Universities (also known as Shanghai Ranking) and the Times Higher Education World University Ranking. Those rankings are not completely impartial because the different criteria used to rank universities are biased. The Shanghai ranking uses 4 criteria: quality of education (10 %), quality of the institution (40 %), official publications (40 %) and size of the institution (10 %).

If we look closer to the criteria, we note that Shanghai Ranking consultant have started by surveying 1500 Deans, Chairs and Heads of Faculties and Departments of the Top 100 universities across a wide range of subjects. The first question asked to the participants is to list

the top tier journals in their primary subjects. Then, they have been asked to identify the most influential and credible international awards in their primary subjects. Finally, they had to list the names of living researchers who have made the most important contribution to the body of knowledge in their primary subjects.

The problem is that almost 95 % of the journals and awards considered by the participants as top tier journals or international awards are American or British. Besides, Nobel Prizes have been highly considered for this survey, but they have been more awarded to American than any other nationality. Countries whose official language is not English struggle to appear in this ranking, because their researchers write articles in their native language. It means this ranking is biased by the survey, which is biased itself by the language the participants to the survey commonly use.

Business Schools (Romain)

Focusing on Business Schools is interesting, because they all have special rankings such as Eduniversal Ranking. Besides, they are recognized through specific awards as well: for example, the Nobel Prize of Economy was created in 1969.

I think it helps business school's rankings like Eduniversal Ranking to be on the right path to give unbiased ranking. Why? Because, if we look at this ranking, you will find national ranking more than a global one. It is an interesting perspective because students can choose

between universities located specifically in a country. Besides, this ranking is potentially able to consider national specificities and local structures.

Nonetheless, we still need to keep in mind that business schools have sometimes more money than other schools (in France for example). Therefore, it is easier to hire international professors, because they can afford to pay their salaries. Then, a special ranking for business ranking makes sense and should inspire specific rankings and not a global one, where big American universities have a huge advantage.

We need to broaden the requirements used for those rankings, and use common standards worldwide such as the average employment rate 6 months after graduation, the average salary 2 years after graduation, national and local structures and features. We also need to have more specific rankings. Even if business schools rankings are an interesting starting point to amend global and regional rankings, we must distinguish business schools from universities.

[Other schools \(FX\)](#)

II. Mobility: the key element is the student visa (Romain)

Talking about student mobility involves necessarily an international dimension, which means that most of the time, a student visa is mandatory. If a student can get through the academic process, he still needs to apply to get a visa. What if the visa is not granted?

The student would obviously be disappointed by this refusal, especially because the academic process is often long and difficult. Moreover, there is another issue: most of the time, students must pay at least 10 % of the tuition fees before applying for a visa. Otherwise, the acceptance letter may not be issued, and the visa process cannot start. What if the visa application is rejected but the student has already paid non-refundable fees? This problem has been solved a long time ago: universities usually agree to give back the money if the visa is not granted.

But it leads to another question. Why would an embassy / consulate refuse to grant a visa? Two main scenarios: the first one is purely financial. If the student cannot guarantee that he has sufficient incomes / resources / help from his relatives, the visa application may be rejected. The student needs indeed to have enough money to pay the tuition fees – up to 80.000 dollars a year for some programs – the accommodation, the medical insurance ...

In the United Arab Emirates, 80 % of visa denials for France are due to financial reasons and this is fair: the French government gives 15.000 euros / year / student, no matter if you are neither French nor European. In practice, this means you can become a qualified lawyer or a physicist for less than 2.000 euros, because the French Government pays the fees for all students. Besides, you also can get a scholarship for your everyday life if you got excellent grades or if you come from disadvantaged areas. 8 % of our GDP is used for education (which is more than the average in developed countries). Therefore, it is fair that financial resources are meticulously checked: we use public funds, so everyone can have access to education. In return, we strictly control that the person coming to study in France will have enough resources to stay for the duration of his / her program.

Then, a security check is realized, which can also stop the process. This is an interesting point as well. Sometimes, consular services refuse to grant a visa for security reasons: a person applies to get a visa and fails to pass security tests. It basically means that consular services have serious doubts about the purpose of the visa request: for example, the applicant may apply for the student visa for the only purpose to live in the country and get the citizenship. Getting the residency / citizenship may be a consequence of a long-term stay in some countries (France for example) even though some countries refuse this possibility

(United States of America). But it cannot be the main reason of the visa application.

In other words, it is easier to get the visa from some countries (Canada, Australia) than from others (United States of America, France). Knowing this fact for a student may encourage him to apply in “friendly countries” instead of the other ones.

Making the visa procedure simpler should be the first concern of countries willing to attract students. It is something that all countries must work on: for example, it took 8 months to the French consular services to have a common checklist of the required documents to get the French student visa, in the United Arab Emirates. 10 months ago, the checklist for people living in Abu Dhabi was different than the one for people living in Dubai. However, the visa delivered was the same.

We can also see a difference between students applying for an exchange semester (students from NYU Abu Dhabi), who always get their visa, and students applying for an academic transfer abroad (students from Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi), who do not necessarily get it, even though consular services deliver the same student visa for both students.

Making the visa procedure simpler and cleared is, from my perspective, the first step to develop student mobility, especially because it is closely related to the global cost of studies.

III. Cost (FX)

High tuition fees: the increase of the tuition fees

Low tuition fees (France)

IV. Local structures (FX)

Accommodation

It can be a problem in some countries (France, UK) because they are not included in the tuition fees.

Academic supervision

V. Cultural influences

Religion (FX)

Cultural similarities (FX)

Language (Romain)

The language is not really a challenge for student mobility. Indeed, it may be the main objective for the student to study abroad (75 % of American students in France choose to study social sciences or languages). It is almost the only reason for short term students visa.

Even if the language is not the purpose, most of the countries where the official language is not English offer programs taught entirely in English (France has more than 2.000 programs fully taught in English; Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands have built their

reputation on English programs; the programs taught in the United Arab Emirates are fully taught in English).

It is used by universities to attract foreign students. Most of the time, if a student is going to study abroad, the university he will join offers him to learn the language as a foreign language. Because universities offer more and more programs in English, a different language is not an obstacle for international students.

English helps universities when they try to attract foreign students. In the meantime, it is also one of the reason explaining that American and British Universities are far more competitive than the other ones. 16 American Universities and 3 British Universities are amongst the top 20 universities in the world, according to Shanghai ranking.

This might be the central paradox: we should consider other languages than English for rankings, especially for reviews and journals, but we must take into consideration that English remains the easier way to attract brilliant foreign students.

VI. Solutions

Many challenges and some solutions. We have considered potential answers for those issues, but we must put aside the ranking, whose solution was discussed earlier.

E-learning (FX)

Offshore campuses (FX)

Joint Universities (Romain)

I have read an interesting article written by Jane KNIGHT, Professor at the University of Toronto, entitled “The new faces of transnational higher education”. It deals with international joint universities.

This type of university is inspired by the corporate law practice of joint-ventures. A joint venture is a contractual business undertaking between two or more parties. It is like a business partnership, with one key difference: a partnership generally involves an ongoing, long-term business relationship, whereas a joint venture is based on a single business transaction.

International joint universities are inspired by corporate law practice, but only partially: this type of university is not implemented for a limited time. The definition given by Jane KNIGHT is indeed the following: *“a joint university is an independent higher education institution founded through collaboration between foreign higher education institutions and host country institutions or government”*.

This new type of university may be implemented in countries willing to develop Higher Education Institutions with foreign partners. These institutions are independent and may be registered as a public or private institution. These institutions shall not be considered as a branch or an offshore campus. A joint-university is a new university.

As Pr. KNIGHT explained, for host countries, joint universities can increase access to higher education, provide niche programmes, serve geo-political purposes and give an international dimension to higher education. But it can also reduce the cultural differences between students and foreign institutions and become the first step to international mobility.

Foreign partners are motivated for different reasons such as international branding, opportunity for faculty and staff to have mobility experiences, international recruitment and geo-political relations.

Those institutions offer flexibility. They can choose the degree they will deliver (joint degree or new degree) and how many partners they will deal with. As a matter of fact, there are 25 joint universities but they all have chosen different paths.

They may become one of the solution to new world map of student mobility challenges, because their flexibility can clarify the misunderstanding between different cultures and institutions.