

Germany? “Very good!”



Michael Peak, British Council, is concerned with the internationalisation of higher education systems

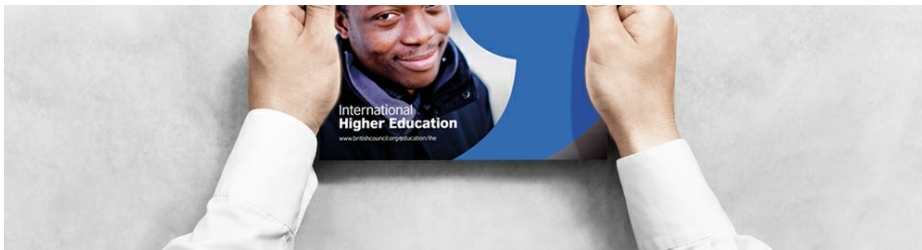
The British Council's latest study, entitled “The Shape of Global Higher Education: International Comparisons with Europe” compared the national regulatory frameworks and higher education internationalisation results of 20 countries and showed that Germany performs very well in this respect. Michael Peak, Head of Higher Education Systems Research at the British Council, explains this conclusion from the German perspective.

Mr. Peak, the global higher education context is a hugely competitive environment. On the basis of your study, what are the most important measures that countries can take to attract international students and scholars and how is Germany doing with regard to these measures?

To ensure sustainable success in international higher education, it is important to create an environment of trust. With regard to attracting international students and scholars, this trust can be built through having clear, consistent and transparent processes for student visas; and policies which allow students to be employed whilst studying and post study, and which permit spouses to accompany students/scholars.

National systems attract international students when they are open to changing forms of mobility too – ie where systems are in place to recognize qualifications and academic credits from other countries, and engaging in forms of transnational education or programme and provider mobility etc. And of course, systems which provide access to financial support for international students and scholars – in the form of scholarships, and or mobile loans etc. – tend to be attractive international study destinations. These are all ways in which Germany supports international education





You looked at the different national levels of political commitment for international cooperation in your study. How can these differences be measured and what are the results for Germany with respect to these indicators of political commitment?

“The shape of global higher education” study compares national support for international engagement in higher education. We created an index with a total of 37 different indicators across three categories: openness of education system; quality assurance and degree recognition; and equitable access and sustainability (see box).

The study is based primarily on desk research, and each indicator is assessed against publicly available policy and legislative documentation. We assign a score to each indicator: 1 when the criterion is fully met; 0.5 when the criterion is partly met and 0 when the criterion is not fulfilled. So, the higher the score for a country, the higher the government support for engagement in international higher education.

This is an approach to assessing and benchmarking national-level support for international higher education which we believe is very useful. Of course, each country has its own particular priorities, perspectives and challenges, and we recognize that it is important to bear these in mind when viewing the results of our study. Germany scores highly across all areas of our index.

Germany is among the countries in your study that have a dedicated body promoting International Higher Education (IHE). Can you elaborate a little bit on the differences between Germany and other countries with and without such dedicated bodies? Or in other words: What distinguishes the DAAD’s activities in an internationally comparative perspective?

In our study we looked at whether a country had a dedicated body or bodies for promoting the internationalisation of higher education as we saw this as a useful measure. The presence of such a body is a clear external signal of the intent of the country.

There are many different examples of such organisations including the British Council in the UK, which is the national organisation for cultural relations and education opportunities, DAAD in Germany, which focuses on Educational exchanges, with the cultural relations being more within the remit of the Goethe Institute, Nuffic in Netherlands, Campus France etc. We haven’t directly assessed the quality, priorities, funding, success etc. of these bodies, just simply whether they exist or not.

Sustainable development needs transnational education (TNE). You also looked at different approaches of TNE. Based on your results – what defines the specific TNE approach of Germany and what kind of advantages and disadvantages do you see compared to other approaches of TNE?

There are many benefits to sustainable TNE programmes: benefits for all of the partner countries involved as well as the partner institutions and the students, and many benefits, e.g. by raising quality standards, building capacity and capability of professionals, developing intercultural and language skills etc., relate to sustainable development.

The “Shape of global higher education” study considers several national-level indicators which relate to delivery of transnational education. The TNE approach of Germany seems to be a particularly collaborative one, with national support provided through DAAD, and institutions working together to deliver education to meet particular needs of a partner country. Such an approach is particularly conducive to supporting sustainable development.

RELATED INFORMATION

An overview of the study

- [“The Shape of Global Higher Education: International Comparisons with Europe”](https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/knowledge-centre/global-landscape/shape-global-higher-education-vol-4)
[\[https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/knowledge-centre/global-landscape/shape-global-higher-education-vol-4\]](https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/knowledge-centre/global-landscape/shape-global-higher-education-vol-4)
- National education systems examined: in a selection of European (Bulgaria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Russia and Spain) and American (Canada, USA, Mexico, Brazil, Columbia, Chile) countries as well as those in place in Australia, China and India.
- The education systems were evaluated on the basis of three overriding criteria:
“Openness and mobility” (i.e. measures relating to IHE strategy, visa policies for students and researchers, and policies relating to programme and provider mobility),
“Quality assurance and degree recognition” (i.e. quality assessment of academic programmes, recognition of overseas qualifications) and
“Equitable access and sustainable development policies” (i.e. funding for inward and outward student and researcher mobility, as well as policies to support international development and capacity building, as well as supporting foreign language and intercultural competence).
- In all of the aspects analysed, the Federal Republic of Germany achieved excellent marks and came second in the ranking, with the Netherlands leading.
- The study has been published annually since 2016 and examines the policy framework conditions established by governments in order to promote the internationalisation of their higher education institutions.