

General Issues

- Does EU action, as opposed to national government action, in the areas of education and vocational training generally benefit or disadvantage the UK?
>>> Generally benefit as it provides the fora, frameworks and usually funding to support activity (study and work mobility and research collaboration) that might otherwise not be funded adequately through national government policy. EU action has stimulated positive UK government action (eg development of national strategy for outward mobility)

Can you point us to any published evidence or analysis in support of your view?

>>> overall UK HE student take up of Erasmus mobility opportunities since 2007; replicated in our own institution and particularly since the introduction of work-based mobility opportunities. Published reports:

Collaborare Report: UK HEI Participation in EU Supported Transnational Collaboration 2007-2012 shows a four-fold increase in funding to UK HEIs between 2007-2013 (total – 184 million euros to UK HEIs in programme period)

CEDEFOP – Benefits of TVET report concludes that higher level skills in reasoning and technology are needed in the workplace across Europe to address future skills needs and that they add to economic growth, higher wages and increased productivity – EU actions reflect this i.e. Leonardo & Erasmus

EU Monitoring Reports assess specific national challenges then they can be addressed through the EU actions i.e. **European Commission Education & Training Monitor 2013 for United Kingdom** – highlights UK challenges in low-skilled workers; poor basic skills; need for improved science skills; under-developed EU language skills in UK etc

- Are there any specific EU activities in the areas of education and training that you consider particularly beneficial or particularly disadvantageous to the UK?
>>> Erasmus (and now Erasmus+) as well as others such as Tempus and Erasmus Mundus have had a positive impact on staff research and teaching network development and have enhanced our ability to develop competitive European and international consortia in response to calls for proposals. The presence of Erasmus student on campus contributes to the internationalisation of our University in general; overall, the Bologna Process has had a positive impact on areas such as credit transfer/equivalence. However there are mixed views on certain initiatives (such as U-Multirank) in terms of national sector body engagement in the development process which has left individual institutions to engage where they have the resource/inclination to do so. There remain difficulties in aligning joint European masters courses between countries with diverse validation arrangements and fee structures or government funding – more could be done to resolve these.

- Do you think the EU, as opposed to national government, should do more or less in relation to education and training? If so, where and why?
>>> Could do more to promote awareness of benefits/positive impact of EU-wide projects delivered under its 'supporting competence' for education and training. This has the most impact on national government policy/strategy development. More evaluation and assessment of recent LLP programme and impact/gaps/needs etc. to inform Erasmus+ programme going forward

- What other areas of EU competence or activity have an impact on education and training in your sector and how?

>>> Research and development (as a major income stream of most UK HEIs); Single Market (Services) – for mutual recognition of professional qualifications that support employment mobility; Social and Employment - ditto

- What challenges or opportunities are there for the UK in further EU action on education?

>>> Challenges relate to identifying and mapping EU activities to UK HE sector and institutional policy when information flows are not always optimal between the relevant EU Commission departments, UK HE policy bodies and individual UK HEIs. A further challenge (see **(European Commission Education & Training Monitor 2013 for UK)**)– also relates to how the UK's our qualifications framework aligns with European models and whether any changes would be beneficial or disadvantageous to UK.

The main opportunity is that the EU has the resources to provide the basis for practical action that will improve co-ordination across HE institutions within and beyond the EU itself.

- What international bodies or arrangements other than the EU are important to education and training in the UK?

>>> The work of the IAU provides access to a wider, global perspective on sector issues and activities to inform institutional policy/strategy development – but it is not (typically) a funding body. The main area of comparison with the EU is in the creation of appropriate fora and projects to research issues of international/regional importance for HE in a global context.

Other organisations that have an impact/influence our work/provide funding from an international perspective include: British Council; International Association of Universities; DfID

How does your experience of dealing with them compare with the EU's activity in this sphere?

>>> We have had funding from **British Council** and **IAU** to set up teaching and research opportunities with countries outside of Europe and have also used their resources and guidance documents to this end. We have applied for funding from **DfID** and monitor these schemes as they are particularly relevant to some of our health education activities and partnerships in developing countries worldwide.

No comparison as such, other than less bureaucratic. We access these schemes additional to the EU ones, but where appropriate we use them to complement the work within the EU and would potentially utilise some of the European educational techniques developed in our work with these countries as capacity building etc.

The Programmes

For the specific programmes which are funded and managed via the EU (such

as Erasmus or Leonardo), what are the benefits or disadvantages of having EU rather than national responsibility and funding for these activities?

>>> Establishes consistency within the programme and synergies across Europe that would otherwise be absent. Encourages academic staff to ensure their work reflects an international dimension and network with peers across the continent. This interaction enriches our activity and the outputs of teaching and research.

Disadvantage – in the past, administration of projects more difficult with activities that are centralised in Brussels re: resolving queries and monitoring. This may be mitigated by new national administration of more of the programmes through British Council and Ecorys from 2014 onwards.

• Can you point to evidence which shows that language learning has improved through participation in the programmes?

>>> No but considerable evidence that low levels of MFL competence in the UK constrain participation. (EU Education & Training Monitor for UK 2013 highlights one of UK challenges is the development of improved language skills for young people).

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages (2012) found that UK participation in Erasmus programmes was one-third of France and Germany and one of main reasons was because of lack of language skills of potential students. This constraining effect was highest amongst UK students (62% as opposed to an average of 41% across all other EU countries).

Of course Erasmus has increased the opportunity for HE students to learn a modern foreign language in the context of study and work mobility

• How would you describe the costs and benefits to your organisation of participating in the programmes?

>>> Over the three years 11/12-13/14 our student mobility ratio was 55% incoming vs 45% outgoing. There is evidence that we are achieving a more balanced profile than was the case prior to 11/12, partly as a result of increased take up of work related (as opposed to study-related) mobility. Employability-related international mobility is highly valued by our University and the trend from recent years is that outbound students are for staying longer periods – thus enhancing the overall experience.

Some evidence of incoming Erasmus students from other EU countries staying on in UK to study for higher qualifications or gain work experience in an international context.

There remains a perception that the operational bureaucracy around mobility schemes such as Erasmus could be improved – both externally and internally...- but on balance there is a benefit in participating as much as we are able.

Policy Coordination

• Have you noticed any change in EU activity or emphasis since the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon and the introduction of Europe 2020, and, if so, where has this manifested itself and in what ways?

>>> No

Have these changes been helpful or unhelpful?

>>> N/A

• Is it appropriate that Europe 2020 focusses on early school leaving and the completion of tertiary education?

>>> We believe so - especially as this is a particular challenge for the UK that needs to be addressed and links to skills needs and progression to higher education. Practical measures and funding that facilitates a wider educational experience (at school and HE level is welcomed). EU programmes offer opportunities that would not be achievable in the national education context. From our perspective, the University works with colleges and schools to address synergies and work on projects to increase skills and confidence and encourage transitions between school, college and university.

- Has the adoption of EU education policy frameworks or Council Recommendations had any impact on your sector?

>>>Yes – for example ECTS/credit transfer, Diploma Supplement (pan European transcript). Also on our University's internationalisation strategies for Research and Teaching and Learning, including international partnership development

- How does policy cooperation on education in the EU compare with other organisations, for example the OECD?

>>> I am not able to comment on this from an institutional perspective

- Can you point to examples of reform in national policy which have resulted from EU co-operation in education and training?

>>> Government sponsored review and subsequent creation of a sector wide programme for development of a UK Strategy for Outward Mobility

- How would you assess the costs and benefits to policy makers of participation in education policy cooperation at EU level?

>>> Through reports such as the one by Collaborare above with statistical information and financial detail and the EU reports etc. as outlined above. i.e. a number of reports at national and EU level as well as parliamentary group reports such as the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility and the All Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages and others.

LINKS to the above references:

Collaborare report – UK HEI Participation in EU supported transnational collaboration – 2007-2013

<http://www.collaborare.org.uk/information-resources/reports/>

European Commission Education & Training Monitor 2013 (overall report and country specific reports)

http://ec.europa.eu/education/tools/et-monitor_en.htm

CEDEFOP – Benefits of TVET Report (country specific)

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/information-services/vet-in-europe-country-reports.aspx>

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Foreign Languages

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/224231/evidence-appg.pdf