

# Chapter 1

## Cross-border Tertiary Education: An Introduction

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*The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general introduction to the different types, forms, modes, rationales and providers of cross-border education. This will facilitate the discussion in the following chapters of cross-border education as a national capacity-building tool.*

### 1.1. Growth and complexity of cross-border education

In most countries, especially those in transition, the demand for postsecondary education including professionally related courses is increasing. This is due to a number of reasons: changing demographics, greater number of secondary school graduates, the movement to lifelong learning, and the growth of the knowledge economy. While demand is growing, the capacity of the public sector to satisfy this need is being challenged. Alternative ways to provide education are being developed. These include a growth in the private education sector, a greater emphasis on distance education given the recent innovations in information and communication technologies but also new developments in cross-border education.

The *Global Student Mobility 2025 Report* (Bohm *et al.*, 2002) foresees that the demand for international education will increase from 1.8 million international students in 2000 to 7.2 million international students in 2025. By all accounts these are staggering figures and present enormous opportunities and new challenges. There is no doubt that the number of

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students moving to study in foreign countries will continue to increase; but it is not clear what proportion of the forecasted demand will be met by student mobility or through other forms of cross-border education. In tandem with the escalating rate of student mobility, there is a definite increase in the numbers of academic programmes and education providers/institutions moving across national borders to deliver courses to students in their home countries (OECD, 2004a).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general introduction to the different types, forms, modes, rationales and providers of cross-border education. While students, professors and researchers have been moving internationally for years, if not centuries, though not at the same scale as in past years, it has only been in the last two decades that there have been substantial new developments related to the mobility of academic programmes and different types of education providers. Moreover, it has only been in the last ten years that education has been included in international trade agreements such as the General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS). An overview of the major elements and dimensions of cross-border education will facilitate the discussion of cross-border education as a national capacity-building tool, an internationally tradeable service under the new trade regulations of GATS, and the issues related to quality assurance – all of which are dealt with in the following chapters.

A fascinating but very complex world of cross-border higher education is emerging. For instance, Phoenix University has become the largest private university in the United States (owned and operated by the Apollo Group company) and is now present or delivering courses in Puerto Rico, the Netherlands, Mexico and Canada. Other Apollo companies are offering courses in Brazil, India and China. The Netherlands Business School (*Universiteit Nijenrode*) has recently opened a branch campus in Nigeria and Harvard is planning to develop two branch campus initiatives in Cyprus and the United Arab Emirates. Furthermore, Jinan University will be the first Chinese university to open a branch campus outside China and will do so in Thailand. Laureate Education (formerly Sylvan Learning Systems) has purchased whole or part of private higher education institutions in Chile, Mexico, Panama and Costa Rica and owns universities in Spain, Switzerland, and France. Dubai has developed a “Knowledge Village” in the Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone and to date the London School of Economics, India’s Manipal Academy of Higher Education and the University of Wollongong from Australia are offering courses through franchising agreements and branch campuses. The University of Westminster (United Kingdom) is the key foreign academic partner in the new private Kingdom University of Bahrain and plays a similar advisory/provision role with new institutions in Nigeria, Uzbekistan and

Kazakhstan (OBHE, 2004). At the same time, the number of students going abroad for their full academic programme has dramatically increased in the last decade (OECD, 2004a). The recruitment of international students has become an important business in popular receiving countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. But European countries including Germany and France, and more Asian nations such as India, China and Malaysia are becoming more competitive and strategic in their recruitment efforts. Finally, the last decade has clearly been a hotbed of innovation and new developments in international academic mobility.

Drawing on recent documents by the author (Knight, 2005a-b, 2006a-c), this chapter will propose an introduction to the landscape of cross-border education, by clarifying the related terminology and concepts and stressing a few trends and issues that raise questions in terms of what regulatory frameworks need to be put in place.

## 1.2. Terminology

The growing interest in the international dimension and delivery of higher education has spawned an increase in the number of terms used to describe the changes. It is important to be clear at the outset how these terms are used and relate to higher education crossing borders. The following list provides a description of related terms.

**Globalisation** is described as a process that is increasing “the flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy across borders resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world”. Globalisation affects each country in different ways. It can have both positive and/or negative consequences, according to a nation’s individual history, traditions, culture, priorities and resources. Education is one of the sectors impacted by globalisation and the growth in cross-border education is seen as one of the direct results of globalisation.

**Internationalisation of higher education** is also a process, albeit a different process than globalisation. Internationalisation of higher education is described as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching, research, service) and the delivery of higher education”. It refers to all aspects of internationalisation, whether it involves cross-border mobility or not (Knight, 2004).

**Internationalisation activities** can include: international development projects; institutional agreements and networks; the international/intercultural dimension of the teaching/learning process, curriculum, and research; campus-based extracurricular clubs and activities;

mobility of academics through exchange, field work, sabbaticals and consultancy work; recruitment of international students; student exchange programmes and semesters abroad; joint/double degree programmes; twinning partnerships; branch campuses, etc. Internationalisation activities apply to both campus-based activities and cross-border initiatives. This publication addresses the cross-border aspects of internationalisation.

*Cross-border education* refers to the movement of people, programmes, providers, curricula, projects, research and services across national or regional jurisdictional borders. Cross-border education is a subset of internationalisation and can be part of development cooperation projects, academic exchange programmes and commercial initiatives. The focus of this volume is on the movement of students, programmes and providers/institutions. Cross-border is a term that is often used interchangeably with other terms such as transnational, offshore, and borderless education. There are some conceptual differences among these terms but usually they refer to similar types of activities. The preferred term is cross-border education given the importance of jurisdictional boundaries when it comes to policy frameworks and regulations.

*Trade of education services* is a term used by both the education and trade sectors, but primarily the former. It focuses on those cross-border education initiatives that are commercial in nature and are usually intended to be for-profit in nature – though this is not always the case. This term coincides with the advent of the General Agreement on Trade in Services which includes the education sector as a tradeable service and is discussed in Chapter 3. It is also sometimes used in relation to the revenues generated or spent related to cross-border higher education in countries' balance of payments, regardless of whether the cross-border initiative is for profit or not.

### 1.3. Elements of cross-border education

Table 1.1 provides a framework to understand the nature of cross-border education and illustrates two significant trends. The first trend is the vertical shift downwards from student mobility to programme and provider mobility. It is important to note that numbers of students seeking education in foreign countries is still increasing and by far the largest component of cross-border higher education; but more emphasis is currently being placed on delivering foreign academic courses and programmes to students in their home country. The second shift is from left to right signifying substantial change in orientation from development cooperation to competitive commerce, or in other words, from aid to trade. Countries' positions still vary in this respect and few countries have adopted a full blown trade approach so far.

**Table 1.1. Framework for cross-border higher education**

Category	Forms and conditions of mobility		
	Development	Educational	Commercial
	Cooperation	Linkages	Trade
<b>People</b> Students Professors/scholars Researchers/ Experts/consultants	↓	Semester/year abroad Full degrees Field/research work Internships Sabbaticals Consulting	
<b>Programmes</b> Course, programme sub-degree, degree, post graduate	↓	Twinning Franchised Articulated/validated Joint/double award Online/distance	
<b>Providers</b> Institutions Consortia Companies	↓	Branch campus Virtual university Merger/acquisition Independent institutions	
<b>Projects</b> Academic projects Services	↓	Research Curriculum Technical assistance Educational services	

Source: Adapted from Knight (2005b).

## *People*

The first category of cross-border higher education covers the movement of people whether they are students, professors, scholars, or experts. Students are mobile in a number of ways. They can take whole degrees in another country, participate in a study abroad exchange programme, undertake fieldwork or an internship, register for a semester/year abroad programme, etc. The funding for such cross-border education can be through exchange agreements, scholarships from government, public or private sources and self-funding. Professors, scholars and experts can be involved in teaching and research activities, technical assistance and consulting assignments, sabbaticals, seminars and other

professional activities. These types of initiatives can be self- or institution-funded, based on exchange agreements, involve contracts and fee for service, or supported by public and private funding.

### ***Programmes***

The programme, not the student, moves in this category. The delivery of the programme is often done through a partnership arrangement between foreign and domestic providers or can be an independent initiative by a foreign provider. The programmes can be delivered by distance, face-to-face, or mixed mode. Franchising, twinning and new forms of articulation and validation arrangements are most common. In some cases, the programme and qualification awarded is provided by the foreign country institution but the teaching and support is done in part or totally by a local institution. In other cases, the foreign provider takes complete responsibility for the delivery of the academic programme but may have a local business partner investing in the operation. Distance delivery of a programme involves yet another set of circumstances. Virtual universities are yet another example of the programme moving across borders through distance delivery of a selection of programmes.

### ***Providers***

The term provider includes all types of higher education institutions as well as companies and networks involved in cross-border education. The key factor in this category is that the institution moves to have physical or virtual presence in the receiving/host country. It is not the student who moves, the provider moves to serve the student. The movement of a provider can involve a more substantial range of programmes and academic/administrative support services moving. A provider can develop a satellite campus or establish a full institution. In other scenarios the provider moves by purchasing or merging with a local institution. The providers can include private and public, for-profit or non-profit, educational institutions, associations and companies.

### ***Projects/services***

There are a wide range of education related projects and services that need to be considered when analysing cross-border education. Such activities could include a diversity of initiatives such as joint curriculum development, research, bench marking, technical assistance, e-learning platforms, professional development and other capacity-building initiatives especially in the information technology area. The projects and services

could be undertaken as part of development aid projects, academic linkages, and commercial contracts.

#### 1.4. A diversity of cross-border providers

The increase in worldwide demand for higher education has resulted in a diversity of providers delivering education across borders. The providers are classified into two categories: 1) the traditional higher education institutions which are normally oriented to teaching, research and service/commitment to society; and 2) the “new or alternative providers” which primarily focus on teaching and the delivery of education services.

*Traditional higher education institutions* include public non-profit, private non-profit and private for-profit institutions. Many countries have a mixed system of publicly and privately funded higher education institutions. There is a definite blurring of the boundary between public and private institutions. Private funds represent an increasing share of public universities’ financing and public universities are sometimes engaging in for-profit activities. On the other hand, in many countries private institutions are eligible for public funds and engage in social non-profit activities.

One important factor is whether the higher education institution is part of a home national education system and recognised by a national bona fide licensing/accrediting body. In cross-border education recognition/registration is critical to ensuring the legitimacy of the institution and the qualifications provided. The majority of traditional universities are bona fide institutions that comply with domestic and foreign regulations (where they exist). But, there is also an increase in rogue or low quality providers who are not recognised by bona fide accreditation/licensing bodies in either the sending or receiving countries. “Rogue providers” are often accredited by self-accrediting groups or by agencies that sell accreditation (accreditation mills). In addition, there is a worrisome increase in the number of “degree mills” operating around the world (Garrett, 2005). These are often no more than web based companies that are selling certificates based on “life experiences” and are not delivering any education programmes.

*New or alternative providers.* The new providers are diverse in nature, but are typically described as a company or consortium that provides education programmes and/or services for profit purposes. They are more oriented to delivering education and training programmes than undertaking research and scholarly activities. The new providers include publicly traded companies such as Apollo (United States), Informatics (Singapore) and Aptech (India), corporate universities such as those run by Motorola and Toyota, and networks of universities, professional associations and

organizations. These new types of cross-border providers can be bricks and mortar institutions or virtual universities and can complement, compete, collaborate or simply co-exist with domestic higher providers (and other cross-border providers).

### 1.5. Typology of programme mobility

Cross-border mobility of programmes can be described as “the physical or virtual movement of individual education/training courses and programmes across national borders through face to face, distance or a combination of these modes. Credits towards a qualification can be awarded by the sending foreign country provider or by an affiliated domestic partner or jointly”. Franchising, twinning, double/joint degrees and various articulation models are the more popular methods of cross-border programme mobility (Knight, 2005b). A short description of each follows:

*Franchise.* An arrangement whereby a provider in the source country A authorises a provider in country B to deliver their course/programme/service in country B or other countries. The qualification is awarded by the provider in country A. Arrangements for teaching, management, assessment, profit-sharing, awarding of credit/qualification, etc., are customised for each franchise arrangement and must comply with national regulations (if they exist) in country B and sometimes national regulations or codes of good practice of country A (if they exist and are applicable to the provider).

*Twinning.* A situation where a provider in source country A collaborates with a provider located in country B to develop an articulation system that allows students to take course credits in country B and/or source country A. Only one qualification is awarded by provider in source country A. Arrangements for twinning programmes and awarding of degree usually comply with national regulations of the provider in the source country A.

*Double or joint degree.* An arrangement where providers in different countries collaborate to offer a programme for which a student receives a qualification from each provider, or a joint award from the collaborating partners. Arrangements for programme provision and criteria for awarding the qualifications are customised for each collaborative initiative in accordance with national regulations in each country.

*Articulation.* Various types of articulation arrangements between providers situated in different countries permit students to gain credit for courses/programmes offered by all of the collaborating providers. This allows students to gain credit for work done with a provider other than the provider awarding the qualification, but with a much looser collaboration between providers than twinning.



*Validation.* Validation arrangements between providers in different countries allow provider B in receiving country to award the qualification of provider A in source country. In some cases, the source country provider may not offer these courses or awards itself.

*E-learning or distance.* Arrangements where providers deliver courses/programme to students in different countries through distance and online modes. May include some face-to-face support for students through domestic study or support centres.

A critical factor in programme mobility is “who” awards the course credits or ultimate credential for the programme. As the movement of programmes proliferates, there will undoubtedly be further changes to national, regional and even international regulatory frameworks. The question of “who grants the credits/awards” will be augmented by “who recognises the provider” and whether or not the programme has been “accredited or quality assured” by a bona fide body. Of central importance is whether the qualification is recognised for employment or further study in the receiving country and in other countries as well. The perceived legitimacy and recognition of the qualification at home and abroad are fundamental issues yet to be resolved in a systematic way.

Given that several modes for programme mobility involve partnerships, there are questions about who owns the intellectual property rights to course design and materials. What are the legal roles and responsibilities of the participating partners in terms of academic, staffing, recruitment, evaluation, financial, and administrative matters? While the movement of programmes across borders has been taking place for many years, new types of providers, partnerships, awards and delivery modes are challenging national and international policies.

## **1.6. Typology of traditional and new provider/institution mobility**

Cross-border mobility of providers can be described as “the physical movement of an education provider (institution, network, company) across a national border to establish a presence in order to offer education/training programmes and/or services to students and other clients”. The difference between programme and provider mobility is one of scope and scale in terms of programmes/services offered and the local presence (and investment) by the foreign provider. There is more limited local presence in programme mobility than in provider mobility. Credits and qualifications are awarded by the foreign provider (through foreign, local or self-accreditation methods) (Knight, 2005b). Different forms of cross-border provider mobility are as follows.

*Branch campus.* Provider in country A establishes a satellite campus in country B to deliver courses and programmes to mainly local students in country B. Country A students may also take a semester/courses abroad. The qualification awarded is from provider in country A.

*Independent institution.* Foreign provider A (a traditional university, a network or commercial company) establishes in country B a stand alone higher education institution to offer courses/programmes and awards. There is usually no “home” institution in country A.

*Acquisition/merger.* Foreign provider A purchases a part of or 100% of local higher education institutions in country B.

*Study centre or teaching site.* Foreign provider A establishes study centres in country B to support students taking their courses/programmes. Study centres can be independent or in collaboration with local providers in country B.

*Affiliation/networks.* Different types of “public and private”, “traditional and new” and “local and foreign” providers collaborate through innovative types of partnerships to establish networks/institutions to deliver courses and programmes in local and foreign countries through distance or face-to-face modes.

The movement of providers to other countries raises many of the same registration, quality assurance and recognition issues that programme mobility does, but there are additional factors to consider if a network or local partnerships are involved. Setting up a physical presence requires attention being paid to national regulations regarding status of the entity, total or joint ownership with local bodies, tax laws, for profit or not-for-profit status, repatriation of earned income, boards of directors, staffing, granting of qualifications, selection of academic programmes and courses, etc. For some countries, it means that strict regulations are being developed to closely monitor, and in some case restrict, new providers coming into the country. In other instances, incentives are being offered to attract high quality providers to set up a teaching site or full campus. This is especially true where “knowledge parks” or “technology zones” or “education cities” are being developed to attract foreign companies and education and training providers.

## **1.7. Rationales and impact**

An examination of the rationales and impacts related to the increase in cross-border education requires a 360 degree view of the issues. This involves giving serious consideration to the diverse and often contradictory

perspectives and expectations that different groups of stakeholders may have. This is not a straight forward or linear task of analysis as the viewpoints differ depending on whether you are a student, a provider, a governmental or non-governmental body and whether you are in the country that is exporting or importing the programmes and services. In short, the analysis of rationales and impacts is rather complex.

### *Rationales at the national/country level*

In the past several years, much has been written about the changes in rationales for internationalisation in general and cross-border education in particular (OECD, 2004a and b; Vincent-Lancrin, 2005; Altbach and Knight, 2006). The chapters which follow will discuss rationales in more depth but a generic description of the rationales includes the following (Knight, 2004).

#### *Human resources development*

The knowledge economy, demographic shifts, and mobility of the labour force are factors which are driving nations to place more importance on developing human capital and recruiting brain power through cross-border education. In general, there is a positive stance towards what is being called “brain circulation” due to increased student and professional mobility. However, this phenomenon affects small and large, developed and developing countries in different ways. For some countries there is currently a risk of brain drain attached to the mobility of students across borders, especially when international student recruitment policies are linked to aggressive immigration policies. Therefore, the smaller countries on the receiving end of cross-border programmes education often see the imported programmes as effective means to lessen the chances of their tertiary education graduate staying abroad after they have finished their studies.

#### *Strategic alliances*

The international mobility of students, academics, and programmes as well as collaborative research and education initiatives are seen as productive ways to develop closer geo-political ties and economic relationships between countries and to enhance competitiveness. Over the past ten years there has been a definite shift from alliances for cultural purposes to economic and political purposes. The development of strategic alliances is attractive to both sending and receiving countries and providers.

### *Income generation*

For sending countries there is a strong motivation to use cross-border education as a means of generating income from fee based education programmes and services. New franchise arrangements, foreign or satellite campuses, on-line delivery, and increased recruitment of fee paying students are examples of a more commercial approach to internationalisation. While more emphasis is now being placed on economic and income generating opportunities it is usually not seen as the primary motivation by traditional higher education institutions. Yet, the fact that education is now one of the 12 service sectors in the General Agreement on Trade in Services under the World Trade Organisation is positive proof that importing and exporting of education programmes and services is a potential trade area for commercial companies.

### *Nation building and capacity building*

While some countries are interested in the export of education for income generation, there are other countries that are interested in the importing of education programmes and institutions for nation building purposes. The fact that the increased demand for education cannot always be met by domestic capacity makes the importing of foreign programmes and providers an attractive option to help increase access to education and to augment/improve national capacity and quality of the higher education system.

### *Social/cultural development and international understanding*

The social and cultural rationales, especially those that relate to promotion of intercultural understanding and national cultural identity, are still significant, but perhaps their importance has been diminished in comparison with the current emphasis given to economic and political rationales. There are mixed views and sometimes conflicting opinions related to social/cultural rationales. On the one hand, there is the belief that by having students stay in the home country while studying for a foreign qualification there is a greater chance that national identity and indigenous customs can be maintained. Yet, there is always the question about how relevant and culturally appropriate course content and teaching/learning processes are when they are imported from other countries. Another opinion emphasises the advantages for students who live and study in a different country than their own. Such an experience opens their eyes and increases their international understanding and cross-cultural skills, while at the same time learning about how their own country relates to the rest of the world.

These kinds of experiences and insights are difficult to replicate in virtual or cross-border provision.

### *Rationales at institution/provider level*

There are a myriad of factors which influence the institutional/provider level rationales. These factors range from mission, student population, faculty profile, geographic location, funding sources, availability of resources, degree of institutional autonomy, orientation to local, national and international interests. The rationales for internationalisation in general, and cross-border education in particular, which are emerging as most important are the following.

### *Research and knowledge production*

The complexity and costs involved in higher education institutions' role in the production and distribution of knowledge should not be minimised. Given the increasing interdependence among nations, it is clear that there are global issues and challenges that cannot be addressed at the national level only. International and interdisciplinary collaboration is central to solving many global problems such as those related to environmental and health challenges, international crime and others. Institutions and national governments are therefore making the international dimension of research and knowledge production a primary rationale for internationalisation and cross-border education and many institutions are articulating this as a key rationale.

### *Student and staff development*

At the institutional level, it appears that there is renewed emphasis on internationalisation in the largest sense and cross-border education in particular, as a means to enhance the international and intercultural understanding and skills for students and staff. There are a number of factors contributing to this. The escalating numbers of national, regional, international and cultural conflicts are pushing academics to help students understand global issues and appreciate international/intercultural diversity. The growing emphasis on the knowledge society makes continuous upgrading and highly developed knowledge and skills important for students. The mobility of the labour market and the increase in cultural diversity of communities and the work place require that both students and academics have an increased understanding and demonstrated abilities to work and live in a culturally diverse or different environment. On the other hand, the increased emphasis on accountability and outcomes-based

education is resulting in a substantial effort towards identifying student and staff competencies developed through internationalisation initiatives. Lastly, the development of information and communication technologies, especially the Internet, has highlighted the need for deeper knowledge and understanding of the world and has provided new opportunities to do so.

### *Income generation*

On the other side of the ledger from human (student and staff) development is the motivation of economic development. There is no question that some institutions are increasingly looking for internationalisation activities as a way to generate alternative sources of income. Public institutions are caught in the squeeze of decreased public funding and increased operational costs, all taking place in an environment of increased accountability and growing competition. The motivation to undertake internationalisation in order to generate income is a complex issue. The purpose or use of the income generation is often questioned not in terms of where or how the money is being spent, but in terms of whether it is profit oriented or for cost recovery. This is not an issue that has clear answers, as most public institutions would argue that they are by definition not for profit and that therefore any surplus from internationalisation activities would be used to subsidise other initiatives on campus. Many would suggest that any income generated from internationalisation activities should be reinvested to enhance under-funded aspects of internationalisation but of course, this is an institutional matter. Another factor related to income generation is the emergence of new commercial corporate providers (Garrett, 2005) who operate on a for profit basis. Thus while there is more importance being attached to the economic rationale for internationalisation at the institution/provider level, the issue is becoming more complicated as it is part of the larger questions of commercialisation/commodification of education with cross border delivery of education programmes and services playing a major role.

### *International profile and reputation*

Traditionally, prominence has been given to the importance of achieving international academic standards (however they may be defined). This motivation is still important but it appears to have been subsumed by the overall drive to achieve a strong worldwide reputation as an international high quality institution. This drive relates to the quest for name recognition in an attempt to attract the brightest of scholars, a substantial number of international students and of course high profile research and training projects. One could say that education institutions have always been

competitive in trying to achieve high academic standards and more recently an international profile. However, there has been a shift towards developing an international reputation in order to successfully compete in a more commercial environment. Institutions and companies are competing for market share of international fee-paying students, or for-profit education and training programmes, or for education services like language testing and accreditation services. The interest in branding is leading institutions to seek out accreditation or quality assurance services by national and international accrediting bodies, some of which are very trustworthy, and some of which are not so reputable. Accreditation is becoming an industry unto itself and, and it is clear that institutions and providers are making serious efforts to create an international reputation and “name brand” for themselves or a network of partners in order to gain competitive advantage. Therefore, the desire to have international recognition whether it is for academic, economic, social or political purposes is clearly growing.

### *Quality enhancement/international standards*

For most institutions, internationalisation is not an end unto itself but a means to an end. The contribution that the international dimension makes to improve the quality and relevance of higher education in relation to international standards is often articulated as a rationale and goal of internationalisation. Given the more interconnected and interdependent world of today, it is important that higher education, through a strengthened international dimension in teaching and research, serves the needs of individuals, communities, countries and society at large. At a more practical level, cross-border education is proving to be a useful tool to assist institutions to benchmark and gain innovative solutions to ongoing management, academic and research related challenges. This is yet another aspect where cross-border education can help to strengthen the quality of higher education institutions and the primary functions of teaching/learning, research and service.

### *Strategic alliances*

The number of bilateral or multilateral educational agreements has increased exponentially in the past decade. During the early stages of the internationalisation process, institutions are often reacting to the multitude of opportunities to establish international institutional linkages. These linkages can be for different purposes: academic mobility, bench marking, joint curriculum or programme development, seminars and conferences, joint research initiatives. It is often the case that institutions cannot support a large number of agreements and thus many are inactive and mainly paper-

based arrangements. As institutions mature in their approach to internationalisation and cross-border education, there is more effort put into developing strategic alliances with clear purposes and outcomes articulated. An important trend is the development of networks. Networks tend to have clearer and more strategic objectives but in many cases are more difficult to manage than bilateral agreements because of the complexities of working with so many different education systems and cultures. All in all, the rationale for developing key strategic international education alliances at both the national and institutional level is not so much an end unto itself but a means to achieving academic, scientific, economic, technological or cultural objectives.

### ***Student and provider/institution perspectives on programme and institution mobility***

Given the recent emergence of programme and institution mobility compared to people mobility, it is important and revealing to examine its rationales and anticipated impacts from the viewpoint of the students enrolled in these cross-border courses/programmes and of the institutions/providers involved in delivering the education. Table 1.2 presents differing perspectives on several key factors.

**Table 1.2. Different perspectives on rationales and impacts of programme and provider mobility**

<b>Rationales and impact</b>	<b>Enrolled students in receiving country</b>	<b>Institution/provider in sending country</b>	<b>Institution/provider in receiving country</b>
Increased access/supply in home country	Ability to gain foreign qualification without leaving home. Can continue to meet family and work commitments  Students' opportunity for labour mobility and migration may be lower if they stay in home country and study with foreign provider	Attracted to unmet need for higher education and training	Competition, collaboration or co-existence with foreign providers
Cost/income	Less expensive to take foreign programme at home as no travel or accommodation costs  Tuition fees of quality foreign providers may be too high for majority of students	Strong imperative to generate a profit for cross-border operations (unless provided with development assistance funding). Fees could be high for receiving country	Varied rationales and impacts depending on whether institution/provider is competing or co-operating with foreign providers



**Table 1.2. Different perspectives on rationales and impacts of programme and provider mobility (continued)**

Rationales and impact	Enrolled students in receiving country	Institution/provider in sending country	Institution/provider in receiving country
Selection of courses/ programmes	Increased access to courses/programmes in high demand by labour market	Tendency to offer high demand courses which require little infrastructure or investment	Need to offer broad selection of courses which may not have high enrolments and/or have major lab or equipment requirements
Language/cultural and safety aspects	Can have access to courses in foreign and/or indigenous language. Remain in familiar cultural and linguistic environment. Post 9/11 students have stronger concerns about safety and security	Language of instruction and relevance of curriculum to host country important issues. If foreign language used additional academic and linguistic support may be needed	Provide courses and programmes according to local cultural and linguistic norms
Quality	Can be exposed to higher or lower quality course provision	Depending on delivery mode, quality may be at risk. Assurance of relevant and high quality courses may require significant investment	Presence of foreign providers may be a catalyst for innovation and improvement of quality in courses, management and governance
Recognition of qualification	Foreign qualification has to be recognised for academic and employment purposes	May be difficult for academic award and for institution to be recognised in foreign country	Recognised home providers have an advantage and are attractive to foreign providers for award granting powers
Reputation and profile	Due to massive marketing campaigns international profile is often mistakenly equated with quality of provider/programme	Profile and visibility are key factors for high enrolments and strategic alliances	Home (domestic) providers are challenged to distinguish between those providers with high/low profile and high/low quality

Source: Knight (2005b).

These are but a few of the aspects that contribute to the complexities of delivering courses and programmes in other countries.

## 1.8. Emerging issues and challenges

This section introduces emerging issues involved in this dynamic arena of cross-border higher education and identifies some of the challenges with respect to capacity building, trade agreements and quality assurance.

### *Student access*

Demographic changes, lifelong learning, changing human resource needs created by the knowledge economy as well as increasing number of graduates from secondary level education are increasing the unmet demand for post-secondary education and training. Does cross-border higher education help countries satisfy this growing demand for further education? Increased access for students is often considered a driving motivation for all forms of cross-border education. But there remain the issues regarding the equity of access and the quality and relevance of the education provided. While student mobility is well documented no precise data exist on the rate of participation of students in cross-border programme or provider mobility at the national or international levels. Only a few countries such as Australia; Hong Kong, China; the United Kingdom; Singapore; and Malaysia collect reliable data on enrolments in cross-border education programmes. This is an area requiring further national and international attention as without solid data it is challenging to develop appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks.

### *Quality assurance of cross-border education*

In the last decade, increased importance has certainly been given to quality assurance at the institutional and national levels. New regional quality networks have also been established. The primary task of these groups has been quality recognition and assurance of domestic higher education provision by public and private higher education institutions. However, the increase in cross-border education by institutions and new private commercial providers has introduced a new challenge (and gap) in the field of quality assurance. Historically, national quality assurance agencies have generally not focussed their efforts on assessing the quality of imported and exported programmes, with some notable exceptions. The question now facing the sector is how to deal with the increase in cross-border education by traditional higher education institutions and the new private commercial providers who are not normally part of nationally-based quality assurance schemes (OECD, 2004a and b; OECD, 2005; Knight, 2006c).

It is probable that sectors, in addition to education, will be interested in developing international quality standards and procedures for cross-border education. ISO standards, or other industry-based mechanisms such as the Baldrige Awards, are examples of quality systems that might be applied or modelled for cross-border education. The education sector has mixed views on the appropriateness of quality standards being established for education by those outside the sector: some see merit to this idea and others see

problems. At the same time, there are divergent opinions on the desirability and value of any international standards or criteria for quality assurance as this might jeopardise the sovereignty of national level systems or it could contribute to standardisation – not necessarily the improvement of quality standards.

### *New developments in accreditation*

The increased awareness of the need for quality assurance and/or accreditation has led to several new developments in accreditation. Many countries have made efforts to establish criteria and procedures for quality assurance recognition systems and the approval of bona fide accreditors. At the same time, the number of self-appointed accreditors has increased and there is some concern that accreditation mills simply selling “bogus” accreditation labels might expand.

Market forces are making the profile and reputation of an institution/provider and their courses more and more important. Major investments are being made in marketing and branding campaigns in order to get name recognition and to increase enrolments. The possession of some type of accreditation is part of the campaign and assures prospective students that the programmes/awards are of high standing. The desire for accreditation status is leading to a certain commercialisation of quality assurance and accreditation as programmes and providers strive to gain as many “accreditation” stars as possible in order to increase competitiveness and perceived international legitimacy. The challenge is how to distinguish between bona fide and rogue accreditors, especially when neither the cross-border provider nor the accreditor are nationally based or recognised as part of a national higher education system.

At the same time, there are networks of institutions and new organisations that are self-appointed and engage in accreditation of their members. These are positive developments when seen through the lens of trying to improve the quality of the academic offer. However, there is some concern that they may not be totally objective in their assessments. While this can apply to both cross-border and domestic provision, it is particularly worrisome for cross-border provision as attention to national policy objectives and cultural orientation is often neglected.

Another development that is worrisome is the growth in accreditation mills. These organisations are not recognised or legitimate bodies and they more or less “sell” accreditation status without any independent assessment. They are similar to degree mills that sell certificates and degrees with little or no course work. Different education stakeholders, especially the students, employers and the public need to be aware of these accreditation (and

degree) mills which are often no more than a web address and are therefore out of the jurisdiction of national regulatory systems.

### ***Recognition of qualifications***

Increased academic mobility raises the issue of credential recognition to a more prominent place in international education policy. The credibility of higher education programmes and qualifications is extremely important for students, their employers, the public at large and of course for the academic community itself. It is critical that the qualifications awarded by cross-border providers are legitimate and will be recognised for employment or further studies both at home and abroad. This is a major challenge facing the national and international higher education sector in light of new cross-border providers and programmes. The *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education* jointly developed by UNESCO and the OECD have started to address these issues (see Annex 1).

### ***Brain drain/gain***

Brain power is an increasingly important issue for many countries due to technological progress, changes in the economy and the growing mobility of professional/skilled workers. The increase in cross-border movement of scholars, experts and teachers/professors is due in part to the increasing competitiveness for human capital in the knowledge economy. Not only is there a trend for higher education personnel to move from country to country, they are also attracted to the corporate sector where benefits can be more attractive than in the education sector. The higher education sector is affected by this mobility both positively and negatively depending on whether a country is experiencing a net brain drain or gain effect and the level of brain circulation. It is important to be aware of the long-term implications in terms of human resource capacity in specific fields for instance, medicine, at both the national and institutional levels. There are implications for education policies but also for immigration, science and technology, trade, employment and foreign relations. There are also probable links between foreign student recruitment/mobility and the immigration needs for skilled labour of the recruiting country. Thus, the complex and increasingly inter-related dynamics between national policies for international education, migration policies and nation building/human capacity-building efforts are areas worthy of serious investigation.

## ***The General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS) and higher education***

The GATS has been a wake-up call for higher education leaders around the world. Higher education has traditionally been seen as a public service. But with the advent of new international trade agreement, higher education is also recognised as a tradeable service that can be subject to WTO rules. Academic mobility (students, programmes, providers) is considered by many as an important economic stake and is expected to increase exponentially as the demand for higher and continuing education escalates (Larsen, Morris and Martin, 2002). The GATS has been seen by many as presenting new opportunities and benefits, and by others as introducing new risks. Thus, while international academic mobility is not new, the presence of international trade law to regulate is new and causing interesting debates within the higher education community (OECD, 2004a and b; Knight, 2006b).

### **1.9. Key questions**

These emerging trends raise questions in terms of what institutional, national and regional level policies and regulatory frameworks need to be put into place. The following list of questions help to guide the analysis in the following three chapters and shape the findings and conclusions presented in the final chapter.

- Under what conditions and for what purposes should cross-border higher education activities be encouraged by receiving and/or sending countries? Are different types of arrangements (development cooperation, academic partnerships or commercial trade) or specific forms (*i.e.* twinning, franchise, double degree, branch campus) more appropriate for some purposes, countries or contexts?
- As education/training programmes move across borders what are the implications for quality assurance and accreditation of programmes and providers? What are the different roles that institutions, national quality assurance and accreditation agencies play in the monitoring of incoming and outgoing programmes? Is there a need for regional or international mechanisms to augment national and institutional efforts to monitor the increased cross-border delivery?
- What are the appropriate regulatory frameworks that need to be put in place to ensure quality, equity, knowledge/sharing, access, research, recognition of qualification? Would it be appropriate to

have a dual regulatory system – one for domestic/another for foreign? Should there be minimal requirements that foreign providers must meet and should they be mandatory or based on incentives? Should student aid be extended to foreign provision?

- The emergence of new types of providers brings new actors to the world of cross-border education. How will these new providers of education programmes and services collaborate, compete, complement, or change the work of domestic traditional public and private post-secondary institutions in providing access to quality higher education opportunities? What regulatory processes need to be in place to ensure quality, financial stability and relevance of foreign providers? What, if anything, facilitates or hinders that cross-border provision serves local interests of receiving countries?
- How does cross-border education contribute to or decrease brain drain or brain gain? What mechanisms can help to enhance the benefits of increased academic and professional mobility and the expertise of the diaspora but mitigate the negative impact of the imbalances in the talent flowing out of countries?
- What are the connections between academic mobility, labour mobility and temporary or permanent immigration? Are targeted international student recruitment campaigns linked to migration patterns? Does delivering education to students in their home country decrease the chances for emigration?
- What are the implications of increased academic mobility for the recognition of academic and professional recognition of credentials? What national policies need to be in place to determine the validity of domestic and foreign degrees offered through cross-border provision? What is the role of the existing regional UNESCO conventions on credential recognition?
- The international dimension of higher education is gaining more profile in policy arenas outside of education, such as immigration, trade and commerce, culture, economic development. How can the education sector work collaboratively with these sectors at the national/regional level to ensure that cross-border education is understood and contributes to human, social, cultural, scientific and economic development?

## 1.10. Conclusion

The mobility of students, professors, knowledge, values has been part of higher education for centuries, but it has recently grown at an unprecedented pace. Moreover, it has only been in the last two decades that there has been a significant growth in the mobility of programmes and providers through physical and virtual modes of delivery. This presents many new opportunities – for increased access to higher education; for strategic alliances between countries and regions; for the production and exchange of new knowledge; for the movement of graduates and professionals; for human resource and institutional capacity building; for income generation; for the improvement of academic quality; and for increased mutual understanding. The list of potential benefits is long and varied. But so is the list of potential risks. Risks can include: an increase in low quality or rogue providers; a potential decrease in public funding if foreign providers are providing increased access; non-sustainable foreign provision of higher education if profit margins are low; foreign qualifications not recognised by domestic employers or education institutions; elitism in terms of those who can afford cross-border education, increasing emphasis on English as the language of instruction; and national higher education policy objectives not being met.

Risks and benefits vary between sending and receiving countries, between developed and developing countries, for students, institutions, companies and employers. The purpose of this book is to cast light on these opportunities and challenges, especially for developing countries willing to use cross-border higher education as a lever of development, both academically and economically.

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## *List of Acronyms*

AAU	Association of African Universities
ABET	American Board for Engineering Training
AIR	Association for Institutional Research
AMBA	International Association of MBAs
APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
CAMES	Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
CCA	Consejo Centroamericano de Acreditación
CSUCA	Consejo Superior Universitario Centroamericano
DAC	Development Aid Committee of the OECD
DGF	Development Grant Facility (World Bank)
EAIR	European Association for Institutional Research
EEA	European Economic Area
EFMD	European Foundation for Management Development
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
FEANI	Fédération Européenne d'Associations Nationales d'Ingénieurs
FIMPES	Federación Mexicana de Instituciones Particulares de Educación Superior
GATS	General Agreements on Trade in Services
GIQAC	Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IAAB	International Accreditation Advisory Board

INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IOM	International Organisation for Migrations
MFN	Most-favoured-nation
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreements
OBHE	Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIFI	Institutional Enhancement Integral Programme
RIACES	Latin America Quality Network for Higher Education
SAAIR	Southeast Asian Association for Institutional Research
SAAIR	Southern African Association for Institutional Research
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANSA	South African Network of Skills Abroad
TQM	Total Quality Management
TRIPS	Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WEI	World Education Indicators of the OECD/UNESCO
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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## *Table of Contents*

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Chapter 1. Cross-border Tertiary Education: An Introduction</b>	
by Jane Knight .....	21
1.1. Growth and complexity of cross-border education .....	21
1.2. Terminology .....	23
1.3. Elements of cross-border education .....	24
1.4. A diversity of cross-border providers.....	27
1.5. Typology of programme mobility .....	28
1.6. Typology of traditional and new provider/institution mobility .....	29
1.7. Rationales and impact .....	30
1.8. Emerging issues and challenges .....	37
1.9. Key questions .....	41
1.10. Conclusion .....	43
References .....	44
<b>Chapter 2. Developing Capacity through Cross-border Tertiary Education</b>	
by Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin .....	47
2.1. Introduction .....	47
2.2. What is capacity development?.....	52
2.3. The centrality of education and higher education in any capacity-building strategy ..	59
2.4. Why build capacity in tertiary education in developing countries? .....	61
2.5. Why incorporate cross-border education into a capacity development strategy? ..	65
2.6. How can different forms of cross-border education contribute to capacity building in higher education?.....	72
2.7. The complementarity of trade and development assistance in cross-border higher education .....	79
2.8. Which policies can maximise a country's benefits from cross-border education and minimise the possible risks? .....	88
2.9. Conclusion .....	100
References .....	102

**Chapter 3. Building Capacity in Quality Assurance The Challenge of Context**

by Richard R. Hopper .....	109
3.1. The complexities of quality assurance .....	111
3.2. Developing capacity in quality assurance .....	117
3.3. The way forward: ideal systems vs. manageable systems.....	146
3.4. Conclusion .....	151
References.....	155

**Chapter 4. Developing Capacity in Tertiary Education through Trade Liberalisation and the GATS**

by Massimo Geloso-Grosso.....	159
4.1. Introduction.....	159
4.2. Developing capacity through enhanced trade and investment .....	160
4.3. Regulation and remedial policies .....	164
4.4. Higher education services and the GATS .....	172
4.5. Conclusion .....	182
References.....	183

**Annex 1. Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education.. 185****List of Acronyms..... 197****List of Tables**

Table 1.1. Framework for cross-border higher education.....	25
Table 1.2. Different perspectives on rationales and impacts of programme and provider mobility .....	36
Table 2.1. Types of cross-border education activities .....	51
Table 2.2. Participation in education by country's level of income: enrolment ratios..	69
Table 2.3. Official Development Assistance (ODA) to post-secondary education and education (1995- 2004).....	83
Table 3.1. Considerations in the establishment and reform of systematic quality assurance practices .....	118
Table 3.2. Definitions of quality assurance mechanisms .....	137
Table 3.3. Expected and potential consequences of quality assurance for cross-border tertiary education .....	153
Table 4.1. Examples of higher education services limitations on WTO Members' schedules.....	178

**List of Figures**

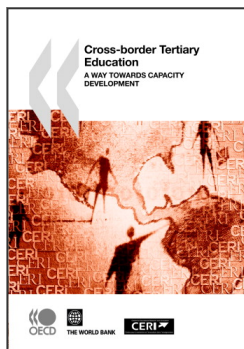
Figure 2.1. Capacity development .....	54
Figure 2.2. Capacity development: a multi-level conceptual framework .....	55
Figure 2.3. An example of capacity-building strategy: trade capacity building .....	61
Figure 2.4. Cross-border education in capacity building .....	65

Figure 2.5. Average enrolment ratio in tertiary education by countries' level of income (2004) .....	67
Figure 2.6. Countries where domestic students enrolled abroad represent over 20% of domestic tertiary education enrolments (%), 2004 .....	75
Figure 2.7a. Countries with more than 20% of tertiary educated people born in the country and expatriated in the OECD area (%) .....	96
Figure 2.7b. Countries with less than 5% of tertiary educated people born in the country and expatriated in the OECD area (%) .....	96
Map 2.1. Percentage of expatriates to OECD countries among all highly skilled born in the country.....	97
Figure 4.1. Gains from liberalisation in goods and services (USD) .....	163
Figure 4.2. Gains from services liberalisation (USD).....	163

### List of Boxes

Box 2.1. OECD Development Aid Committee (DAC) – Guiding principles for sustainable development strategies.....	57
Box 2.2. UNDP's 10 default principles for capacity development.....	58
Box 3.1. Hungary looks to Western Europe .....	113
Box 3.2. Nepal proposal for quality assurance in an environment dominated by a single institution .....	115
Box 3.3. Bangladesh purposes of a newly emerging quality assurance system.....	121
Box 3.4. Consejo Centroamericano de Acreditación (CCA) .....	126
Box 3.5. Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) ...	127
Box 3.6. Tunisia: regulation of private higher education institutions .....	129
Box 3.7. Federación Mexicana de Instituciones Particulares de Educación Superior (FIMPES).....	130
Box 3.8. Quality assurance in Indonesia – reform of a large system to deal with resource constraints .....	133
Box 3.9. Quality assurance in post-conflict Mozambique focuses on institutional development .....	135
Box 3.10. Indonesia – government resources to teacher training institutes to support and encourage self study .....	138
Box 3.11. Brazil's experience with PROVAO and ENADE .....	141
Box 3.12. Sri Lanka builds its quality assurance system from worldwide lessons of experience.....	146
Box 3.13. Vietnam and cross-border quality assurance.....	149
Box 3.14. Cross-border quality assurance: a few examples.....	150
Box 4.1. The gains from liberalising trade in services.....	162
Box 4.2. Mechanisms for achieving equity .....	165
Box 4.3. Quality assurance and accreditation: the case of Malaysia .....	167
Box 4.4. Harmonisation and recognition of academic qualifications in MERCOSUR.	168
Box 4.5. Diaspora networks: the case of South Africa .....	170
Box 4.6. Transparency in higher education systems: the case of Australia.....	171





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