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FE Reputation Strategy Group (FERSG)

- The need to enhance the national reputation of FE was identified in the 2006 FE White Paper and 'World Class Skills' (2007).
- FERSG was formed in November 2007
- Independent sector-led group
- Working to raise the national reputation of FE
- Activities include:
 - Developing a national voice for the sector
 - Disseminating and acting on latest research
 - Identifying and managing reputation 'hotspots'
 - Maximising opportunities to celebrate successes in FE

Members come from sector organisations including:

- Association of Colleges
- 157 Group
- LSIS
- Association of Learning Providers
- Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
- Learning and Skills Network
- Lifelong Learning UK
- Sixth Form Colleges Forum
- YMCA Training
- A variety of colleges
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills

And under review in light of recent changes.....not a closed shop.

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So what does FERSG know about FE and International Reputation?

- A significant number of colleges work internationally (nearly half)
- Individual institutions' reputations are high
- Individual colleges undertake 'reputational' measurement of their work overseas but little international benchmarking goes on
- British training providers work overseas but no visibility on their reputations
- AoC has worked on reputational research in the UK.

What do we know about FE's International work?

- 160 (of 350) Colleges report income from non EU/UK sources
- That income varies from tiny amounts to £4.3m
- Does not include EU income, or migrant workers
- Award winning: Ealing and West Hammersmith: Queen's Award for its International work
- Thousands of international students study at our Colleges

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AoC/DBIS/UKCISA/Scotland's Colleges

- Tracking the International Student Experience at Further Education (FE) Colleges in the UK study was commissioned by the DBIS with support from the Associations of Colleges, UKCISA and Scotland's Colleges
- Examining the expectations and experiences of non-EU students
- 1,542 students at **43 FE Colleges**, 2010 (2011 follow up)
- Good practice/areas for development identified

Key findings re Reputation (2010)

- 87% satisfied or better with college experience
- 87% satisfied with the support given by college over visa application
- 81% satisfied with support from agent
- 51% rated country as more important in choice of where to study, 49% 'the college'
- Why choose UK? 45% opportunity for further study, **41% the reputation of country's education system**
- USA main competitor with UK

Key findings....

- Why choose the college:
 - 97% Quality of Teaching
 - 95% Personal Safety and Security
 - 93% Quality of Research
 - 92% Reputation of Qualification
 - 92% Institute Reputation
- Parents (45%), friends (37%), agent (21%), college website (21%), someone who previously studied (19%) key in choice
- 30% would actively encourage others to apply to an FE college
- 48% if asked would encourage others to apply to an FE college

Follow up in 2011:

- Many of findings similar
- Differences:
 - Satisfaction: 84% in 2011 (87% in 2010)
 - Accommodation cost and living cost satisfaction levels fell
 - Advocacy levels fell
 - Significant differences in reasons for choosing UK (opportunities for further study still very important, reputation of the college fell significantly to 17%)
 - Changes in way students apply with applications directly to college falling (via other colleges rising)
 - FE tends to do slightly worse in some areas re satisfaction than HE (eg learning support)

To improve reputation and advocacy
we need to improve...

- The organisation and smooth running of the course
- Opportunities for work experience/work placements
- Studying with people from other cultures
- The subject area expertise of teachers/supervisors.
- The social activities
- The college's eco-friendly attitude to the environment

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- The welcome received
- (And food and accommodation)
- And the way we use the internet to keep

And....

- Despite US competition, 85% only applied to the UK (because of reputation of education system and opportunities for further study)
- Deciding factors for an individual FE college:
 - Quality of teaching
 - Safety
 - Reputation of the qualification
 - Employability
- BUT how do we compare internationally? Do we know?

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What do we know.....about other providers

- International Student Barometer 2010:
 - 81% either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with UK university life.
 - Since 2009, students are increasingly satisfied with:
 - Language support (up from 77 per cent to 85 per cent satisfaction);
 - Employability (up from 71 per cent to 78 per cent);
 - Standard of teaching (up from 80 per cent to 86 per cent)
 - Multiculturalism (up from 82 per cent to 89 per cent);
 - Worship facilities (up from 76 per cent to 85 per cent);
 - Cost of living (up from 61 per cent to 68 per cent);
 - Visa advice (up from 74 per cent to 81 per cent);

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– UK student satisfaction up eight per cent since 2006

University rankings....

- Universities have a well developed systems for international rankings
- 2011 World Reputation Rankings:
 1. [Harvard University](#) United States
 2. [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) United States
 3. [University of Cambridge](#) United Kingdom
 4. [University of California Berkeley](#) United States
 5. [Stanford University](#) United States
 6. [University of Oxford](#) United Kingdom
 7. [Princeton University](#) United States
 8. [University of Tokyo](#) Japan
 9. [Yale University](#) United States
 10. [California Institute of Technology](#) United States

Also

- Many universities purchase and use independent international student surveys
- You will see many universities using surveys as a clear marketing tool.
- But nothing for similar numbers of FE Colleges.
- Lack of use of student satisfaction in FE as marketing tool – we may be missing a trick?
- And we should focus on the areas important for students using % ratings

And countries influence reputation too...

- British Council has measured whether a country's policies encourage and support international study:
 - Support for study abroad
 - International collaboration
 - Visas
 - Quality control

What did this find?

- United States leader in international education in number of students it attracts (and UK's direct competitor)
- But came sixth in the study
- Top 5 countries are:
 - Germany
 - Australia
 - Britain
 - China
 - Malaysia

Why Germany?

- Provides more courses in English to attract more foreign students
- Subsidises fees, keeping them at the same rate as home students
- Sets a goal of having at least half of all university students spend a year abroad
- Monitors campuses abroad to secure quality
- Has rules which allow foreign students to work in Germany

Clearly then.....

- A country's policies can impact on its reputation for international study
- Universities know where they stand on international reputation
- Plenty of information out there about where and what to study

But....FE is not using the information we have to market our reputation

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What about FE?

- Should we have an FE College ranking system and use this ruthlessly to boost reputation?
- Could we develop and use an international student satisfaction survey to market what we do?
- Could this be an international ranking system?
- Should we systematically survey training providers about their international work?
- What about the education and training provided by the voluntary sector?

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Are we missing opportunities provided by the internet to boost the reputational influence of FE?

I think we should.....

- AoC already acknowledging more needs to be done: *‘Efforts to represent Colleges have to, an important extent, been hampered by a lack of reliable data so we will be conducting a survey on international students; this is an area that HE does better than us currently in portraying the scale of economic and other benefits accruing from international engagement. I think that we need now to position ourselves even more strongly to resist any future challenge to this area of work and, if possible, to secure additional government funding particularly for transnational delivery’.*
- Hence the AoC’s work on an International Kitemark

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I think we should....

- Perhaps this is something the British Council work with AoC to consider?
- Certain aspects individual colleges can quickly take forward....

And other opportunities...

- Work in India – FE's vocational expertise/reputation to good use (AoC working on this)
- FE partnerships between awarding bodies and colleges now the HE landscape is changing....?
- Off the shelf degrees.....branding of 'institute'?
- High levels of student satisfaction (league tables between countries)?

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Thank you for listening – any questions?

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