



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE PROMOTION
OF AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION INTERNATIONALLY

BETWEEN

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST)
The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
The Australian Trade Commission (Austrade)
The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous
Affairs (DIMIA)
The Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR)
The Australian Tourist Commission (ATC)
The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

PREAMBLE

Recognising the Government's intention to strengthen Australia's engagement in international education and training and build Australia's share of international trade, the agencies who are parties to this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will work together to ensure that their policies and programmes that affect the promotion of Australian education internationally are developed and implemented in a coordinated way that supports and enhances the integrity of the industry and its contribution to Australia's economic and social well being.

As a part of the Government's broader action plan for international education, this strengthened engagement will:

- extend Australia's capabilities to generate and apply knowledge;
- underpin Australia's foreign relations and trade;
- increase Australia's exports in education, training and scientific services;
- develop global understanding within Australian society; and
- strengthen Australia's ability to contribute to sustainable development.

PART A – FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide additional impetus to a whole of government approach to international education. The Memorandum complements the Commonwealth's executive policy making arrangements through the Cabinet and the high level Interdepartmental Committee on International Education. This is achieved through:

- clarifying respective roles and responsibilities for the promotion of Australian international education;
- establishing a framework to facilitate cooperation and avoid duplication;
- providing for the most effective use of relevant Commonwealth resources; and
- identifying and addressing priority issues for early attention.

Through the arrangements established under this Memorandum agencies will also contribute to achieving the Government's goals:

- in foreign and trade policy, including to double the number of exporters by 2006;
- to underpin the Government's 10 Year Plan for the development of Australia's tourism industry;
- to at least treble the export earnings and other national income from international education by 2012;
- for the aid programme as set out in the Government's Policy Framework, which includes the development of human capital; and
- to maintain and enhance border protection and integrity of visa programmes.

The objectives and provisions of the MOU will be given effect as agreed herein, including through a number of Country Strategies that will be developed reflecting the principles and agreed priorities. The first of these will be China, as described in Attachment A.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The parties to this Memorandum recognise each other's policy and programme responsibilities and note that in respect of international education

- DEST has the lead role in international education policy development and, as chair of the Inter Departmental Committee (IDC) on International Education, coordination of promotion effort. These responsibilities include promotion of Australian education, science and training through AEI – The Australian Government International Education Network, supporting the education export industry, and government to government education cooperation and (in cooperation with States and Territories) quality assurance of education and training, the regulation of international education providers, qualifications recognition, and consumer protection for overseas students.
- DFAT has the lead role in pursuing an integrated, multilateral, regional and bilateral approach to education issues in foreign and trade policy, and coordinating government effort at overseas posts.
- DIMIA has the lead role in regulating the entry of students and trainees to Australia; managing the student visa programme and the skilled migration programme; and developing visa products in response to international education demands. This includes provisions under the *Migration Act* that complement provisions of the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act* to exclude non-genuine students and providers from the industry.
- DITR has the lead role in developing and implementing Commonwealth policy for the tourism sector. This includes initiatives that support a stronger, sustainable and internationally competitive tourism industry and that reinforce the positive linkages between tourism and international students.
- Austrade has the lead role as the Commonwealth's general export promotion agency in coordinating and advising on the development of export programmes. Austrade helps Australian companies and education providers win overseas business for their products and services by providing practical advice, market intelligence and ongoing support.
- The ATC has the lead role in the overseas promotion of Australia as a tourist destination and facilitating the targeting of promotional messages by industry sectors within the broader promotional campaign.
- AusAID has the lead role in the development and implementation of overseas aid policy and programmes. Services of Australian education and training providers are used widely within country assistance programmes.

SHARED PRIORITIES

The initial priority areas of the Memorandum are:

1. quality of services – recognising that improved regulation of the industry onshore and offshore is critical to ensuring Australia's reputation as a quality study destination;
2. coordinated promotion – aiming to increase awareness of Australia as a sophisticated, technologically advanced and innovative nation with particular strengths in fields of scientific research and development; and
3. sustainable growth in education exports – through diversification of demand (by country and level and field of study), enhancing the integrity of Australia's migration programme, and further expansion of offshore delivery.

COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

All parties agree to build cooperative working relationships through:

- consulting at an early stage on policy initiatives and programme changes that would affect the international education industry and business opportunities for Australian providers of education, training and scientific services;
- taking into account immigration risk when determining priority markets and marketing strategies relating to study in Australia;
- sharing market intelligence;
- providing advance notice to other agencies and where relevant to the industry of routine administrative changes or portfolio announcements of interest; and
- working together to produce complementary outcomes in priority areas.

To facilitate an integrated approach to the development of strategies for international education in major markets and regions, DEST undertakes to:

- consult all parties in developing a three year strategic plan for AEI; and
- invite other parties to contribute to the country strategies it develops on a rolling three year basis.

All parties agree to work together in the following areas:

- research on market trends and developments;
- trade promotion, including working collaboratively on trade exhibitions and in the area of study tourism, and supporting Australia's commercial and cultural interests;
- public awareness campaigns relating to exports;
- sharing of information about international education, particularly through a whole of government approach in priority markets;
- sharing of information at an early stage about Australian contributions to capacity building in other countries, so as to enable Australian businesses to participate; and
- linking of websites.

In addition to the provisions of this Memorandum, primary mechanisms for cooperation will be:

- the IDC on International Education and Training (Chaired by DEST);
- the industry working group on student visas (Chaired by DIMIA);
- the industry working group on international education (Chaired by DEST);
- a global agreement between Austrade and AEI on support to education and training exporters;
- a whole of post approach led by DFAT;
- a service level agreement for management services between DEST and DFAT; and
- regular bilateral discussions.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Progress reports on the actions arising under this Memorandum will be a standing item for the IDC on International Education.

Secretaries and agency heads will report progress to Ministers as part of reporting progress on the Government's action plan for the industry.

PART B - ACTION RELATING TO IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES

QUALITY OF SERVICES

Quality assurance for education and training is provided by the education portfolios of the Commonwealth and the States and Territories through a variety of course and provider accreditation and registration arrangements, performance benchmarking and audit provisions, and specific legislation governing providers of services to overseas students. These arrangements are continuously refined and improved to ensure that students receive high quality education and training. For education/training services provided to overseas students in Australia, the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000* regulates providers. The *Migration Act 1958* includes provisions to regulate the entry of students into Australia. Regulation of the industry offshore requires attention.

To attract the top students from overseas, AEI and Austrade have been actively promoting Australia as a quality study destination and an alternative to the prestige markets in the United States and the United Kingdom.

To further strengthen the quality of Australia's engagement in international education the following action is agreed:

- DEST will carry out in consultation with relevant stakeholders a review of quality assurance arrangements governing international education, both onshore and offshore, and take early action, where this would not pre-empt the review, to strengthen enforcement of the current provisions of the ESOS Act;
- DEST and DIMIA will work closely together to increase the effectiveness of relevant enforcement provisions of the Migration Act and the ESOS Act where these intersect, particularly where exchange of information is required to achieve compliance;
- DFAT will promote Australia as world leader in providing quality education and training through its contacts and trade and cultural promotion events;
- Austrade will continue to provide general export advice to the industry including education specific marketing advice (eg advice on agent promotional materials suitable for particular markets) to complement DEST and DIMIA activities to inform market intermediaries.

COORDINATED PROMOTION

Promotion of Australia as a quality study destination needs to take account of the nature of education and training and the spending decisions being made by families and individuals to invest significant resources in developing critical thinking skills and their ability to engage in the labour market. It also needs to take account of the needs of business. Promotional activities also need to have regard for the level of immigration risk evident in specific markets.

Australia has a unique and highly valued approach to education that places strong emphasis on creativity and independent thinking. It also has world leading strengths

in particular fields of study and research and innovation. The public sector quality assurance arrangements that underpin this are foremost in the minds of consumers seeking reassurance that their resources will be wisely invested.

It is vital that all relevant promotional messages convey to target markets this emphasis on a quality education underpinned by government regulation and quality assurance arrangements. To strengthen the harmonisation of messages in international markets the parties agree:

- to use the AEI-developed brand for Australian education and training in all promotional/marketing material directed at students;
- to build on Australia's tourism promotion to portray a multi dimensional image of Australia as a sophisticated and technologically advanced nation that leads the world in particular areas;
- that all portfolios will look for opportunities for their Ministers to include a focus on education in their overseas visits;
- AEI, DIMIA, Austrade and the ATC will work together to develop the study tourism market by developing a strategy to integrate education promotion with general tourism promotion, with regard for the level of immigration risk evident in specific markets;
- that Austrade will maintain lead responsibility for exhibitions overseas with support or joint staging from AEI where possible. AEI and Austrade will establish a principle for sharing of revenue reflecting each agency's input as part of their global agreement on services;
- DEST will support the work of other agencies through the vAEC to which all posts can connect. The vAEC includes foreign language translations. DEST will consult other agencies on future priorities for translation;
- DEST will provide to other agencies any promotional material they might require for exhibitions and other activities, under a cost recovery arrangement where necessary; and
- DFAT will facilitate and coordinate generic promotion of Australia as a study destination and exporter of services at posts where DEST does not have a presence.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF EDUCATION EXPORTS

Australia is well placed to build a progressively stronger share of the global market. It is already one of the top world leaders, third behind the United States and the United Kingdom.

With demand exceeding supply for the foreseeable future in the international education market it is easy for a country to rapidly grow its industry. Historical experience internationally, however, suggests that too rapid engagement can disrupt supply capacity and bring higher levels of non-compliance with migration regulations. Steady sustainable growth is in the interests of the industry and the broader community.

To facilitate sustainable growth of education and training exports the parties agree:

- DEST will analyse supply constraints and develop growth estimates for the sector in consultation with the industry to ensure that planning takes account of the opportunities and risks in the market;

- DFAT will continue to lead efforts to improve market access for Australian education providers through integrated, multilateral, regional and bilateral approaches to trade policy and related activities at posts;
- DEST and Austrade will support the industry's promotion efforts overseas as follows:
 - DEST will have the lead role in markets where both have a presence;
 - Austrade will have the lead role elsewhere;
 - Where neither agency has a presence, DEST and Austrade will consult and agree on any initiative to establish a presence;
 - Services for which the industry is charged will be provided under consistent charging regimes; and
 - Overlap and duplication will be avoided through the provisions of the global agreement on services;
- DIMIA will work with other agencies and the industry to ensure that, as far as possible, visa regulations facilitate the entry of genuine students while preventing the entry of non-genuine students
 - The principal mechanisms for this will be the industry working groups chaired by DIMIA and DEST and comprising industry representation through the Affiliation of International Education Peak Bodies (AIEPB);
- A common approach will be developed, coordinated by DEST, to the use of market indicators and the supply of market indicator data for analysis and for the industry, including the ability to closely monitor the impact in the market of any significant policy changes; and
- AusAID will consult with other agencies on significant education and training policy initiatives for Australia's aid programme and major country programme strategy papers with an education and training component, and advise the industry on business opportunities for Australian education and training providers and providers of education, training and scientific services.

SIGNATURE PAGE

This MoU commences on 1 August 2003, notwithstanding the signature dates. This MoU in its present form will remain in effect unless the parties mutually agree, in writing, to vary or terminate the MoU. An individual party may terminate their agreement to the MoU by providing written notice to the other parties.

The original of this MoU will be retained by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) with copies made available to all signatories.

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth **Department of
Education, Science and Training** by:

[signed 14/7/2003]

_____/___/___
Dr Jeff Harmer
Secretary

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth **Department of Foreign
Affairs and Trade** by:

[signed 25/7/2003]

_____/___/___
Dr Ashton Calvert
Secretary

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth **Department of
Immigration and Multicultural and
Indigenous Affairs** by:

[signed 31/7/2003]

_____/___/___
Mr Bill Farmer
Secretary

Signed for and on behalf of the
Commonwealth **Department of Industry,
Tourism and Resources** by:

[signed 15/8/2003]

_____/___/___
Mr Mark Paterson
Secretary

Signed for and on behalf of the **Australian
Trade Commission** by:

[signed 6/8/2003]

_____/___/___
Mr Peter O'Byrne
Managing Director

Signed for and on behalf of the **Australian
Tourist Commission** by:

[signed 8/8/2003]

_____/___/___
Mr Ken Boundy
Managing Director

Signed for and on behalf of the **Australian
Agency for International Development**
by:

[signed 31/7/2003]

_____/___/___
Mr Bruce Davis
Director General

Draft Model for a China Country Strategy

Rationale:

Under this MOU, DEST is committed to developing a three year strategic plan for AEI and related country strategies. A whole-of-government approach to aligning programmes and resources in key priority markets will support the objectives of the Australian international education industry, promote a consistent message overseas about Australia and its strengths, and have important benefits for the development of Australia's economic, trade and broader bilateral relations interests.

In 2000 China was the fifth ranked source country for international students in Australia and became the leading provider of new international students to Australia in 2001. China is also a key trade and economic partner for Australia and has become a major source of inbound tourism. China's accession to the WTO, the selection of Australia as supplier for the Guangdong pilot LNG project and formal agreement in May 2002 to negotiate a Trade and Economic Framework Agreement provide broad scope for mutually beneficial partnerships between Australia and China.

Aim:

- To optimise the use of existing and future programmes across government to achieve market access and development objectives for Australian international education in China.
- To use the cooperation between government departments and agencies in the context of negotiations for a *Framework Agreement to Enhance the Economic and Trade Relationship between Australia and China* to advance Australian interests in China through information sharing and coordination of programmes.

Action:

- DEST will produce a three year strategic plan for AEI with state and territory government and industry input; and develop a country strategy for the promotion and development of Australian international education in China in consultation with MOU signatories
- DEST and DFAT will convene jointly a working group comprising MOU signatories, under the auspices of the negotiations for a *Framework Agreement to Enhance the Economic and Trade Relationship Between Australia and China*, to share information about current and proposed activities in China of the respective Australian agencies relevant to DEST's objectives for development of the market for Australian international education.
- As far as possible, DEST will also bring to the working group's consideration of whole of government activities in China, information about possible complementary activities of relevant state and territory authorities in the field of international education and the international education industry.
- The principal focus of the working group will be the identification of areas for cooperation between agencies designed to help Australian business, including the international education industry, take advantage of emerging opportunities in China.