



## The international higher education revolution: Impacts on mobility, qualifications, networks

Senate House, University of London  
11 December 2013

Regent's University London  
12 December 2013

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This conference takes as its starting point current developments in online learning and explores questions on how they may impact on three aspects of international higher education: student mobility, how qualifications are gained, and international networks.

Even before MOOCs, students could pick from courses for which degree credit was awarded by a different institution. And the manner in which MOOCs are now being adapted for credit will have implications for the volume and patterns of international student mobility and the acquisition of qualifications. Both of these developments will impact on the formation of international alliances and networks.

**Sir Michael Barber**, Chief Education Advisor at Pearson, will deliver a keynote lecture on the evening of 11 December. **Rt Hon David Willetts MP**, Minister for Universities & Science, Government of UK, will give the morning keynote on 12 December. Our closing keynote presenter is **Professor Nigel Thrift**, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Warwick.

Speakers include **Conrad Bird** (Foreign Office & GREAT Britain Campaign), **David Black** (Google UK), **Professor Sir Drummond Bone** (Balliol College, Oxford), **Sam Brenton** (Academic Partnerships), **Carolyn Campbell** (QAA), **Professor Aldwyn Cooper** (Regent's University), **Eva Egron-Polak** (IAU), **Dr Stephan Geifes** (DAAD), **Tim Gore OBE** (University of London International Programmes), **Dr Joe Hong** (HKCAAVQ), **Mark Jaynes** (OC&C Consultants), **Dr Fernando León-García** (CETYS University, Mexico), **Professor Dato' Hassan Said** (Taylor's University, Malaysia), and **Dirk van Damme** (OECD).

The day will run as follows:

### **Senate House, University of London**

18:00-20:30, 11 December      Sir Michael Barber keynote lecture  
Google/OC&C Strategy Consultants research results  
Drinks and canapés

### **Regent's University London**

09:00-17:00, 12 December      Full day conference, Herringham Hall  
17:00-18:30, 12 December      Wine reception, The Knapp Gallery

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The three themes are unwrapped below. Join us as we debate these topographies of change!

#### **A. The shape and level of student mobility**

With the increase in domestic education capacities in some emerging economies and the spread of online and distance learning, will there be fewer reasons for students to travel in order to receive the education they want?

Or will the online revolution act as a driver for future mobility? MOOCs are being used by universities as recruitment tools for traditional degree courses. Some university leaders say this will enable them to tap new markets.

What kind of mobility will we see? Are current global patterns likely to remain much the same over the next two decades, as those who can afford it continue to travel to be taught at high-ranking research institutions? Or perhaps there will be an explosion of intra-regional pathways, as students travel closer to home for bespoke qualifications designed to fill local and regional skills gaps.

Recruitment agents are mediators of mobility. How would less global mobility affect them? How will they reinvent themselves and how will universities and students engage them? Perhaps they will be service providers and facilitators for new markets.

#### **B. The acquisition of qualifications**

University degrees have been awarded since medieval times. Other types of qualifications exist but not many in higher education. Is this set to change? The premise here is that private companies are already driving the 'unbundling' of higher education provision from accreditation. It does not mean the unravelling of higher education. It means the rise of alternative and parallel provision pathways which may have relevance for a greater diversity of students in more parts of the world.

What will alternative qualifications look like? If bachelor's degrees are superseded by skills-based qualifications that are recognised by both governments and employers, will the lines between HE, FE and vocational education fade? In which disciplines will this first emerge? If courses are offered by private-sector providers in different countries, which national authorities will recognise multinational qualifications? Which will be in the vanguard of setting national accreditation standards? Which will publicly fund them through grants and loans?

#### **C. Impacts on HE partnerships and networks**

Mobility patterns may become more fragmented and localised. Unbundling is likewise a manifestation of fragmentation of business models. To what extent will these phenomena impact on how and why universities project themselves internationally? The emergence of international branch operations in niche disciplines is already underway. International networks can go the same way: will there be a shift to partnerships based on niche learning networks rather than groupings built on geography, political jurisdictions or research strength?

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### *Venues*

Beveridge Hall, Senate House, University of London, Russell Square, London WC1E 7HU  
Herringham Hall, Regent's University London, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4NS

### *Prices*

Observatory Members	£475
Non-members	£575

[Click here to register online](#)      *More information:* [info@obhe.ac.uk](mailto:info@obhe.ac.uk)