Is the key to HE success developing internal capabilities in Expectation Management? (0321)
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Higher Education (HE) employees may have seen the proliferation of articles in popular magazines, newspapers and academic journals over the last 20 years stating what Higher Education Institutions (HEI) leaders need to implement or change in their institutions to survive. This along with the growth in accreditation bodies, new accreditations standards and more sophisticated league tables could suggest that the market where UK HEIs operate have increased in complexity and volatility. Molesworth, Nizon and Scullion (2009) describes the marketization of higher education, where students seeking to have a degree rather than be learners, the development of a consumer culture, vocational qualifications and the drive for HEIs to link closely to businesses present challenges for academics who strive to transform scholars into critical thinkers. However, the Government continues to encourage collaborations with business through the commissioning of research and funding through the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) examples have included collaboration between SME's and universities (HEFCE 2015) and the impact of the Higher Education Innovation funding value of student enterprises and student start-ups and spin-out from English HEIs (HEFCE 2015). Molesworth, Nizon and Scullion (2009)   outlines how marketization has resulted in the transfer of education costs from the tax payer to students but how the Government continues to heavily regulate HEIs through the introduction for tuition fee bands, a student loan scheme, encouraging HEIs to financially support the 'widening participation' agenda and the requirement for more transparency from HEIs through the collection and publication of 'key information set' data to inform prospective students. The

responsibility and accountability of universities as the relationship with various stakeholders has changed. UK universities are now required to educate a larger numbers of students with a much wider array of educational and social backgrounds and who have significantly different expectations and needs to those who experienced the university educational process some 20 or 30 years ago (Estermann & Nokkola 2009). Students, their parents, and employers are increasingly vocal in relation to what they expect to be both the student experience and the end product of University education. The numbers of PGT (Postgraduate Taught) Home students has been declining in the UK and the introduction of tuition fees at Undergraduate level has changed the nature of the expectations held by English students and their parents and it is expected will detrimentally impact on numbers. Consequently UK HEIs are increasingly dependent on attracting significant numbers of overseas students to postgraduate courses. These students are expecting a high quality *UK* university experience and appropriate levels of support to settle into the UK.

Each set of expectations is important but they are not always compatible, clearly articulated or measured in terms which are realistic from a university's point of view. In recent years the focus has very much been on the Undergraduate (UG) market with the result that our understanding of the PGT market is more limited, under researched and does not benefit from the depth of detailed data available nationally on UG. Using empirical data this paper will present the findings from a project which mapped the expectations of various stakeholder groups towards postgraduate studies in HE and identified mismatches of expectation.

The data collection process for the study invited all postgraduate students full and part-time to take part in a series of focus groups and through discussions on a dedicated website. Course Directors, because of their involvement in designing postgraduate courses, coordinating a team of postgraduate tutors and dealing with students were invited for one to one interviews. A dedicated website was also designed for all staff to post their views on the development of postgraduate education at the University. Employers were invited for one to one interviews and where possible some employers were invited to take part in focus groups. The questions designed for the data collection process explored areas such as the needs of postgraduate students, the needs of the growing international postgraduate market, grow the home/EU student market, establish from the University staff their needs and difficulties in providing a quality service for postgraduate students, establish what employers are looking for from postgraduate students, what universities need to do, to provide good postgraduate students work-ready for industry and whether there is a distinction in organisations between postgraduate and undergraduate students for example in pay and promotion. Across all groups we consider the nature of mismatches and the reasons they occur. The findings illustrate the role expectations play both before and after enrolment and suggest that expectation management is an underexplored area that deserves more attention if universities are to satisfy, or at least understand, their stakeholders.

There is little in the literature in relation to HEIs and the mismatch of expectations. There is research and literature in fields relating to service quality and customer satisfaction, where for example Miller (2000) identified customer dissatisfaction with new information systems and stated that the answer may lie in how satisfaction is

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defined. Miller (200) goes on to outline that expectations are both explicit and implicit. There is some limited information in the management and marketing literature on expectation management practices to support customer satisfaction and increase competitiveness but there seems to be little establishing and defining the concept. Yet, as the empirical data presented in this paper will illustrate this has the potential to be a fruitful area to inform practice in HEIs which could assist. HE institutions to position their resources and develop capabilities that enable them to fully understand the expectations of its stakeholders and so improve their competitiveness and performance in the HE market.

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