



# Report sets out benefits and pitfalls of international partnerships



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By [Sarah Cunnane](#)

**The higher education sector in the UK is undergoing “a strategic shift” in the way it thinks about internationalisation, according to a report published today.**

*A Guide to UK Higher Education and Partnerships for Overseas Universities*, published by the UK HE International and Europe Unit, claims that increasing competition for students worldwide has caused a shift “away from a focus on international student recruitment and toward a longer-term and more partnership-based conceptualisation of internationalisation”.

Because of this change, the report says, UK institutions should be more prepared to work with international partners rather than going it alone overseas.

It identifies a number of benefits of such links, such as the contextual knowledge that local partners can supply on regulatory structures within a country.

“It is always easier [to do business overseas] if one has advice and guidance from local partners who understand from the inside what is required,” the report states.

It cites the University of Nottingham’s Ningbo campus in China as an example of a successful international venture that has benefited from being a joint venture.

The report also says that UK institutions have to ensure that their international partners are fully briefed about the way the sector operates at home.

It warns, for example, that unless they are forewarned, partners “may easily be offended” by the quality assurance measures required in the UK.

It adds that misunderstandings are best avoided by being absolutely clear about the nature and parameters of any partnership. “Setting realistic goals understanding what is expected from both sides will avoid confusion down the line,” it states.

The report also says that collaborations should be entered into with an assumption that there will be “some shared financial risk”.