



Country Brief – Malaysia

Onshore and offshore enrolments

With Australian enrolments of Malaysian students at 21,587* and enrolments in Malaysia, of students in Australian programs at around the same number, transnational education continues to be a distinguishing feature of the education landscape in Malaysia – dominating the higher education policy agenda and fundamentally changing Australia's engagement in this traditional student source country.

Tightening of regulation for the private higher education sector

The Malaysian Government is tightening regulation for private higher education institutions after a period of rapid expansion. Earlier this month, the Ministry of Higher Education formalised its policy on the establishment of new partnerships and announced no new private colleges will be permitted to set up for the next two years, and no new university branch campuses will be approved unless they involve a university with an international reputation. Information from the Ministry is that the international reputation refers to standing within the Top 100 listing in reputable international rankings.

This tightening follows the announcement of Xiamen University as the newest entrant to the competitive private sector education market. Several other branch campus university applications are currently under consideration by the Malaysian Government and are not affected by the current prohibition. With the commencement of the first cohort of students at Herriot-Watt University Malaysia in a MBA program, and the Universities of Reading and Southampton also commencing operation in the southern state of Johor, the transnational education sector will continue to add domestic capacity and reduce local demand for international study destinations.

The Minister of Higher Education also announced a review of nine private education institutions based on concerns about quality. The review is expected to be concluded by the end of March. For more information go to www.aei.gov.au.

Policy initiatives: New Code of Practice for Open and Distance Learning

The MOOCs phenomenon has not yet resonated in Malaysia although regulators are now acknowledging traditional distance learning methods and have issued a new Code of Practice for distance learning has been released. See www.aei.gov.au/malaysia.

Policy initiative: Blueprint for school education

With three reviews in 10 years all highlighting the loss of capability in the Malaysian school education system, the most recently released review, the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 identifies no new significant policy initiatives. The Blueprint highlights Malaysia's PISA and TIMSS results, and proposes a range of strategies (consistent with those proposed internationally in similar reviews) including establishing teaching as a high prestige profession and entrepreneurial and developed school management. It is expected that after the Malaysian national election, imminent but not yet called, English language training and school management and executive development are likely to be the focus areas for Government funding.

Science and Research

The Malaysian Government continues to invest in science and research: In 2013, 1 billion MYR is allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education university research grants scheme alone. Malaysia's GERD has continued to grow from 2.6 to 3.3 over the past three years, with further growth forecast. Criteria for the award of research grants includes international collaboration, although change within universities, to reduce teaching loads in favour of research time, remains a challenge.

Private sector funded research remains at an embryonic stage.

Student mobility

Balancing student mobility continues to be an area of interest for the Malaysian Government. With the Australian university branch campuses looking to expand mobility offerings and the Malaysian public universities offering a range of short term, often specifically designed programs for international students, there are real opportunities for Australian students to gain some "Asia literacy". In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education has requested several private sector institutions to develop a range of short term mobility programs suitable for international students, including from Australia.

*AEI YTD as at December 2012

Counsellor contact details

Contact details: Louise McSorley Counsellor (Education) Kuala Lumpur Australian High Commission 6 Jalan Yap Kwan Seng 50450 Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA	Phone: +60 3 2146 5604 Fax: +60 3 2145 7807 Email: louise.mcsorley@dfat.gov.au
--	---