

## British Council International Education Services Webinar Q&A

### Market sentiment towards the UK in light of Covid-19 – the evolving perspective from East Asia markets

April 2020

*Has there been any questions regarding online teaching and the loss of student experience?*

We have not included any questions in our surveys about student experience of online teaching, however in our second survey to students in China we have added a question about expectations regarding pricing of an online semester.

*Does Taiwan have a more likely possibility of sending students on summer school programmes in mid-July?*

That will depend on the situation in the UK, one reason why Taiwan has seen a lower number of Covid-19 cases is that they were quick to implement travel restrictions, it remains to be seen when they might be lifted.

*I think BC are working on a second iteration of the China prospective student survey. Do you know when this second iteration will be available? The first was incredibly useful.*

Yes, it will be released within the next couple of weeks.

*I understand that Indonesian scholarships (LPDP) have been frozen for the year 2020? Is this correct?*

The LPDP's new cycle of applications was due to start in late March - it is at the moment on hold and new dates have not been announced as yet. However, the already existing scholarship awardees will continue to benefit from the scholarship.

*In the situation that all is safe in the UK do you think that the Taiwanese students have a more positive sentiment to travel to the UK, rather than the other NE Asia countries mentioned?*

The media coverage of the UK has been quite negative across the region, however the research we've done suggests that once things return to some normality students will still look to go to the UK in the future - i.e. defer not abandon the UK. I think we do need to see the UK squash the curve before students come however.

*For TNE programmes can the BC support with helping to find UK English language and subject-specific lecturers that are residents in China?*

For TNE programmes local partners should be in a position to support on recruitment of academics and teaching staff. It is also important to note that these academic recruitments would need to fulfill Ministry of Education requirements and expectations on high quality foreign teaching resources.

*How is the undergraduate schedule impacted? How will this impact onto Postgraduate entry in the UK?*

For China we do not anticipate much delay in undergraduate exams and results transcripts and certificates. The majority of universities have continued teaching online, so there will not be much catch-up needed. However, where possible, UK universities should try to remain flexible in their deadlines, just in case.

*In all probability, given the difficulty in 'squashing the curve', travel bans, quarantine and other lockdown measures, plus perceptions of the UK etc., is it best to assume few or no international students from East Asia to the UK in 2020?*

For summer school programmes it is best to assume zero from EA for SSP. For universities, many students still have a 'wait and see' approach and so developments in the UK in the next month or so will be critical.

*What were the key words being monitored on Chinese social media?*

We have been monitoring key words related to Covid-19 / UK Education / UK institutions / students in UK etc.

*Re the British Council China Agent survey just undertaken - does it suggest that prospective students do NOT WANT online learning option in term 1 and would rather defer/ take TNE option locally?*

We didn't ask a question as such. Usually in China it's a different market segment of students who decide to study abroad vs TNE. So for those who plan to study abroad, deferral is probably more likely than change to TNE, but given the situation this year, it might be that we will see growth in interests to take up TNE.

*Regarding to September intake, if we have to adopt online deliver option, do you think China MoE accepts it again for the new term?*

If the online delivery is done as part of the course due to Covid-19 (and students then move to the UK for their next term) this is not a problem. However a FULL online degree is not yet recognized in China.

*Will there be another update in the next few weeks?*

Yes, we will run another update for East Asia in four to six weeks. This will be communicated through the British Council International Education Services website and BUILA.

### **Questions for David Thornber – Durham University**

*Have you discounted your online PS offering? If not any pressure from students to do so?*

No, we are focusing on high quality and maximum student contact.

*Are you being optimistic re October intake as normal?*

Yes, there is optimism there – but only if it is safe to do so. There will be the backup plan of an online option.

*What platforms are Durham using for effective online teaching, especially if October proves to be impossible later?*

We have an online system, called DUO, which is already in place, but we are looking at a variety of platforms

*We are also using Password; Password Skills is the version we are using as this mirror all 4 IELTS components.*

We are buying a block of test slots, which are then allocated to students following payment via a portal set up by our Finance office.

*Have your team anticipated the level of deferrals received this year especially from EA? Do you foresee the potentially large number of deferrals will affect the applicants in 2021?*

At the moment our deferral rate has been quite small. We are monitoring the situation, but I am sure this will be tied into how the virus situation develops in the UK

*Did your university inform external stakeholders like UKVI about the extension of the expiry date of IELTS to 2.5 years?*

Admissions worked with our Immigration team to check rules. I believe UKVI have eased up on their requirements given this current situation.