

PMI2 Employability Projects Overview 2009 – 2011

The Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education, commonly referred to as PMI2, is a five year strategy to secure the UK's position as a leader in international education and sustain the managed growth of UK international education, delivered both in the UK and overseas. The strategy comprises four interconnected strands: UK positioning; ensuring the quality of the student experience; strategic partnerships and alliances; and diversification and consolidation of markets. A number of international student 'employability' projects have been, and will continue to be funded through PMI2 over the next couple of years. They are delivered by AGCAS, NASES and a variety of project partners.

Support for students and graduates

The **International Virtual Careers Fairs** were held in 2010/2011 and created shared online meeting spaces for employers, institutions and international students from all over the UK. The first fair specialised in Greater China and South East Asia, the second event in the Asia-Pacific region and the third specialised in India.

During 2009/11 10 HE careers services ran **innovative pilot projects** aimed at developing international alumni networks, workplace contacts, awareness of the labour market in different PMI2 target countries and case studies demonstrating successful employment. Reports from Phase 1 can be downloaded: http://www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/227PMI2-Pilot-Projects-2009-2010

International Graduate Jobs was initially developed by HECSU and The Careers Group, University of London, as an earlier PMI2 project. It includes organisations with vacancies and those likely to offer other forms of education and training such as work experience, internship or voluntary work. It has been enhanced as part of a second PMI2 funded project. In addition to improving the search functionality, the general interface and usability of international graduate jobs it also highlights value added related content: www.prospects.ac.uk/international_graduate_jobs.htm

An additional 6 Guides have been produced by i-graduate in the second phase of this project. Guides on 15 countries are now available for international students and returning graduates as **Starting your career in - Country guides for international students**. As well as providing useful information about the labour market they also contain information about finding and applying for jobs, which sectors are offering the best opportunities, a sample CV and useful information sources. They are available on the NASES website, www.nases.org.uk/countryguides, for students and graduates, and on the AGCAS website, www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/132-Starting-Your-Career-In-Country-Guides-for-International-Students, for practitioners.

The NASES **morethanwork** student website was originally developed as part of PMI2 2007 – 2009. The second phase added a skills tracker and other skills focused materials to help international students understand the distinction between employability and employment, how to develop skills to increase their employability, and case studies of students who found work.
www.nases.org.uk/internationals

Support for careers and employability advisers

A study visit to India took place in February 2010 to enable staff assisting international students to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing international students and graduates in finding employment. The visit resulted in a wealth of information which has been written up into reports with lots of facts and figures obtained through the specific visits to the various organisations, plus the main findings and recommendations. Copies of the report can be downloaded from the AGCAS website: www.agcas.org.uk/agcas_resources/203-India-Visit-A-Report-on-the-AGCAS-and-NASES-PMI2-Visit-to-India

Staff training and development has been an important part of these projects, training courses have been provided to meet the needs of careers and employment advisors in their day to day work with international students.

Specific **FE training events** designed to develop the skills and expertise of employability staff working with international students within the FE sector were delivered by NASES on a regional basis. They were developed following research with NASES members in FE and so targeted at their needs. Training resources are available on the NASES site: www.nases.org.uk/wwistraining



Support for employers

AGCAS has held two **high profile events for employers** aimed primarily at employers unsure of how to recruit international talent, helping them to understand the complex issues around UK immigration and employment legislation and the benefits of employing international graduates. These events also contributed to the international competitiveness of the UK as a destination providing top quality higher education.

In 2009 PMI2 funded CIHE to undertake research with employers to identify the barriers to the employment of international students. The **Global Horizons** report was produced July 2009 and is available on the NASES website www.nases.org.uk/content/index.php?page=193855. **A guide for employers recruiting international students and graduates** was published in 2010 and is available from the British Council website www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-employability.htm

NASES ran an **International Student Language Utilisation** pilot project in the Midlands region to maximise the use of international students' language skills in part-time employment whilst studying in the UK, and to introduce international students to the UK employment sector. This was rolled out to four more regions during 2010/11, and universities worked with local employers and internal contacts. Additional national level agreements were made with organisations such as Podium to help international students use their language skills at LOGG and Paralympics games 2012.

A national competition to identify the **International Student Employee of the Year** was successfully launched by NASES in 2008. The aim of the award is to recognise and promote the contributions and achievements of international students who combine part-time work with their study commitments. Nominations can be submitted by students, employers or job shops, with entries being co-ordinated through institutional job shops. The award was successfully repeated in 2009 and 2010 and is now an established award in the NASES Student Employee of the Year portfolio of awards. www.nases.org.uk/seoty

