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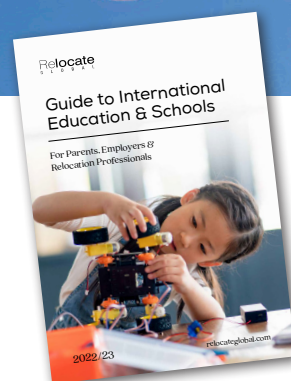
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HOT TOPIC:
Invest in tech to survive & thrive in 2023



HR & GLOBAL MOBILITY:
People first



GLOBAL MOBILITY:
Women on the move



EDUCATION: THE FUTURE OF WORK:
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EDITOR'S LETTER



"Navigating risk will be a core skill to pass on to leadership teams."

As a year ends and another begins promising a fresh start, it is not surprising that many of our readers feel they have been skating on thin ice for too long.

In this issue, we reflect on what we have learnt from the past to help us move more confidently into the future and the changing world of work. Global mobility professionals know about risk. It is part of their DNA. And it seems that navigating risk in the future will be a core skill to pass on to leadership teams.

Employees are certainly looking for more from their working lives as writer Ruth Holmes confirms, having done the round of autumn conferences and dipped into a raft of end-of-year reports and surveys that confirm flexibility is the name of the game.

Take heart from Robert Peston, ITV journalist, on adapting to today's state of permacrisis and geopolitical shifts, which led him to proclaim at the CIPD annual conference "the chaos we are experiencing is genuinely like nothing I have lived through". He also reflected on the role of purpose. "What is really interesting about institutions that succeed is that they know who they are," observing that the companies that do best are those that invest in people, kit and operations in difficult times. He ended on an optimistic note for companies that "can see the downturn happening and can see the upturn coming", joining up the message for people managers and business.

It is timely that the CIPD has published a new Code of Conduct and Ethics, which will be a good starting point for all those leading international teams and across borders. We look forward to hearing your views.

A sustainable future for the planet and economies lies with the young. There is certainly optimism across the education sector from schools that grasp the importance of STEAM to navigate the future world of work. This issue, we are thrilled to share webinars and content created for Autumn's online International Education and Schools' Fair (IESF).

We are also delighted to publish this issue the first phase of the 'International Education & Schools Guide 2022/23'. Pass this on to your international assignees and relocation colleagues. It is packed with advice and country insights to support families on the move. Download more over the coming months.

Fiona Murchie
Managing Editor

Spring 2023 – next issue

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**THINK WOMEN:
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Invest in tech to survive and thrive in 2023

Global companies that maximise their tech options will reap the rewards, finds a new industry report. **Marianne Curphey** explores what is working for leading tech organisations and how international teams are identifying new markets.



In the past, when recession hit companies with a global workforce, leaders were inclined to cut down on spending, with the IT and HR departments hardest hit as managers tried to reduce costs around systems, recruitment and benefits.

The pandemic has changed those parameters, with executives now keenly aware that they cannot skimp on investing in technology and talent. In this new landscape, the companies that will survive are those that are nimble enough to pivot into new opportunities. The key pillars supporting success are agile management, new talent, and sophisticated technology. Managing cashflow, using data to make more strategic business decisions, and employing cloud accounting services to view the balance sheet in real time will all be essential to survival and will become key skills for the chief executive and finance director.

“In the past, the response would be: I’m going to slow down and I’m going to get rid of anything that looks like it requires additional expenditure,” says Barry Brunsman, Principal, CIO Advisory, KPMG. “Spending was deferred to save costs. The 2020 lockdown showed that was not really an option, because you still needed to find a way to reach customers, suppliers and your employees.”

Rather than reducing the spending on technology, smart companies are using the analytics capability that comes with deep data to identify new markets and opportunities and automating time-consuming tasks. KPMG’s Global tech report 2022 identified seven key characteristics of digitally-mature and resilient organisations. These are:

- a commitment to tear down silos so the voice of the employee can be heard between departments
- employing mentoring and providing a wealth of career opportunities across different

departments to help solve the talent crisis

- building airtight alignment between cloud stakeholders and optimising ways of working
- ensuring cyber specialists have early involvement in tech selection and staff education and making cyber security a key part of ongoing staff training
- allowing the voice of the customer to guide emerging-technology strategies and working out whether technology is delivering what the customer wants
- being prepared to switch platform providers to enhance customer experiences
- not being afraid to experiment wisely and have a business model that is flexible and can adapt

The report also found widespread appetite across business for new and emerging technology platforms. Leaders of 67% of businesses expected to embrace emerging platforms such as crypto, the metaverse, Web3, NFTs, quantum computing, VR/AR, 5G, and edge computing within two years. The research revealed that 57% of businesses are engaged in transformation to improve customer experience and 88% of businesses are advanced in their adoption of cloud technologies.

TALENT RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

KPMG’s report highlighted the importance of different departments working together to nurture talent and to ensure ideas can be exchanged readily.

“The talent crisis is not going to resolve itself, especially when it comes to in-demand skills in new and emerging technologies,” the report states.

For technology teams, the short-term challenge is likely to worsen as businesses review their hiring plans to mitigate the impact of economic uncertainty and consider putting a

freeze on new hires.

“Progressive businesses are recalibrating their approaches to hiring and training specialist talent from the ecosystem,” it explains. “Long-term talent strategies should encourage organisations to widen their perspectives and expand the universe of talent.”

As older workers retire, middle managers consider the Great Resignation, and younger employees are attracted to new industries such as technology and FinTech, many companies are struggling to find the right talent to lead and innovate.

There is a talent shortage globally and it is important for companies to identify, attract and retain that talent, says Sim Hall, Founder of Populus Select Recruitment, a headhunting firm.

“Companies are trying to improve and provide counter offers to retain talent via retention programmes and added benefit schemes,” he says. “This has made talent management a more candidate-centric business process and means that there are better packages on offer with a greater emphasis on career progression.”

Employers are also becoming more flexible in the contracts they draw up for staff and prospective candidates, he says. This could mean looking in non-traditional places and considering a wider range of candidates.

“There is a great interest in spotting talent early on and actively promoting a more diverse and balanced shortlist,” he says. “Analysis shows that diversity and inclusion can meet stakeholder targets and promote better business performance.”

There are particular challenges in finance industry due to start-ups and FinTechs offering exciting job opportunities to younger employees.

“Our latest research shows that almost one in five UK finance professionals leave between seven and eleven months into their new

“There is no doubt that those who are using robust and comprehensive data to make rapid, intelligent decisions will be in a stronger position to adapt.”

MARC HUFFMAN,
CEO OF BLACKLINE

job, which is almost 10 percentage points higher than any other country surveyed,” says Anders Fohlin, CFO of Medius, a provider of AP automation and spend management solutions.

“Across the globe, the average tenure in finance teams is 30 months,” he says. “This is a problem, as Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) need to have stable teams when aiming to deal with inflation and the frequent churn of staff impacts on resourcing and continuity of processes.”

USING DATA TO ENHANCE DECISION MAKING

In a global survey of executives and finance and accounting (F&A) professionals commissioned by BlackLine, respondents said the three biggest challenges they will face in the coming year are:

- Increasing regulation and scrutiny
- Being able to provide accurate data quickly enough to help the organization respond to market changes
- Attracting and retaining talent

“Company leaders across the world will be carefully considering how their organisation can respond and remain competitive, agile, and resilient in the coming months,” says Marc Huffman, CEO of Blackline. “There is no doubt that those who are using robust and comprehensive data to make rapid, intelligent decisions will be in a stronger position to adapt.”

However, in the rush to hire new specialists, HR departments should be careful in how they interview and

take on staff, says Daniel Callaghan, CEO of global pre-employment screening platform Veremark.

“We’re largely wise to the benefits of global and mobile access to talent, but are we as wise to the evolving risks?” he asks.

“Companies looking to expand their teams in 2023 should be alert to the growing risk of hiring fraud. Cyber criminals are becoming increasingly more sophisticated in their methods: the FBI has warned of individuals using deepfakes in remote interviews, along with stolen personally identifiable information to apply for positions, and there have been stories circulating of individuals showing up for work who were not those interviewed for the role.”

The best way to mitigate this risk? Tighten up pre-employment screening: first, to make sure candidates are who they say they are and, second, to check they have the skills and experience they claim to have, he says.

UPSILLING STAFF AND MANAGING RISK

Technology can save time and provide real-time insights into new market opportunities, but it can only yield these dividends if the staff understand how to harness and use the data it provides.

“It’s clear to those of us who’ve been in the industry for a long time, that just turning on a new technology doesn’t result in cost savings,” says Barry Brunzman of KPMG. “You also need to change the way that you work with those technologies and how you interpretation the information they provide.”

James Petter, VP & GM, International at Pure Storage, a leading US technology company with a global workforce, says that for global managers and finance directors, 2023 will be the year that risk management becomes a corporate priority.

“Risk management is never far from discussions amongst CFOs and regulatory team, but in the economic climate of 2023, every senior leader, in every organisation, will have risk management front of mind,” he says. “There’ll be a deep assessment of the economics within companies, and their financial structures and technologies.”

He warns that 2023 will not be the year to leave any kind of chink in

the corporate armour.

“I think that while CEOs and CIOs and CFOs will focus on their usual remits, we’ll also see leadership teams that are far better versed in each others’ areas as well,” he says. “There will be truly multi-faceted teams, where each member can appreciate and understand their colleague’s concerns and pressure points too.”

This links into KPMG’s report showing the importance of reducing silos and encouraging employees across different departments to collaborate and innovate.

GETTING VISAS AND EMPLOYMENT TERMS RIGHT

Attracting and retaining talent is also about ensuring that staff are given the support they need to work in the jurisdictions they are assigned to.

Yash Dubal, Director of A Y & J Solicitors says employers with global teams need to pay heed to the immigration and visa requirements in the territories in which they operate and employ people, particularly when they move people between sites in different countries.

“Each country has its own work visa rules and there will be different visa requirements depending on what the employer is travelling to the country to do,” he says. For example, some countries will allow people in for business meetings on standard visitor visas, while others will require a work visa.

“Since the UK left the EU, free movement no longer applies and so UK nationals travelling to work in Europe must also meet the requirements,” he explains. “If, for example, a worker is travelling for business to Spain for up to 90 days in a 180-day period, they may be able to do some work-related things without needing a visa or work permit, such as attending business meetings as these are usually covered by the Schengen visa waiver. If they are going for certain other types of work, they may need a visa, work permit or residence permit.”

Henry Clinton-Davis, Employment Law Partner at Arnold & Porter, adds: “From a UK perspective, an employer can allow an employee to work remotely from overseas, subject to an immigration check to ensure that the employee has the right to work lawfully in the country concerned.”

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GLOBALLY MOBILE EMPLOYEES

Spryker, an ecommerce company which works with companies like Aldi and Toyota to deliver their ecommerce operations, has a fully remote global workforce, employing more than 650 people in more than 30 countries around the world.

People & Culture VP Elise Mueller believes it is vital to tap into local expertise regarding laws and rights, and that being intentional about company culture is important in order for global teams to thrive.

“We employ people in more than 30 countries and can’t possibly hope to understand the local market in each, so it is essential to identify local needs with the help of third-party providers,” she says.

“Local needs do not only refer to the individual needs of employees, which can often be assessed via personal conversations or surveys, but also to the legal framework. These vary not only from country to country but also in some cases within a country, such as the US.

“The use of Employer of Records (EORs) is also vital when expanding globally. These third-party organisations take care of all the labour challenges in a particular country – from drafting contracts and offering the right and market-driven employee benefits (especially healthcare) to labour and tax issues. EORs can help identify local standards in the respective country and make your job much easier.”

Creating a unified, global culture can be challenging, so she suggests that companies introduce central elements of the corporate culture when each new employee joins the company, especially during virtual onboarding.

“Internal comms takes on greater importance with a distributed workforce,” she says. “It must be clearly regulated, transparent, and comprehensible to all. It should include regular surveys among employees, which are central building blocks for ensuring that the culture is accepted, lived and carried forward.”

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GIVING EMPLOYEES A VOICE

Liz Sebag-Montefiore, founder and director of 10Eighty, says technology may make the dispersed, globalised team efficient, but you need to ensure that you look after them properly too, otherwise employees may feel cut off and excluded and productivity will suffer. Her suggestions to keep global teams motivated and connected include:

- Show team members that they share a common purpose and to direct their energy toward strategic corporate goals. Motivate every team member to contribute, to take ownership and accountability.
- Distance amplifies uncertainty, so set and agree clear objectives and targets, and find ways to measure things such as contribution to team effectiveness.
- Promote online networking, perhaps via intranet or sharing platform, so employees who work remotely have an opportunity for social interaction and are not isolated from colleagues in other locations.
- Go online to encourage and cultivate collaboration and knowledge-sharing.
- Evaluate training needs for remote workers, as skills such as time-management, building client and colleague relationships, and maintaining successful work/life boundaries are important in the remote team.

She also suggests that global HR managers schedule regular meetings with dispersed team members, which is particularly for important conversations such as appraisals and reviews. They should think about how to offer opportunities for a remote working team to get together.

“Ensure that out of sight does not mean out of mind; and foster mutual understanding by promoting interaction,” she says. “If you want your employees to engage with the organisation, then you have to engage with them. An employee-centred approach will make a big difference.”

UK IMMIGRATION POLICY ON ICE: WILL IT SEE A SPRING THAW?

As the first frosts of winter arrived in the UK, so did data from the government's statistical bureau that sent a shiver through some: in one year, net migration to Britain had soared to more than half a million – a figure unprecedented since records began in 1964. **David Sapsted** reports.

The revelation by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that 504,000 more people had arrived from abroad than had left – smashing the previous record of 329,000 in 2015 – only served to intensify a debate over immigration that has divided the country and pitched politicians against business leaders and academics.

True, much of the increase in the year to June was down to a string of exceptional circumstances, notably a surge in the number of foreign students following the lifting of Covid restrictions; the arrival of tens of thousands fleeing the war in Ukraine; and the granting of visas to Afghan refugees and to Hong Kong holders of British National (Overseas) passports.

Yet, regardless of these one-off elements, the net migration total sent tremors through Downing Street. It appeared to fear the news would prompt a backlash among the populace, even though surveys have shown the British public are now markedly more sympathetic towards migrants than they were in pre-Brexit days.

POLITICAL REACTION

The immediate political reaction to the ONS figures was for government spokespeople to say Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was considering a plan to clamp down on the number of overseas students coming to the UK by banning those taking “low quality” degrees.

Nobody quite knew what that meant, but it prompted a warning from Professor Brian Bell – the Chair of the government's independent Migration Advisory Committee and an economics professor at King's College, London – to warn that universities could go bankrupt if ministers ever attempted to enact such legislation.

He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: “Most universities for

most courses lose money teaching British students and offset that loss by charging more for international students. If you close down the international route, I'm not sure how the university continues to survive.”

Professor Bell said London, Cambridge and Oxford would do well if overseas students were only allowed to enrol at ‘elite’ universities, but he added: “What about Newcastle, what about the north-east, the north-west, Scotland?”

He pointed out that what the government was contemplating was not just an immigration policy, but also an education policy, as it could lead to a “massive increase” in British students' fees to make up for the loss of foreign students' financial contributions.

Madeleine Sumption, Director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, agreed that political decisions on immigration should not be made as a consequence of the latest ONS figures.

“These unusually high levels of net migration result from a unique set of circumstances following the war in Ukraine and the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis,” she said.

“We cannot assume they represent a ‘new normal’, and it would be rash to take major policy decisions based only on these numbers. Some of the most important contributors to non-EU immigration are not expected to continue indefinitely, such as the arrival of Ukrainians.”

DILEMMAS FOR POLICYMAKERS

Nevertheless, the political rhetoric has continued, with Home Secretary Suella Braverman reportedly objecting to some of the conditions in a hoped-for trade deal with India because they would give businesspeople and students easier access to the UK.

She has even suggested that the nation's “ultimate aspiration”

should be to reduce net migration to below 100,000 a year – a decade-old Conservative Party objective that has repeatedly proved neither viable nor desirable.

Shortly after Ms Braverman – whose parents, incidentally, emigrated from Mauritius and Kenya – outlined her immigration ambitions, the government think-tank, the Office for Budget Responsibility, came out with a revised estimate of net migration of 200,000-plus a year for the foreseeable future. This, in turn, prompted Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt to say immigration “will be very important for the economy”.

Indeed, politicians from Mr Sunak on down have repeatedly paid lip service to the importance of overseas skills to the nation while, simultaneously, calling for immigration to be reduced.

Mr Hunt summed up the government's apparently contradictory position. After saying how important immigration was, he added: “We want to bring down the level of migration that we need, but that means improving the skills of people here in the UK. It's when you start raising the skills of people at home that you don't need so many people to come from overseas.”

And it is not just Conservative Party politicians saying this. Addressing the annual conference of Confederation of British Industry (CBI) in the autumn, Sir Keir Starmer, Leader of the Labour Party, said the economy must be steered away from its “immigration dependency”.

Like his Tory opponents, Sir Keir called on businesses to focus on “investing more in training up workers who are already here”, while adding that a future Labour government would be “pragmatic” over visas for overseas skills and would improve the existing points-based immigration system.

All of which has led to business



“A new government with new officials in key posts presents an opportunity to draw up an immigration policy with fresh ideas that can balance the needs of industry across all sectors.”

LAW FIRM, OSBORNE CLARKE

leaders pulling their hair out at a time when the record number of job vacancies exceeds the number of people registered as unemployed, and when sectors from IT to financial services, engineering to R&D, and truck driving to hospitality are confronting chronic shortages.

BUSINESSES’ VIEW

Companies say they are doing all they can to train new staff and upskill existing workers, but add that none of this will solve the immediate and medium-term labour shortages. The British Chambers of Commerce has repeatedly called for an “urgent” overhaul of the Shortage Occupation List to make it easier for firms to hire overseas talent, while the CBI, the UK’s largest business organisation, warned the government in November that the nation’s growth prospects could only be maintained by an increase in immigration.

Tony Danker, the organisation’s Director-General, described the government’s approach to immigration as a “barrier to growth”, adding: “Let’s be honest

with people: our labour shortages are vast. We have lost hundreds of thousands of people to economic inactivity post Covid. And anyone who thinks they’ll all be back any day now is kidding themselves.

“Secondly, we don’t have enough Brits to go round for the vacancies that exist, and there’s a skills mismatch in any case. And third, believing automation can step in to do the job in most cases is unrealistic.”

Chris Harber, Head of the immigration team at law firm Boyes Turner, points out that at least Mr Sunak had made a commitment in the autumn to ensure that British businesses would have access to the “best and brightest talent” from around the world by creating one of the world’s most attractive visa regimes for entrepreneurs and highly skilled people.

But Mr Harber added: “As with most policy announcements of this nature, the details are sparse. However, we expect that the Home Office will make more detailed announcements in the spring to coincide with the usual updates to the immigration rules that take place in April.”

In an online article, the immigration team at law firm Osborne Clarke said that for many years UK immigration

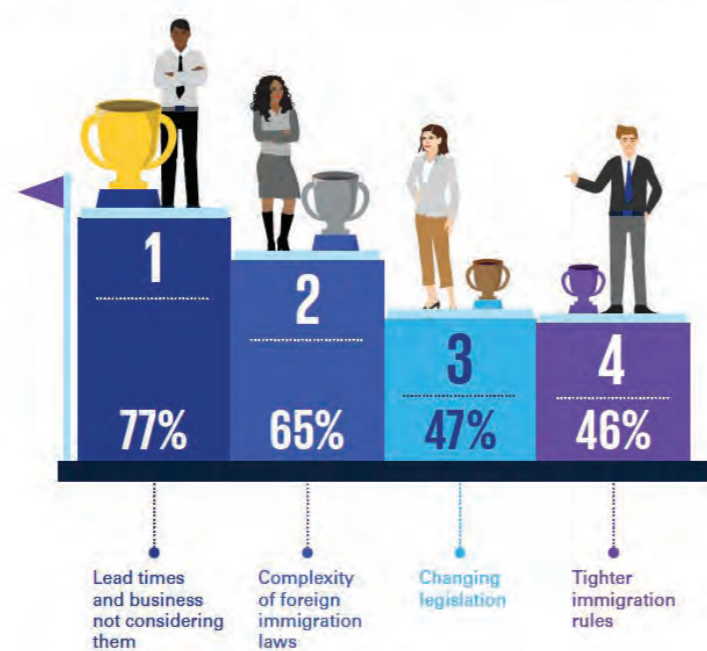
policy had tried to balance the need to attract and support high-skilled international workers with a recognition that there were many roles that traditionally needed to be filled by low-skilled immigrants. One current problem was that the Covid-19 pandemic might have masked the impact of Brexit and the end of access to a large pool of visa-free workers from the EU.

“A new government with new officials in key posts presents an opportunity to draw up an immigration policy with fresh ideas that can balance the needs of industry across all sectors,” the firm said.

“It needs to be borne in mind, however, that the existing government is moving politically to the right and needs to be seen to be managing numbers of immigrants entering the UK. Any policy that is dictated purely by numbers and not incorporating economic and social need runs a risk of being, at best, pointless and, at worst, destructive for economic growth.”

It seems the UK’s great immigration debate has echoes in the words of the late Sydney J Harris, a renowned US journalist and author: “Our dilemma is that we hate change and love it at the same time; what we really want is for things to remain the same but get better.” •

Global Mobility professionals rank the top immigration challenges as:



Note: Respondents chose all answers that applied for their organization. Source: 2022 KPMG Global Assignment Policies and Practices Survey, KPMG International.

Government unveils City rules overhaul

The government has announced a major overhaul of financial regulations to “bolster the competitiveness of the UK as a global financial centre and deliver better outcomes for consumers and businesses”.

Experts said the move, launched by Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt at a conference in Edinburgh on Friday, would abolish many of the regulatory restrictions introduced on banks and other financial services after the 2008 crisis.

‘EASIER TO RELOCATE BANKING STAFF TO UK’

The Treasury in London said the package of more than 30 reforms would reduce crippling bureaucracy faced by the industry and would “turbocharge growth”. One of the main aims of the changes will make it easier for foreign banks and other overseas institutions to relocate staff to the UK. Mr Hunt said: “We are committed to securing the UK’s status as one of the most open, dynamic and competitive financial services hubs in the world.”

He went on to add that the reforms “seize on our Brexit freedoms to deliver an agile and home-grown regulatory regime that works in the interest of British people and our businesses”.

Simon Jack, BBC Business Editor, commented that, in the wake of the financial crisis, a new regime was brought in to increase the personal accountability of senior risk-taking staff.” But City insiders say a major disadvantage it imposes is the lengthy process of getting the movement of senior staff to the UK approved by the regulator – making London less attractive to foreign firms,” he wrote.

WHAT ARE THE EDINBURGH REFORMS?

The government’s package, known as the Edinburgh Reforms, includes plans to consult on a new central bank digital currency; a change in tax rules for investment trusts involved in real estate; reform of rules around short selling; and the trial of a new trading venue that would allow companies to raise money from investors before officially floating shares on the market. In a statement, the Treasury said the existing Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 would be amended to give the Financial Conduct Authority a secondary remit to “facilitate, subject to aligning with relevant international standards, the international competitiveness of the UK economy (including, in particular, the financial services sector)”. Chris Hayward, Policy Chairman at the City of London Corporation, told BBC Radio 4’s Today programme: “This is not about deregulation, this is about growth. We need the help of good growth and good

regulation at the same time – they are two sides of the same coin.”

It’s not a race to the bottom, in my view – it’s a chance to actually grow our economy and I think we should be very excited about it. It’s positive news for financial services.”

BOOSTING UK COMPETITIVENESS

Kay Swinburne, Vice Chair of KPMG UK’s financial services practice, told CNBC that the reforms were a “step closer to making regulation more efficient rather than a race to the bottom”. She added: “While the majority of these reforms have been trailed before, they represent a step towards future-proofing the competitiveness and long-term growth of the UK’s financial services industry while seeking to maintain standards.”

Miles Celic, CEO of the financial services trade body TheCityUK, said: “Boosting the industry’s competitiveness and securing the UK’s position as a world-leading international financial centre is an investment in the nation’s success and in communities across the country.”

This is a comprehensive package of reforms which, if implemented effectively and alongside the Financial Services & Markets Bill, should help boost the UK’s attractiveness as a place for businesses to list, invest, grow and do business. “It’s also positive to see further detail on how the regulators will be expected to help boost growth and promote the international competitiveness of the UK.”

We look forward to working closely with government and regulators to ensure that the wider landscape of financial services regulation is coherent, stable and tailored to Britain’s needs. Ensuring the regulators deliver on their commitment to enhancing operational efficiency will also be crucial.”





People first

Employees are looking for more from their working lives and, as the autumn conference season showed, human resource and general management functions are seizing the opportunity to attract talent. **Ruth Holmes** reports.

The long-discussed trends of demographic change, digitisation and VUCA (the acronym that stands for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous circumstances) have become reality and they demand new approaches to talent management. Perks like concierge services and days off to celebrate birthdays, alongside competitive rewards and benefits, are no longer enough to attract and retain talent.

Post-Covid, employers have a rich mix of options for recruiting and retaining employees with in-demand skills and experience. Staff can return to the office, including hybrid working, and take advantage of new rights to request flexible working from day one. Four-day working weeks are also possible.

As the November conferences for the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) showed, leading employers also recognise the underpinning role of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), environment, social and governance (ESG) and employer value propositions (EVP) in the people and performance equation, as employees seek purposeful organisations that act with integrity.

How employers approach this evolving psychological contract will set the course for success in the coming decade. As broadcaster and journalist Robert Peston pointed out in his keynote in Manchester at the CIPD annual conference and exhibition, “The companies that do best are those that invest in difficult times in people, kit and operations. It’s a bit like Liverpool FC. It sees a downturn happening and can see the upturn coming. There’s always an opportunity.”

Addressing the annual conference of the CBI in Birmingham, director-general Tony Danker also emphasised the importance of the talent agenda to UK wealth and growth, identifying four barriers to growth.

Danker’s core message to government was around immigration and skills, which feature in three of the barriers, alongside regulatory requirements. “Let’s be honest with people: our labour shortages are vast,” says Danker. “We have lost hundreds of thousands of people to economic inactivity post-Covid. And anyone who thinks they’ll all be back any day now is kidding themselves. Secondly, we don’t have enough Brits to go round for the vacancies that exist, and there’s a skills mismatch in any case. And third, believing automation can step in to do the job in most cases is unrealistic.”

While governments spend the winter working out their position on the role of immigration in solving skills and productivity problems, 2022’s conference and report season showed many great examples of how businesses, GM and HR are seizing the moment that these times of challenge bring.

PEOPLE-FIRST APPROACHES

The Covid-19 pandemic catapulted the human resources and general manager functions into the organisational spotlight. People issues are now resolutely top of the agenda. Alongside the CBI's strong message to policymakers this autumn, Hays' 'Salary and Recruiting Trends Guide 2023' surveyed more than 13,000 employers. It found an unprecedented 93% now face skills shortages, with wage increases not enough to counteract the twin threats of the rising cost of living and the "great reconsideration", the phrase used to describe how employees are reassessing the way they work post-Covid.

Simon Winfield, managing director of Hays UK and Ireland, says: "It is a challenging time for employers as they compete to keep up with the rising cost of living for staff, economic uncertainty and an unrelenting battle for talent."

"Although the right salary is crucial, I'd urge employers not to neglect other factors which will attract staff to work with you and, crucially, stay. This includes offering hybrid and flexible working, making sure career progression pathways are clear, and supporting the wellbeing of your workforce."

The CIPD conference highlighted the focus on flexibility and the fact it is a sellers' market for talent. Data from recruitment website Indeed shows an uptick in people searching for jobs, but not urgently, suggesting they are being looking for congruence of values alongside decent pay with their next employer. At the same time, there has been a 44% increase in jobs advertised since March 2020. This emphasises how hard employers are having to work to attract and retain talent.

At international law firm Clifford Chance, the "pandemic was a reminder that we should all be evolving and engaging with our workforce," says global marketing and brand lead Ebun Soyinka, in the CIPD session on building a successful employer brand. "It certainly escalated awareness of younger people being

more than one thing – recognising and setting clear expectations about being multi-hyphenate."

A FOCUS ON FLEXIBILITY

Human resource and general manager functions have increased in visibility and influence due to greater recognition of diverse expectations and needs in the multigenerational workforce and the trend to more hybrid and flexible ways of working.

The past few years have also exposed the value of a multidisciplinary approach when working out more flexible approaches to international assignments. The latest publication in Santa Fe's award-winning Global Mobility Survey (GMS) series asked 11 multinational employers representing over 2 million employees in 24 countries how they are adapting to the new normal of working from anywhere (WFA) and cross-border remote working (CBRW). The functions of business heads (28%), global mobility/HR (17%), HR directors (14%) and boards (10%) all take responsibility for approving CBRW across the sample. The responses highlight the level at which general managers and human resources report, even if they do not take the final decision.

Santa Fe's 2022/23 GMS report (Reshaping Global Mobility – Is it time to think outside the lines?) highlights both these trends: "Overwhelmingly, requests for this work arrangement are employee-driven by a return to their point of origination, extended families or lifestyle," finds the report.

This nexus of HR, GM and organisation development (OD) was the focus of Relocate Global Think Global People's Future of Work Festival in June 2022, see the coverage and video highlights. The festival also discussed two new studies from, KPMG which show how, alongside compliance and global risk management, top of mind for global mobility professionals are responsiveness to business needs, supporting talent management and controlling costs.

"The pandemic proved a high level of flexibility was possible for most of the workforce. Employees like it and

don't want to give it back. If we want those employees to be comfortable and go on the assignments we want to send them on, then we need to be accommodating that need for flexibility," says Marc Burrows, partner at KPMG International and head of global mobility services.

In some industry sectors this more flexible approach to assignments brings added complexity and cost around risk management and compliance, which many employers are not financing by increasing headcount. This is driving more technology adoption, outsourcing and agile practices in global mobility functions. In addition, over the past year global mobility functions have been:

- collaborating with human resources on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, talent planning, and workforce shaping
- contributing to improved organisational ESG goals and practices
- demonstrating to senior management there has been a significant return on investment for talent mobility spend.

"By taking this strategic approach, the global talent mobility function can be recognised as an indispensable partner to the business, playing a critical role in attracting, developing and retaining global talent," says KPMG's International's Global Mobility Services report.

THE CHALLENGES FACING HR

KPMG's latest Future of HR series, 'From Flux to Flow', asked 300 Chief HR Officers what their biggest challenges are. The top four priorities were improving employee experience, and strategic workforce planning (both 57%), improving the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce and building a talent marketplace (46%).

The report highlights mini case studies from multinational "pathfinding" organisations Aegon, AIB, Albertsons, Aviva, bp, Genentech, Microsoft, Ocado Group, Salesforce, Starbucks, Tesco and Tevva. They are preparing for the future by developing their capabilities around areas including strategic flow, making purpose real and prioritising wellbeing.

Echoing the message from the CIPD and CBI conferences that now is the time to innovate, KPMG's report concludes that: "As employees go through Great Reconsideration, there is little time for HR to sit back and hope the company strategy will unfold, and that employees will be happy to keep turning up each day."

"Businesses must show even greater ingenuity," says Tony Danker. "In the past two years you have shown more resilience, imagination, bravery and agility than ever. The bad news is you can't take a break. Greater business ingenuity has to become the new normal."

For those in HR, the closing message from the 2022 CIPD conference was clear. "We are in this time of change, a time of incredible opportunity as well as challenge. What we do in the next three years will be judged more than what we have done in the past ten years. We have never had more influence," says CIPD chief executive Peter Cheese. •

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"Businesses must show even greater ingenuity. In the past two years you have shown more resilience, imagination, bravery and agility than ever. The bad news is you can't take a break. Greater business ingenuity has to become the new normal."

TONY DANKER, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, CBI

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: REDRESSING THE BALANCE

Why are women still seen as less suitable candidates for senior management roles than men? We look at how companies with global employees are missing out on talent by failing to promote women, and how their business may be less successful as a result. **Marianne Curphey** investigates.

The perception of women as leaders has not changed in three years, despite the triumphs of female leaders, their strong stewardship of a number of countries during Covid, and the strategies companies around the globe having been making to ensure senior roles are more accessible and attractive to women.

The Reykjavik Index for Leadership, launched at the Reykjavik Global Forum – Women Leaders, held recently in Iceland, found that there has been no progress in the journey to gender equality for the G7 since 2019. The report highlighted entrenched gender stereotypes regarding men and women in positions of leadership. The report found that the pandemic had a “dramatic impact” on gender equality, and while many women took prominent leadership roles in fighting the pandemic, in medical research, healthcare and government, “deeply rooted views on female leadership are hard to shift”.

The Reykjavik Global Forum – Women Leaders was the fifth time the conference has been held in Iceland. The Index measures the perceived legitimacy of women’s suitability to lead. Unfortunately, the research found that perceptions of female leadership have not changed and demonstrates a wide range of prejudice across a number of sectors and countries.

Gina Lodge, CEO, World View who attended the Forum commented, “The World needs a new style of leadership. Accelerating gender equality at C suite level would optimise the effectiveness of feminine and masculine traits working together in the creation of a better environment and role model for future generations.”

HOW CAN FEMALE LEADERSHIP BE SUPPORTED?

“Despite seeing inspiring leadership from women leaders throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, confidence in women leaders has actually fallen,” says Katya Kim, a Leadership Development Consultant and the Founder of WhizzMind. She spent 14 years in HR and Talent with many multinational pharmaceutical companies, as well as within the retail, tech and fashion industries and now specialises in working with ex-pats.

“Ensuring the flexibility of working positions would also support more women at work,” she says. “The private sector can bring best practices to attract more females into leadership roles. Companies can develop a strategy for strengthening female leadership presence and consider using gender-neutral language in the hiring process.”

She suggests that developing mentorship programmes, educating managers and collecting and analysing data can all be tools to support the promotion of women. Other measures include assessing candidates’ and employees’ experience, collecting data about the number of promotions among females, and educating management teams about taking decisions on promotions.

She says legislation on the Gender Pay Gap has raised awareness around women’s pay and convinced organisations to take action.

“The key thing is not only to submit the data, but also to analyse it, make conclusions, and build a plan for improvement,” she says. “Larger organisations have more policies and strategies in place to reduce the gender pay gap, but SMEs represent about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide. Flexible opportunities for work are also more important for women.”

“The World needs a new style of leadership. Accelerating gender equality at C suite level would optimise the effectiveness of feminine and masculine traits working together in the creation of a better environment and role model for future generations.”

GINA LODGE, CEO, WORLD VIEW



WHY ARE STEREOTYPES OF WOMEN, AND WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP, STILL SO NEGATIVE?

According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the reasons for the gender pay gap are complex and interrelated, and include economic, cultural, societal and educational factors including:

- A lack of flexible working options
- Women being the main providers of unpaid caring responsibilities
- Occupational segregation
- The undervaluing of women's work
- Pay discrimination

"This is very much interrelated to the stereotypes and bias against women," says Katya Kim. "Even if females are promoted to senior roles, do they get enough support in their new roles? Can they see enough men allies among their colleagues? Are they included in team discussions, outside of the office ('men's clubs')? I am sure there are still many organisations who will respond; 'No', unfortunately."

HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS REDRESS THE BALANCE?

Florence Brocklesby is founder of Bellevue Law, a firm for women in professional services seeking advice on discrimination issues. She is a former City lawyer, who founded Bellevue Law in 2014 to allow her to combine a challenging legal career with raising a young family

She believes that a lack of diversity in organisations creates a "vicious circle" where senior managers, who are often male and white, promote men in their own image. Not only does this send a negative message to the women in the organisation, it also means that businesses are missing out on a huge well of female talent that is going unrecognised and unpromoted. She also takes issue with the concept that women in leadership are seen as role models in a way that men are not.

"If you take 100 leaders, some of them will be extraordinary, many of them will be very good, some will be average, and others will be poor. But because there are so few female leaders, they are in a very difficult position. They may be given a role model status that they do not want. She says that some of the issues around the lack of promotion of women could be to do with senior managers carrying unconsciously biased views about the suitability of women or other protected categories of people to become leaders.

Some companies have tried to address this by training staff to be aware of bias or prejudices that they may have, but critics have suggested that this does little to really change thoughts or behaviours. Unconscious bias training has become widely critiqued, she says, because it has become a box-ticking exercise that has not made a significant difference to the culture of organisations and staff who undertake it. Instead, businesses need to actively take steps to increase the number of the women in management roles.

"It is possible to make people aware of their own bias and businesses should actively prioritise that," she says. "By taking active steps, organisations can increase the number of female leaders and it becomes a virtuous circle."

"The more senior women that you have, the more normal it is to have them," she says.

WOMEN LEADERS BRING FRESH PERSPECTIVES AND QUALITIES

Another area where organisations, especially those with global teams or where employees are sent to different jurisdictions on assignment, can make a difference is accommodating the needs of working women.

"The needs of female leaders may be different from the needs of men," she says. "It might be good to think about leadership in your business. If you only have 10% of leaders who are women then you are probably missing out on some really good leaders."

She cites the example of large law firms where there is not necessarily a misogynist culture, and yet senior female managers and equity partners are rare.

"In a City law firm, more than 50% of graduate entries will be female and most people coming out of law school are women, yet those firms have very few senior women. Less than 20% of equity partners are female and the gender pay gap is enormous, even greater than in investment banking," she says.

It is a waste of talent and time for women who have been denied careers and a missed opportunity for companies who could be nurturing a wider range of talent for the future while they are in the middle of a global talent shortage.

She says organisations should think about why talented people are leaving.

"Maybe without realising it, an organisation is making it hard for women to progress. This applies across all kinds of other protected characteristics – for example why are there so few black partners? Why don't we have disabled people advising firms or industries? The talent is there, but it depends on what on what your perception is and what you think a leader looks like."

While it is important not to generalise or to stereotype the qualities that female leaders bring, some characteristics that women in leadership demonstrate are the ability to collaborate and being able to build a more inclusive culture.

PAY AND FLEXIBILITY PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN ATTRACTING WOMEN TO SENIOR ROLES

Sandra Wilson, director, recruitment and HR consultant Cottrell Moore, says that the issues that she sees regularly are when higher earners experience a much larger difference in hourly pay between the sexes compared with lower paid employees.

"Women are usually the ones who require a more flexible working environment and yet in my view often deliver just as much value, if not more, than their male counterparts, sometimes in half the time," she says. "However, in comparison women are reluctant to discuss salary and ask for raises as often. It's evidenced when women apply for jobs. They only apply if they know they tick all the boxes, while men are more likely to take a risk and apply if they only tick half. On a positive note, it looks like females in the younger generation are more confident to address pay, as the stats show over time the gender pay gap is slowly decreasing in the under 40s."

Carla Hoppe, founder, workplace financial wellbeing provider Wealthbrite, says the latest gender pay gap statistics are "shocking".

"Progress appears to be reversing before our eyes. We need to ask what is causing this? McKinsey reported earlier this month that women are leaving jobs in record numbers searching for greater flexibility, inclusivity and meaningful support for their wellbeing," she says. "We also need to talk about childcare costs, parental leave and return to work policies as part of a culture of equality and inclusivity."

Edua Effiom, consultant, HR Consultancy Face2Face HR says these issues need to be higher up on the agenda.

"Obtaining gender pay gap data is the first step to making change," she says. "If you do not know where the problem is, you cannot expect to solve it. The next step is to take action. Are companies recruiting using the same networks? Why not try to recruit from women networking groups such as women in tech or women in construction? Are companies using employee forums to ensure that women have a voice in their businesses? Do companies have policies in place that support women, such as menopause at work? Implementing these steps cost nothing. It is a question of leadership and putting this issue higher up on companies' agendas."

Claire Trachet, Founder and CEO of Trachet, a business advisory firm specialising in helping companies operating the technology, chemicals, infrastructure, healthcare and Natural Resources industries knows that getting a foot in the door of investment banking is hard for women and ethnic minority individuals but is not the only challenge in the sector. After a successful career in investment banking, Claire decided to set up her advisory, Trachet, which also aims to address the inequalities that women and those from ethnic minorities face in the workplace. She was not only shocked by the inaccessibility of the industry, especially for roles with higher seniority but also in the critical issue of unjust pay gaps that existed within these well-established organisations that claim to have very advanced diversity programs. In Investment banking, women make on average, 56% of what their male counterparts earn, at Barclays bank the bonus pay gap stands at a staggering 70% in 2022, up from 66.2% in 2020 which indicates inequality is getting worse.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CAN BOOST BUSINESS RETURNS

A report commissioned by McKinsey & Co called Diversity Wins found that teams with more than 30% female executives were 48% more likely to outperform those with few to no female execs. This is replicated in the case of ethnic and cultural diversity where the companies with the highest ethnic diversity outperformed companies with the least diversity by 36%.

"Social models are still significantly biased against women and minorities," she says. "This is reflected in business by lower salaries, a slower career path, distinct lack of access to C-suite or board positions and both fewer and smaller investments received. There is no chance of reaching a more balanced set of opportunities for women and men without society making conscious choices to start with. Crucially, it is important to note that this is not advocating for the promotion of subpar businesses because they are led by women. It is about giving people a fair shot and owning the fact that biases run deep within businesses and institutions all around the world, including tech!

Accountability and actions are a path to the balancing of opportunities, she says, and women-led businesses regularly outperform other businesses, meaning excess returns for the investors.

"They tend to reach these top echelons of performance in a more capital-efficient way," she says. On top of this, businesses led by women tend to be less volatile during crises. Female entrepreneurs also tend to build businesses that are more diverse, hence the added creativity in problem-solving, and have increased capacity to attract and retain talent in this era of the "great resignation."

There is still a long way to go before the recruitment and promotion process and the composition of the boardroom, truly reflects the diversity of talent within organisations. Globally mobile employees, who have access and exposure to many cultures and experiences, are among the best placed to start to understand the benefits that diversity and inclusion provide. Employers with global teams now need to look again at their recruitment and talent pipelines to identify areas where female and minority staff can be supported and encouraged, and their voices heard. Then we can start to make progress towards a world where female leadership is the norm, rather than an anomaly. ◉

THINK WOMEN 2023

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The whole story

Intersectionality means considering everything that can marginalise an employee from sex and gender to race and class. **Dr Sue Shortland** explains why employers need to consider it when making international assignment and recruitment decisions.

Over the past several decades there has been a focus both within practitioner and academic research on increasing women's participation in international assignments and much has been published on this topic. More recently, however, attention has focused on widening diversity within expatriation more generally. The main focus has been on the participation of LGBT expatriates with both practitioner and academic research exploring this issue. Other aspects of diversity, however, have received scant attention – there is very little published to provide guidance for global mobility professionals on the deployment of, for example, racial and ethnic minority expatriates, disabled expatriates, and different religious groups.

Diversity celebrates difference and the business case presents a strong argument for incorporating different

individual characteristics within the expatriate profile. Managing diversity is not a straightforward task though – it requires understanding of different perspectives and the potential to manage conflicts resulting from these. Nonetheless, recognition of the positive benefits that flow from a diverse international workforce is considered to be a valuable objective within the talent management agenda.

INCREASING FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The global mobility industry has begun to focus more strongly on increasing diversity since the pandemic. This may have resulted from the ability of minority groups to participate in virtual assignments during the pandemic period whereas previously they may have been precluded from undertaking international mobility due to their personal circumstances. As such, we are now seeing more working groups taking place and research being published into international assignment diversity. Of course, it is important to remember that diversity concerns a statistical base. Through this organisations are able to record and monitor the profiles of their mobile populations. Diversity though is not enough in itself – inclusion is required if individuals are to be listened to and their contributions valued.

One of the key problems in terms of researching and delivering interventions to promote diversity concerns its very nature. Diversity concerns difference and, as such, with everybody being different how can diversity statistics reflect the combination of attributes held by each individual? Here lies the importance of considering intersectionality.

INTERSECTIONALITY THEORY

Intersectionality theory dates back to the late 1980s and the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw. Working in a legal academic context, Crenshaw's work draws attention to the experiences of women of colour in the US workplace. Equal opportunities legislation provided a framework for interventions to avoid discrimination on grounds of sex and also on grounds of race but, as Crenshaw argues, the legislation responded to one or other of these characteristics, women of colour were marginalised as a result. In essence, the intersectionality of race and sex resulted in the subordination of black women in the workplace.

Intersectionality theory is helpful to us in that it highlights the effects of the interplay of various aspects of a person's identity and how these result in social outcomes. The many aspects of an individual's identity combine to produce a set of circumstances greater than the sum of their parts. Thus, when we consider the diversity of an expatriate population, by looking solely at gender or race or sexual orientation, we effectively ignore the effect of the combination of these factors. Hence, intersectionality theory predicts that gay black women, for example, will experience outcomes in the workplace and the societies to which they are assigned differently from individuals with other combinations of identity characteristics. Thus, although equality legislation addresses protected characteristics and HR and global mobility professionals must be mindful to ensure that they do not breach these legal directives, to ensure full benefit from diversity and inclusion, they need to be mindful of the consequences of the intersection of these different protected characteristics.

Intersectionality theory emphasises disadvantage at the individual level as well as within organisations and societies more generally. The flipside of this is that it also emphasises power and privilege for those in the upper echelons of organisations and societies. Here it is useful to consider the value of upper echelon theory in predicting outcomes for diversity within employee groups such as within international assignee populations.

UPPER ECHELON THEORY

Upper echelon theory predicts that those holding positions at the top of corporate hierarchies are powerful individuals who work with others who also hold power. Together they produce organisational outcomes that reflect their own orientation. Hence, corporate elites make decisions that potentially promulgate a similar ethos meaning that resourcing decisions can simply reflect the status quo. The argument is that individuals holding power within organisations replicate themselves and so powerful groups within organisations remain similarly constituted; this can act against moves towards increasing diversity and inclusion, and potentially even lead to discrimination.

It is still the case today that the top levels within organisations are predominantly male; women still hold only a minority of board roles. It can also be argued that elite groups such as expatriates remain predominantly staffed by non-diverse populations and the status quo remains due to a lack of widening of selection criteria to enable minority groups to enter this international arena. For HR and global mobility professionals, effort must be paid to considering how people are selected for international roles and also how the developmental opportunities that flow from them are communicated such that those holding non-traditional assignee identities might be attracted to them.

MAKING THE THEORY RELEVANT TO THE PRACTITIONER

Upper echelon theory suggests that attention needs to be paid to those holding the positions of power as they make the decisions to let others into top roles. Intersectionality theory guides us to consider every person as an individual with their own unique identity. Thus, decision-making on selection for assignments should be based on an individual's own personal identity rather than an assumed collective group identity.

To ensure that diversity and inclusion objectives become a fully functional reality, the nature of decision-making about each individual requires attention with practical steps taken to ensure that true effort is made to fully address how decision-makers holding power within organisations can operate to best fulfil talent objectives. •

FURTHER READING

Hutchings, K., Michailova, S., & Wilkinson, A. A Concise Guide to Key Theories for Human Resource Management Research, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. Forthcoming.



Women on the move

Given the global talent shortages, what steps can companies make to spot talent earlier and encourage more women and minorities into senior roles?

Marianne Curphey reports.

Employers are grappling with the global talent crisis, the demand for hybrid working and the retirement of older and more experienced workers. Many are looking for new ways to promote and develop a more diverse workforce but are held back by a culture which limits opportunities for women and minorities.

For example, the traditional route to C-suite and senior management role recruitment may disadvantage women who have not necessarily been promoted to the jobs that are seen as preparation for CEO and leadership roles. In addition, the benefit of mentoring and personal development, which can help propel recipients up the career ladder, is often reserved for a small number of senior managers.

Yet spotting talent early and promoting women and people from different backgrounds can help future-proof an organisation, fulfil Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) objectives and more accurately reflect the spread of clients and customers in the wider community. Being able to demonstrate a clear commitment to D&I will also help meet growing demands from customers, shareholders or stakeholders who want to do business with more equitable organisations. Diversity in leadership teams can avoid groupthink, bring fresh ideas and create higher levels of profitability in the long term, research has shown.

“As we move further from the pandemic, mobility and overseas assignments will return,” says Teresa Phiri, Consultant at international executive search firm Perrett Laver. “Particularly when working in challenging or remote environments, it is important that an organisation’s talent recruitment strategy aligns with global mobility efforts. Providing workplace support such as mentorship and leadership development programmes

– even when employees are not based in a physical office – will also be key to not just attracting but retaining the best talent,” she says.

HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO TAKE UP MORE GLOBALLY MOBILE ROLES?

“Increasing the breadth and depth of the talent pool via flexible and non-linear career pathways will future-proof an organisation and widen the talent pool of well-rounded, agile leadership talent,” says Rachel Davis, Co-Managing Director at Armstrong Craven, a global leader in research-driven talent solutions. She argues that these first steps lead to a “snowball effect” as fresh talent moves up the organisation. Increasing numbers of leadership positions are then filled by minority talent, their visibility increases, and the next generation begin to put themselves forward as a result.

“This visibility applies externally as well as internally and therefore it is not just stakeholders and shareholders who will ultimately benefit, but customers,” she says. Customers are increasingly discerning in their choice of companies and brands who are actively ‘doing the right thing’.

What’s more, the global shortage of talent and the high demand for new skills means companies must now turn their attention to reskilling their existing workforce, opening up new opportunities for talent to put themselves forward for new roles. This agile talent in time will be more well-rounded and therefore will possess a broader set of skills and experiences better suited to leadership.

The key to accelerating this is to adopt a culture of openness and transparency regarding succession and career progression and to dispense with the ‘vertical’ element of succession planning. This will widen the talent pool and



“A true commitment to social impact needs to be in place beyond the recruitment process. This involves female talent being properly nurtured on a continuous basis.”

LEWIS MALEH, EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT EXPERT AND CEO OF BENTLEY LEWIS,

embrace talent from underrepresented groups.

“There is a real opportunity for HR to open up new pathways and remove the idea that the only way to obtain promotion is via a vertical straight line,” she says.

“Organisations are missing a massive opportunity when it comes to female talent,” says career coach Natalie Trice. “All too often women leave the workforce simply because they support isn’t in place and the challenge of navigating corporate life adds to an already full cup and stressful life.”

CAREER MENTORING FOR WOMEN NEEDS TO BE CONTINUOUS, NOT A TOKEN GESTURE

Lewis Maleh, executive recruitment expert and CEO of Bentley Lewis, an award-winning global boutique executive search firm, says companies need to work harder to explain what they are promising while interviewing candidates.

“A true commitment to social impact needs to be in place beyond the recruitment process,” he says. “This involves female talent being properly nurtured on a continuous basis.”

The pandemic sped up the movement towards increased hybrid and remote work. The increase in hybrid and remote work opportunities helped level the playing field for women, particularly those with children.

“Having women in senior leadership roles should be a priority for leaders to promote having diverse

perspectives in leadership teams,” he says. “The rise in remote work has opened up a global workforce and expanded the talent pool. Companies are beginning to realise that in order to access and attract top talent, this may mean recruiting globally, increasing diversity in our organisations. Competing for talent is also becoming more challenging, as job seekers can search globally for roles which suit them.”

Organisations need to be flexible when designing roles and Lewis Maleh says that with the significant rise in employers offering flexible models of work, people are no longer as willing to accept positions that don’t accommodate their needs. It is an employee market, and companies need to demonstrate their commitment to employee satisfaction.

Firms need to examine their own unconscious bias in the recruitment process for globally mobile roles.

Research from the House of Commons this year showed that companies with more female leaders outperform those dominated by men. In addition, having more senior female leaders tends to have a similar effect throughout the organisation with female leaders serving as mentors, role models, and changing organisational policies to benefit both men and women as well as attracting a more diverse workforce.

Teresa Phiri at Perrett Laver says there are, however, still common perceptions that women have less leadership potential than men.

“We need to address misconceptions like this urgently, as they continue to hold women back from progressing within their organisation,” she says. “They are also a barrier to firms recruiting female talent, as interviewers can bring these views with them when assessing candidates, even if they have succeeded in attracting diverse talent to apply for the role. Organisations which succumb to unconscious biases are therefore missing the opportunity to attract, retain and promote female leaders.”

To address this, organisations must create an open and diverse hiring process. From an executive search perspective, this means looking beyond immediate networks and recruiting pools and discarding traditional assumptions of what makes a senior leader successful.

“It is important to use inclusive language on the job

description and in the interview room,” she explains. “Women leaders are more likely to leave their roles due to the desire for greater flexibility, mental health support or Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Organisations which foster workplace processes which supports DEI policies can therefore encourage women to stay and help them succeed in their roles.”

She recommends mentorship programmes as a key strategy to encourage women in the early stages of their career. Bespoke mentorship can help women not only grow in their skills but their self-belief to take on day to day organisational challenges.

“Having female mentors who have shown they can succeed at the C-suite level can help inspire a new generation of women to follow their career aspirations and fulfil their potential,” she says.

WHAT’S NEXT IN THE WORKPLACE AND WHY IS DEI SO IMPORTANT?

Teresa Phiri says women are seeking better work cultures and organisations risk losing significant proportions of their talent if they lack strong diversity and inclusion policies and practices. Research from McKinsey has found that women are more than one and a half times as likely as men in the same roles to have left a previous job because they wanted to work for a company that was more committed to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

“Positively, this indicates that the next generation of female leaders will play a key role in building company values and shaping policies that support DEI and wellbeing,” she says. “Increasing the diversity of management has been shown to impact on a company’s profitability and performance.”

Leaders should embody the values of inclusion to challenge the status quo. A report from the Fawcett Society and Runnymede Trust revealed that 75% of women of colour have experienced racism in the workplace, with over one in five having suffered racial slurs during their career.

“We can clearly see that organisations are doing much more to tackle racism and discrimination of all forms but more still needs to be done,” she says. “From setting up employee network groups and resources to ethnicity pay reports, employers must continue to lead from the front to ensure racism has no place in business – or society.”

She says most talent teams have changed their approaches to reverse assumptions of what candidates should look like. Now, anonymous recruitment is a common practice to get the best talent irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity or any other characteristic.

“It is vital that organisations challenge any preconceptions they may have when reviewing CVs and applications,” she says. “While a potential candidate might not have gone to the most prestigious university or received the best degree, they may have other skills which suit that role. ●

How to create new career pathways to grow and nurture women and minorities and encourage them to pursue globally mobile roles:

- Implement an internal job market where employees are actively encouraged by line managers to apply for secondments and out-of-function roles
- Create and ring-fence time in the working week for people to take part in cross-company project teams. This gives them exposure to other roles to interact with and even influence colleagues from parts of the business that might otherwise have been closed to them
- Create a culture where the route to the top is no longer seen as a straight vertical line. Rotations and horizontal moves should be seen as the norm
- Ensure talent from underrepresented groups is actively encouraged to put themselves forward. HR and managers should take time to understand the barriers and blockers that might be preventing individuals from putting themselves forward and ensure support frameworks are put in place.
- Consider coaching and support for families who may need to relocate alongside the role holder – this may in itself ensure that rotations involving relocations are not closed to women
- Celebrate success stories and encourage leaders to be great coaches, supporting and nurturing the next layer of talent who explore new challenges.

“Increasing the diversity of management has been shown to impact on a company’s profitability and performance.”

TERESA PHIRI AT PERRETT LAVER

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GOING HOME: THE HARDEST MOVE

Repatriation is known to be a source of concern to expatriates and their families. **Dr Sue Shortland** explains how employers can help to reduce repatriation distress and improve organisational outcomes.

Fears about work opportunities and career prospects on return home often feature as a source of stress for international assignees. Concerns over finding new employment and settling back into schools are issues that repatriated spouses and children can worry about. These can affect performance while on assignment. On return to the home country, assignees can find their work roles to be less satisfying than they had anticipated, spouses may experience difficulty re-entering the employment market especially if they were not working while abroad, and children may experience difficulty in adjusting to state schools and making friends when they previously were benefiting from an international education. All these issues contribute to repatriation distress.

Preparation for repatriation is as necessary a form of support for assignees and their families as preparation for expatriation. However, repatriation training is less frequently provided by organisations. Recognising repatriation issues and addressing them through employer action prior to the return home can help to reduce repatriate turnover and raise productivity.

International assignments are often associated with career growth and so it is not an unreasonable expectation for assignees to envisage career development through their international responsibilities. Returning assignees frequently measure the success of their assignment through their career growth and the extent to which their widened networks lead to interesting and challenging future work opportunities.

The transfer of expertise to meet organisational

objectives is also crucial to repatriation success.

With respect to organisational outcomes, employers are looking for returnees to stay with their firm and perform well, transferring knowledge and cultural capabilities to the home location through successful relationship building. Employers typically also look for repatriates to maintain links with overseas operations and be capable of forging new relationships with other international subsidiaries due to their experience in building global networks.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN HELP

Turning to the repatriation of assignees and how this can be best supported, it is important that appropriate employment is provided on return that makes best use of the skills and capabilities developed while on assignment. Repatriation success is associated with job satisfaction. Assignees typically expect to secure promotion on return and while this is not always feasible for employers, a work role that recognises their skills development in the international context goes some way towards supporting work readjustment.

Returning home usually results in the removal of the additional reward that flowed from the assignment policy – especially if the employee was sent abroad on a home-based package. The loss of financial benefits can act as a major disincentive to returning assignees and while employers are clearly not expected to continue to provide expatriate benefits on return, a salary increase associated with a bigger job role can go some way towards meeting repatriates' expectations. A post-assignment mobility payment (successful completion bonus) can also prove to be motivational.

Organisations need to take steps to encourage returning assignees to share their knowledge and use this for organisational as well as individual career benefits. In order to increase job motivation, performance and readjustment, support may be required to foster knowledge transfer before career dissatisfaction sets in. It is therefore important to invest in timely action upon return so that skills, capabilities and networking benefits are not lost. Using repatriates to train new assignees and setting up repatriate/assignee networks within the organisation can help to address these issues.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL READJUSTMENT

One of the key repatriation problems concerns cultural and social readjustment on return. Assignees and their families may well be looking forward to coming home but often find that their expectations are unmet. Repatriation research indicates that employees and their families undertake a cultural shift while living abroad and may find cultural readjustment to their home country difficult. This is especially the case if they have not engaged with home leave opportunities while away and have drifted apart culturally from their home country culture. Cultural preparation can prove to be helpful ahead of the return.

Research also looks at repatriate identity change and how global roles affect assignees' ways of thinking and behaving. Individuals can become more globally-oriented or more closely culturally attuned to their host nation than their sending country and so find it difficult to readjust to their home country culture. This can be a cause of stress and potentially lead to turnover

intentions. Cultural preparation can prove valuable in such cases.

One of the key issues that expatriates can face is the out-of-sight, out-of-mind syndrome. While working abroad, employees and their families may have had significantly reduced contact with employees and other home country colleagues and friends. In the past, social readjustment has proved to be a significant source of stress upon repatriation. This is because when assignees and families try to rebuild these collegial and friendship networks they can find that their previous contacts are not particularly interested in their experiences.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, though, with the widespread use of social media, it is not yet clear as to whether the out-of-sight, out-of-mind syndrome still exists. Individuals are able to keep in touch far more easily than they could in the past, by engaging in meetings online, such as by using Zoom. Research is needed to find out whether this can act as a good substitute for face-to-face contact and whether relationships with colleagues and friends are maintained efficiently using this method, thereby reducing this potential form of repatriation distress.

While many repatriation concerns (such as work and cultural readjustment, work dissatisfaction and turnover), have remained problematic over the decades, the issue of the impact of social media and online contact on social readjustment has yet to be studied. Understanding this could help to establish whether these media have the potential to reduce some of the social difficulties faced by repatriating assignees and their families. Further research in this area could therefore potentially prove very useful not only by helping to understand how the role of social media and online communication can support repatriates' social readjustment but also how organisations might use these media to improve repatriation outcomes. •

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Managing Across Cultures: Repatriation
www.relocatemagazine.com/gmt-global-mobility-toolkit-fact-sheet-resource-hub



CIPD ACE 2022: how to manage in these extraordinary times

The CIPD's annual conference welcomed ITV journalist Robert Peston to talk about what business leaders and HR need to know to be able to adapt to today's state of permacrisis and geopolitical shifts.

Ruth Holmes reports.

“the chaos we are experiencing is genuinely like nothing I have lived through.”

ROBERT PESTON,
BROADCASTER & JOURNALIST



Robert Peston speaking at the 2022 CIPD conference

Turning the tables, CIPD CEO Peter Cheese interviewed award-winning journalist, Robert Peston, on the opening day of the annual conference and exhibition about the challenges facing business and HR today.

The fascinating conversation held key insights for the people profession, ranging from an explanation of the impact of the mini budget on the UK's economic outlook, the role of trust, and likely inflation rates in the next two years. It reinforced the role of HR and global mobility expertise in rising to the ongoing challenges and delivering the people and ESG strategies critical to business today.

EXTRAORDINARY TIMES THE NORM

“We are all in extraordinary times with all these moving parts,” said Robert Peston. “What does it mean for us? For me, this has been the most chaotic period professionally. Globally, we’ve seen the invasion of Ukraine by Putin and considerable concern about China and Taiwan, as well as the end of the era of free money and return to era of inflation and interest rates.

“Returning to the UK scene, the chaos we are experiencing is genuinely like nothing I have lived through. Three prime ministers in four months. Then Kwasi Kwarteng resigned as Chancellor after 38 days. Just last night I was reporting how Gavin Williamson had resigned after 15 days. These are new concepts we have to come to terms with.”

ON GLOBALISATION

Explaining the economic background to the changes, Robert Peston traced the origins of the current crises to predict the years ahead, with some interesting insights for global mobility, international business and the movement of skilled and talented people.

“Globalisation has not gone, but there are some countervailing trends,” said Robert Peston. “Covid showed how risky supply chains are and that has kind of stuck and forced countries to think more about onshoring. What is happening now in Ukraine showed us vulnerability when it comes to a bad actor like Russia.

“The rise in inequalities has been more pronounced during this phase of globalisation. Inequalities within countries like ours have got a lot worse and given all of us pause for thought. But of course, that offshoring has narrowed inequalities between countries, like with China.” These factors underline the importance of inclusion and diversity in business and public services, as well as the success of initiatives like the levelling up agenda. On these global and macroeconomic trends, Robert Peston remains hopeful. “Over time this could mean more and better jobs in UK and that’s what we hope. The more worrying phenomenon is that this drives up prices in the short run.” This unwinding of globalisation is one of the significant forces behind end of the era of cheap money.”

ON TRUST

Robert Peston also highlighted the longstanding issue of declining trust that has dogged leaders over the past decade. Remarking on a world map that showed political condemnation or support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year by country, he pointed out that the map aligns to support 50 years ago. "It's certainly the case there's been an enormous amount of naivety around China and Vladimir Putin early among officials, security services and business leaders," said Robert Peston.

"All will admit they got him [Vladimir Putin] wrong and didn't recognise his imperial ambitions. NATO was so unprepared for [the invasion of Ukraine] but got its response together quickly despite its degradation. It showed the West can still act together in a way that increases our security. "There was also lots of naivety about China. We thought the richer it got, the more it would move to be a more liberal society. For now, this is utterly wrong. President Xi has consolidated the most personal power since Mao and there is oppression. But we are massively interdependent so a rupture would be significant."

Be under no illusion that lots of people have paid massively for this situation. But economic conflict would be multiples of that. Also, for China that would

Below: Peter Cheese and Robert Peston



be significant. "The great mistake of western governments over last 20 years is they did not take risk of long-tail risks seriously – like the banking collapse and a global virus – until it was on us."

WHERE NEXT? A ROUTE OUT OF CRISIS

Yet out of crisis, hope is possible. That means adapting business models and having a clear sense of purpose and where you are going, whether you are a politician, business leader, business or country.

The role of purpose, it seems, is the one constant throughout this economic and political volatility. "Instability is going to be with us for some time," said Robert Peston. "We see that across the world through economic transition to no to high inflation. What is really interesting about institutions that succeed is that they know who they are. "Football is an interesting model. The most interesting is Liverpool FC. It has survived over decades because of its incredible sense of identity. The thing that has gone wrong that is pernicious is when institutions lose sense of who they are and what has worked in the past. We have seen that degrading of institutions and it's really important we reverse that." For businesses, this means being transparent and saying loudly "when something any party wants or any government doing is

directly damaging their interests," said Robert Peston. "This is not the same thing as getting involved in party politics. Climate change is real and a massive driving force for change in our lives. Businesses are getting constructively involved in issues-driven where they have authority. "I do think that all of us – individuals or corporate actors – we have a responsibility to have our voice heard on these issues that are vital to our futures. We have to stand up and be counted in this way."

THE FUTURE – IMPACT ON PEOPLE PRACTICES AND GLOBAL MOBILITY

For now, Robert Peston expects inflation to remain at slightly higher levels than the Bank of England currently estimates before reverting in a couple of years to "four or five per cent." He also expects dislocations to supply chains are "going to go on for longer than people currently think." Yet, "there will still be very significant demand for our goods and services," concluded Robert Peston. "If there was a massive escalation in Ukraine then things become a lot more worrying and that will be a shock to the economy. But this is not going to be like a deep recession and will feel like we are bumping along with no growth."

We are a big economy, and we always get through difficult times and get to recovery. "The companies that do best are those that invest in difficult times in people, kit and operations. It's a bit like Liverpool FC. It sees a downturn happening and can see the upturn coming. There's always an opportunity." ◉

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Subscribe to **Relocate Extra**, our monthly newsletter, to get all the latest international assignments and global mobility news.

Relocate's **Global Mobility Toolkit** provides free information, practical advice and support for HR, global mobility managers and global teams operating overseas.

CIPD ACE 2022: A BOLDER FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE PROFESSION

CIPD CEO Peter Cheese underlined the importance of collaboration and the continued investment in HR and people practices at the opening of this year's annual CIPD conference and exhibition.

This year's keynote address and discussion, with broadcaster Robert Peston, set a distinctly international tone from the outset of the CIPD's two-day conference held in Manchester. In a wide-ranging discussion of geopolitical headwinds, it emphasised HR and global mobility's key role in building trust and delivering the ESG agenda.

INTERNATIONAL RELEVANCE OF CIPD ACE 2022

Welcoming 1,300 delegates and a return to pre-pandemic attendance levels, Mr Cheese extended a special welcome for the 200 international delegates who are participating either in person or online from Iceland, Canada, Ukraine, Poland, Belgium, Ireland, Ghana, Azerbaijan and the Middle East. "It's great to see such a room full of people again," said Mr Cheese. "Particularly now as we go through great change."

The more we strengthen our community, the more this will help us all grow our profession and improve the world of work. The things we are trying to do as a community are what we are trying to extend internationally as well."

BUILDING BETTER ACROSS THE PROFESSION

Mr Cheese reiterated the importance of collaborating with colleagues in HR, as well as elsewhere in the business and across its functions, as he introduced the four conference themes of:

- being a better employer and championing good work
- attracting and retaining the right people
- reimagining leadership and management
- building skills and capabilities in a fast-moving world

"We worry so much about everyone's skills and capabilities, but the more we learn, share and connect the more agile we can be," said Mr Cheese. "We are living in a world where there



Above: Delegates at the CIPD conference and exhibition

are many different approaches. It takes courage to innovate, experiment and try. There are many ways to respond to today's challenges."

WHAT'S NEXT FOR HR AND GLOBAL MOBILITY?

The Covid-19 pandemic put HR and people front and centre of the business agenda. Today, HR, global mobility and the people profession is still dealing with the aftermath. From remote working to the great rethink, reskilling and retention, and global skills shortages, people are critical to how businesses ride out the recession and this period of high inflation.

To put this into context and offer a glimpse beyond the current state of permacrisis in the UK, Peter Cheese welcomed award-winning ITV journalist, Robert Peston, to the platform to help pick out the key trends and geopolitical influences he sees informing the international management, global people and HR agenda for the months ahead.

Despite the bleak events of the past 12 months, Robert Peston ended with an upbeat message that the fundamentals, like purpose, trust and transparency, remain unchanged while everything else might be beyond our control. "The companies that do best are those that invest in difficult times in people, kit and operations. It's a bit like Liverpool FC. It sees a downturn happening and can see the upturn coming. There's always an opportunity." ◉



Start the conversation across global mobility

"THE COMPANIES THAT DO BEST ARE THOSE THAT INVEST IN DIFFICULT TIMES IN PEOPLE, KIT AND OPERATIONS."

ROBERT PESTON, BROADCASTER & JOURNALIST



Kings'
InterHigh

Schools on screen

When it comes to online schooling, those not familiar may worry about their child's online screen time and lack of socialising opportunities. However, it can actually remove barriers to socialising by encouraging teamwork and creativity, and empowering children to make friends anywhere in the world!



“I’m often abroad and would usually be unable to attend mainstream school. If I’m busy with table tennis, I can just go back and listen to the recorded lessons, so I don’t have to miss out on anything.”

ANNA HURSEY, TABLE TENNIS PLAYER &
COMMONWEALTH GAMES MEDALLIST

Anna Hursey, online student, table tennis player and Commonwealth Games medallist

Online learning is growing in popularity, and it's not surprising with one in three internet users being under 18, and 46% of 16 – 24-year-olds having used online learning materials. Fifteen per cent of people this age have also taken part in an online course.

It is true that online learning is not for every child, but parents concerned with too much screen time being harmful to a learner's development need to understand that there are in fact many benefits. The online learning community provides a child with more flexibility, participation in active learning, opportunities to socialise on- and off-screen, and fewer distractions. Regular breaks and time away from the screen during the schooling day are also encouraged.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING THAT CAN BE TAILORED TO EVERY CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Live lessons are an important part of online learning, and give students the opportunity to interact with their teachers and peers, but one of the crucial benefits is that these lessons can be recorded. Recordings are then uploaded to a central student platform where learners can view them at any time, from anywhere, giving them flexibility to study whenever and wherever suits them. Equally, if they're not well enough to attend a live lesson, or if they have commitments outside of education, they can catch up with lesson recordings later.

Students with creative or sporting talents often need lots of time for practice and travel. Online schooling allows them to step away from the desk and keep up with their active schedules without compromising their learning. The likes of actors, musicians, artists and athletes can take part in lessons



Above: The Carrick-Smith brothers split their time between the slopes and online learning with King's InterHigh

from anywhere. Brothers Luca, Zak and Freddy Carrick-Smith spend their mornings skiing on the slopes, and afternoons studying.

Here's what online student, table tennis player and Commonwealth Games medallist Anna Hursey says about online learning:

"I'm often abroad and would usually be unable to attend mainstream school. If I'm busy with table tennis, I can just go back and listen to the recorded lessons, so I don't have to miss out on anything."

The world is changing, and it's not just students that can make the most of the flexibility of online learning. Families whose parents travel for work or get posted abroad for a length of time, can benefit from being able to stay together and not impede on the child's education or the parents' career aspirations.

ACTIVE LEARNING, NOT PASSIVE

Some online schools use multimedia learning as a big part of teaching programmes. Students can regularly watch peer-reviewed videos, take part in interactive quizzes and listen to audio soundbites.

Many students who study STEM subjects get to apply their skills to real-world projects. This often includes learners working together on assignments. As part of their lessons, students may find themselves planning journeys, making meal plans and creating models.

Children can also still be hands-on through an online school in artistic subjects. They can use the same materials as they would in a traditional school to paint, sculpt or take photos, enabling them to be creative. They then share their work online and receive

constructive feedback from students and teachers.

To encourage collaboration, many online schools also have extra-curricular programmes such as theatre clubs, where learners work together to stage virtual plays. This includes rehearsing, recording and editing their performances for peers and parents to watch.

Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and simulations are also great tools to enhance the engagement experience for students. Plus, everything being online gives students easy access to a wealth of digital resources, negating the need to set foot into a library which has a limited number of computers and only so many copies of books, journals and other resources. Students are no longer limited to what a physical library has to offer.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SOCIALISE, ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Virtual common rooms are a great way for students talk to each other in online schools. They can break into groups and discuss their shared interests, and older learners may also have the opportunity to communicate using a monitored social media platform. Since some online schools, such as King's InterHigh, are global, this means students can make friends around the world.

The best online schools also have a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities for learners to join, giving them plenty of opportunities to pursue new hobbies and make friends. Whether they're interested in chess, creative writing or debate, a good online school will have lots of options for children to consider.

King's InterHigh offer opportunities for summer camps, exchange programmes and international conventions, giving students the chance to also meet in person in an exciting and engaging environment. These events allow learners to meet face-to-face with friends they've met virtually, and join extra-curricular activities in their local areas.

Families can also get together in online and offline groups, to discuss shared interests and aspirations for their children.

LESS DISTRACTIONS

Traditional classrooms can often be distracting, with the pressures to 'fit in', and misbehaving students interrupting the learning process.

With online learning, classes are free from distractions and interruptions and students can study from the comfort of their own homes.

When children have days where they must work on commitments outside of education, there is no longer the worry for them to figure out how they will fit everything in and make time for both. Recorded lessons mean that they can catch up with their classes anytime, from anywhere, as long as they have an internet connection.

What do students think of this approach? Here's what actress and online learner Bella Ramsey says:

"I get way more out of the lessons because there's no frustrating distractions or loud unruly classes, you get to sit in the quiet and safety of your own home and learn... It also decreases peer pressure and the desire we all have to fit in to a certain box."

ONLINE LEARNING WITH KING'S INTERHIGH

We know that there's no 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to learning. That's why every individual King's InterHigh student receives a flexible, high-quality education that revolves around their needs and lifestyle. Our expert teachers guide students to learn, grow, and thrive together, with a British and international education designed for online, from Primary to Sixth Form, for ages 7 to 19.

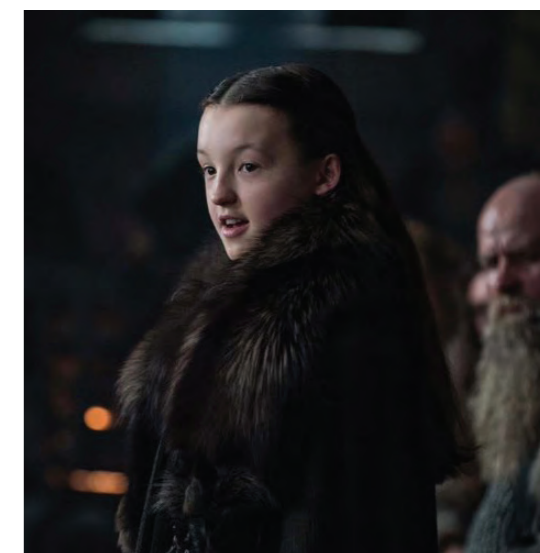
We offer both GCSEs and IGCSEs, providing greater flexibility and the opportunity for international students to achieve their GCSE qualifications no matter where they are in the world. Alongside the well-regarded British A Levels in our Sixth Form, we were also the first online school to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma completely online. ●

For more information about King's InterHigh, please visit <https://kingsinterhigh.co.uk/>

"I get way more out of the lessons because there's no frustrating distractions or loud unruly classes, you get to sit in the quiet and safety of your own home and learn... It also decreases peer pressure and the desire we all have to fit in to a certain box."

BELLA RAMSEY, ACTRESS & ONLINE LEARNER

Below: Actress Bella Ramsey





Left: Ryan Ball & Steve Katz

STEAM: embedding the skills for tomorrow, today

The jobs children at school now will have in future will be influenced by the net-zero agenda, climate change and technology. Having the subject knowledge and skills to tackle these makes STEAM essential in education today.

Education and skills shortages – including reskilling – are among the world’s greatest economic challenges. Extrapolating data for 20 economies, the World Economic Forum (WEF) identifies emerging clusters of future professions. As the current global IT shortage suggests, the largest cluster is estimated to be around data and AI, followed by engineering and cloud computing, people and culture (including HR), product development, and then sales, marketing and content.

As a whole, these clusters crystallise everything STEAM education is all about – and it is much more than simply the individual teaching of science, technology, engineering, art and math.

Ryan Ball, Director of Education, Design and Technology Association, and Steven Katz, Elementary School Coordinator, The International School of Kuala

Lumpur (ISKL) joined Relocate Global’s Fiona Murchie in the latest webinar in the International Education and Schools’ Fair discuss what parents can look for around STEAM in international schools that will help set their children up for the future.

WHAT DOES STEAM MEAN IN EDUCATION TODAY?

“STEAM is science, technology, engineering, art and math,” says Steven Katz, who has taught at ISKL since 2015 and an Apple Distinguished Educator. “But STEAM is transdisciplinary, where we are doing all these things together rather than teaching them apart, as traditionally has been the case.”

The transdisciplinary approach to STEAM is different to much STEM teaching in the past, which historically often focused just on science and maths. The STEAM approach is more future focused, not just from what employers are looking for, but also for all-round employability.

“There’s definitely shortages in these fields,” says Steven Katz. “It’s important that we are focusing on them, especially the area of coding, which has a huge deficit of jobs. In addition to that, in these fields there’s definitely an under-representation of women and people of colour, so to try and diversify this field I think is important.”

“It’s also important that we are teaching children the thinking skills to solve problems within this integrated pedagogy.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY

“Having the extra element of creativity through the arts is really key,” agrees Ryan Ball, a DT educator with 20 years’ classroom experience, including as head of art, at international schools in the UK, Middle East and Asia.

“In the UK, we have a subject called design and technology [DT]. This seems to encompass the whole of STEAM really. I’m passionate about it as an educator and a parent as well. I want my kids to explore and have these experiences because there are so many opportunities available through STEAM and how it opens up the soft skills – not a term I particularly like – around problem solving, curiosity and resilience.”

These skills have real value in the emerging world of work. “One of the things we do is really focus on the design cycle,” says Steven Katz. “Having kids go through a process over and over in order to come up with a solution to a problem. We keep having different iterations of that first iPhone for example. We want to get the kids thinking in that same way because it’s really a life skill.”

A QUESTION OF PERCEPTION?

Until recently, the separate subject of DT and STEAM generally have not necessarily been well-received by parents and government policymakers, who often regard qualifications in this area as less valuable than core academic subjects to getting on in life. However, as the WEF’s projections show, these perceptions may need to change.

“Parents have a really important part to play in kids’ education,” says Ryan Ball. “From my own experience in the last 20 years, DT is often a misunderstood subject and sometimes thought of as being – and I’ll use inverted quote marks – ‘for the less able’.

“When I was school and then when and I just started teaching, it was thought of as a subject for children ‘who were good with their hands’ or ‘less academic’. It used to really irk me. But it isn’t that. It allows lots of students to access the curriculum and learning in general.

“But it’s also something I found that the more academically able students, if you want to call them that, often found really hard. To have something where there isn’t a right answer, and it’s not directly from a textbook, and they’ve got to use their problem-solving skills and come up with a creative solution, is something a lot of kids really find tricky. We had to spend quite a lot of time in all the schools I’ve worked in to really try and dispel those myths and tell them it is a really vital subject.”

“In our elementary school, we invite parents in to see what’s going on in the classroom,” says Steven Katz, as he explains how ISKL are helping to lead the way in STEAM education in Asia. “In elementary school DT/STEAM is not a separate subject. There is some merit in teaching design and technology separately, especially at higher levels, but here at ISKL we integrate it into the curriculum so we are improving teaching and learning.”

REAL-WORLD LEARNING

Describing how this approach works with a fourth-grade class setting up a model city, building houses and wiring them with electricity, Steven Katz says, “Most kids if you ask them to build a house will cut out six pieces and glue them together. My contribution as Technology Coordinator to that was teaching them how to take a 2D template and make it into a 3D shape. Developing those skills in design fit really nicely with what they are doing already.”

“That’s something the best schools do in terms of that context,” says Ryan Ball. “Steve touched on it brilliantly when he was talking about the electrical circuits – teaching the difference between a parallel and a serial circuit for instance. By putting them in the context of something the students are familiar with, like housing, kids will really retain that information and see how it helps them in the big wide world.

“This is the sort of thing we say to parents: it’s all around you. The man-made world has been designed, manufactured, built by somebody and they have gone through the process that your child is going through at school. It might be with different materials and timescales, but they are handling materials, understanding the properties of things and putting together all of their learning from maths, science, engineering, arts to put together a tangible, real and useful solution. That’s where the magic happens.”

WATCH NOW

Watch the full webinar [here](#).

For the latest insights into international schools, read more in our [International Education and Schools Fair section](#) and out now [International Education & Schools Guide](#).

The Design and Technology Association is lobbying the UK Government and other decision-making bodies to ensure D&T’s place on the curriculum. This report aims to highlight what steps need to be taken to support the growth and preservation of the subject.

See the report ‘Reimagining D&T’ published in December 2022.

<https://www.data.org.uk/news/reimagining-dt-report/>



SIR JAMES DYSON

“Design & Technology plays a fundamental role in combining the academic rigour of Science and Maths with creative problem solving to equip young people with the skills they need to solve big problems. Over half of our undergraduates at the Dyson Institute studied the subject at GCSE and apply the practical skills learnt to live Dyson projects and technology. There is great potential in this subject, for education and the global economy, and it should not be left untapped.”

SIR JAMES DYSON, MARCH 2022

REACH FOR THE STARS WITH NASA & ISSET

In this latest addition to Relocate Global's International Education and Schools Fair library, Fiona Murchie meets **Chris Barber** and **Sarah Murray** to explore the exciting STEM opportunities available to all.

The "Mission Discovery: Space & Stem with ISSET and NASA" webinar focuses on unlocking every young person's science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) potential.

Fiona Murchie welcomes Sarah Murray, the International Space Station's Education Trust's (ISSET) Head of Operations speaking live from Houston, and Chris Barber, Founder and Chief Executive of ISSET.

Together, Chris and Sarah, who is a former NASA Deputy Chief of Robotics - Crew Systems, on the International Space Station and who worked most recently on the Orion project, discuss the opportunities schools and individuals have to take science beyond the classroom.

They offer a rousing challenge and compelling reasons why all students and young people can unlock their incredible potential in NASA's 'you can do it' pioneering spirit.

MISSION DISCOVERY

Introducing the work of ISSET, former teacher Chris Barber explained that the education trust looks to "inspire young people by bringing them into contact with the people at the very heart of the human space programme."

ISSET runs a number of initiatives, including:

- Mission Discovery, a series of international summer schools
- the Launch Prize for schools
- Space to Learn, a live virtual show with an astronaut.

All are linked to humanity's largest science and technology exploration programme, open to everyone and aim to inspire people to have better future lives.

Mission Discovery programmes are led by astronauts, NASA leaders and scientists. They bring young people into contact with people passionate about STEM and space exploration in what is also an amazing opportunity to create experiments that NASA could fly and carry out on the ISS. "This programme is about how you can get your ideas and experiences carried out in space," says Chris Barber.

Just two weeks ago, NASA launched a module of ISSET experiments from its Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia, USA. These are being conducted right now by astronauts as they orbit Earth. Two more modules were launched this week, bringing ISSET's total to over 50 student experiments launched into space.

As a partner with UNESCO, ISSET is able to take its Mission Discovery Summer Schools all over the world. Focusing on STEM, space industries and personal development, thousands of young people across Africa, Asia and the US, and in countries including the UK, Scandinavia, India, Singapore, China, Australia and Mongolia have benefited.

Retired astronaut and author Scott Kelly is one of the world's most influential spokespersons for science. A veteran of four space flights, commander on three ISS expeditions and one of the first to spend an entire year in space, Scott is among NASA personnel who have visited these events as part of the Mission Discovery project.

He is one of 60 astronauts and cosmonauts who have been directly involved in ISSET's programmes to work with young people all around the world. "It was great to have Scott on the team," says Sarah. "Scott is really, really interested in working with the students and

passing on to everyone what he has learned. This is a special team of astronauts and NASA personnel. They are those folks that really want to get out there and inspire."

OPPORTUNITIES

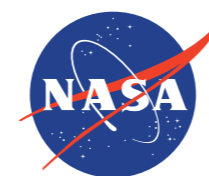
"Mission Discovery is an amazing programme that allows students to be exposed to astronauts, NASA personnel and scientists," Sarah continues. "We focus on skills that these students will need throughout their lives."

"It's important for the young people we reach today to understand that all astronauts and NASA leaders were at one point boys and girls in ordinary classrooms – just like themselves," adds Chris. "They did things for themselves that every young person in every classroom can do for themselves to equip themselves for the future they would want."

The Mission Discovery Space and STEM Summer School in 2023 at King's College University, London, is an exciting opportunity for 14-18 year olds to explore their passions and purpose. Reinforcing the role of women and girls in STEM, NASA astronaut Dorothy Metcalf-Lidenburger will be there to help students go beyond their expectations and do something extraordinary.

"What is really good about the King's College London Summer School is that it brings together people from across the continents," says Sarah. "It is available to anyone who wants to join. The other thing I'd like to add is that you see Dottie [Dorothy Metcalf-Lidenburger] here. I love it when we get our female astronauts on the programme.

"But sometimes what folks don't understand about space is that there are people who enjoy space, who maybe don't want to be an astronaut, but who want to learn



about it and work within it.

"You can do just about anything that you do on Earth in space. You can be a nutritionist. If your goal is to be working in space in any capacity, you are who we would like to be working with."

GOING BEYOND SPACE

As well as putting young people on track to a career in space and STEM, Mission Discovery is about acquiring and understanding the importance of transferable skills, like teamwork and communication, creativity and self motivation.

It is also a fantastic opportunity to help fire young people's imagination about what is possible for all of us, as Sarah explains. "When I talk about my career, I'd like to make sure that you guys know that what I'm thinking is that I came from a place where I never dreamed I would be doing when I first even got to NASA.

"I grew up in St Louis, Missouri, I had four brothers, and we did have some very hard times. So, when I first got to NASA, I could not believe I would be working in Mission Control sending commands to the space station and directing the ISS on its trajectory.

"This is something I want you guys out there listening to know and understand. You can do things even if you can't envision it. You need to envision it. If you can see it, more than likely you can do it." •

Meet **NASA Astronaut and space scientists** at **The Innovation Festival for Global Working**, 9 June 2023, Lamberhurst Kent. Plus outreach programme of visits to Kent schools and further afield.



Left: Chris Barber and Sarah Murray



WATCH NOW

Watch the inspirational live session replay at www.relocatemagazine.com/mission-discovery-space-and-stem-with-isset-and-nasa-iesf-au22

Confidence building for primary aged children



Left: Ellen Shustik, Inner Wings



The covid pandemic coincided with a steep rise in mental health worries and anxieties among children. Fortunately, a free confidence-building programme for all primary schools, and resources for parents and employers, are now available.

Ellen Shustik, Head of Programmes and External Relations at the Inner Wings foundation spoke to Relocate Global's Fiona Murchie about the origins and aims of the charity, and how it has already reached over 4,000 children in more than 60 schools in the UK.

MENTORING AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN CHILDREN

Speaking at this first webinar in the Autumn 2022 Relocate Global International Education and Schools Fair, dual Canadian-British citizen now living in London Ellen Shustik explained how her international career in politics and democratic support led her to be very interested in mentoring, especially among young girls and women.

"This is so interesting in terms of the opportunities available to them," she says. "It is so important to have that confidence and follow your dreams." My path has not been straightforward, but certainly I was able to get to where I am because of the confidence that was instilled in me through school, that confidence and resilience, to really go after what I wanted."

At Inner Wings, that's our raison d'être: it's about giving young people and schools those skills on how to be confident, how to be resilient and how to really follow their dreams."

FINDING WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE

The Inner Wings Foundation, which runs the courses, aims to help children aged 6-12 develop a growth mindset and can-do attitude that will help them succeed. Through two – soon to be three – programmes, Finding Your Superpower and Finding Your Voice, the next generation of school leavers will have the skills they need to be active and fulfilled members of society and the workplace in whatever they choose to do.

The foundation is the initiative of co-founders Darren Roos, South African-born CEO of global software company IFS, and Melissa Di Donato Roos – an acclaimed American-born British business and technology leader, the first female of SUSE, the world's largest open source software company, and technology group chair of the 30% Club, which has the goal of achieving a third of women on S&P boards by 2023.

UPGRADING OPPORTUNITIES EARLY ON

"Melissa had this vision of a charitable foundation that would work on confidence building in young children," says Ellen Shustik. "The age range we work with 6-12 acknowledges that confidence drops more significantly among girls when they get to that age 8-14 age range and by 30%, so it's quite significant." For Melissa in particular as a very rare female CEO in a male-dominated industry she wanted to see all children but particularly girls have that confidence to study STEM subjects, which are typically seen as 'for boys'.

"I think her own lived experience in working her way up to the top of the industry was done to the confidence and self-belief that she had and the role models around her. For her, it was very important to go in very early and target younger children and give them those skills and tools earlier on and learn about developing a growth mindset and why it is important to detach our value from external circumstances before things get more complicated in those secondary years at school with social media.

"Melissa is an incredible inspirational woman who has made it to a leadership level and this is her way of giving back." •

For more information on how your school or workplace can access these free confidence-building programmes and help build the next generation of confident leaders one child at a time, visit www.innerwings.org

WATCH NOW

Watch the inspirational live session replay at www.relocatemagazine.com/events-iesf-au22-helping-children-find-their-voice



ENGAGING CHILDREN TO SOLVE TOMORROW'S BIG ISSUES

In early October, ACS International schools teamed up with a host of STEAM organisations for an inspiring educational day for 10,000 children held at Thorpe Park, Surrey. Students and their teachers from a broad range of schools, backgrounds and ages were welcomed to an exhilarating day of learning and fun. **Fiona Murchie** was there to find out more.

Above and right: activities at the ACS STEAM event held at Thorpe Park

The STEAM event was staged as part of ACS International schools' charitable mission to collaborate with state and independent schools across the region to raise the standards of teaching and learning through innovative, relevant and accessible initiatives. Their aim is to fill the gaps in mainstream services that have a positive impact on children's education.

Organisations attending the event at Thorpe Park included Airforce Air Cadets, Barclays Digital, Bloodhound Team, Endeavour Steam Engine, Intel, INTO Film, Land Rover and Jaguar, LEGO, Mercedes F1 car, the RAF, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Supersonic Car, TED Talks, and Vex robotics.

On the day, Fiona Murchie spoke to Tim Cagney, ACS's Chief Executive, who explained the concept behind the event. "We recognise that young people need to be inspired for their future careers. We also recognise that creativity is at the heart of young people's future. We wanted to engage with schools across the UK and invite them to be part of a superb day of education. Because we are at a fun park, all the children have to go around and find education moments for themselves, which allows them to get on the rides.

"But equally and more importantly we demonstrate things like augmented reality and artificial intelligence. We've got robots here and the whole event is about STEAM: science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. Today gives young people a view on future skills and the things that they might be ready for in the future themselves. So today is all about engagement."

Explaining more about what young people would take away he said, "I think for the young people it is the art of the possible. Many young people I have spoken to today said 'I've never seen a Formula 1 car or I've never actually held a robot or I have never been able to programme something or even hold or play a musical instrument.' I think the engagement from young people and making their creativity just flourish for today, is something for them and it gives them a sense of the beyond the possible.

"I think for teachers it allows them to see the whole and how STEAM subjects work together very coherently in their own curriculum. It allows them to talk to young people about future careers and skills of the future."

OPENING DOORS

I asked Head of School, ACS Cobham, Barnaby Sandow, why he was excited by this STEAM initiative, particularly coming from a physics teaching background.

"I have never seen anything quite like it. The sights and sounds are overwhelming. I think we have 10,000 students here and they are making the choice to engage with science and technology and earn their way onto rides and there are just happy faces all around.

"If you watch the children themselves, they are engaged, they are making the choice about what interests them, pursuing their own interests. It is heating the fire of curiosity with all of these kids, which is brilliant.

"It is closing the distance between the work that people do in high-tech industries and what they are doing in the classroom, and they can think 'hold on, I can really do that, I can really make that happen myself'.

"If we can open the door for just a small fraction of the children that are here today, then that will be a fulsome achievement."

I asked a graduate test engineer with the Mercedes F1 car what drew him to the sector? He responded, "I have always loved cars, had curiosity about how things worked and why we built them, and that drew me toward engineering, maths and that love brought me to Formula 1.

He explained why he was there at the STEAM event. "Essentially, to show the kids the car, W13, Louis Hamilton's car, get them excited about engineering and some of the really cool applications you can apply engineering, maths and science to." Quizzed about what topics school students have to be keen on he responded, "You have to be a very curious individual. You need to work hard at your maths and science, but there are also a lot of avenues you can go down, whether it is electronics you like, or computer science or you are more into mechanical engineering."

EXPERIENCING SCIENCE

I also spoke to Lisa Mullan, Manager at Baylab, who was there demonstrating some of their teaching in laboratory activities, including 'blood making' using sweets and coloured water, which was proving a real hit with the children.

She explained, "Bayer itself is a life sciences company. Obviously, we need lots of scientists and we make pharmaceutical medicine and medicine for over the counter. We are also very interested in growing food for the growing population, crop science and higher yields, so scientists are welcome for all of those areas. There is no lab in the UK. All the research is done in the US and Germany, but we have a teaching laboratory so children and teachers can come, put on a lab coat and actually get hands on science, to encourage them. This is part of Bayer's outreach."

In addition, Baylab was demonstrating a giant inflatable heart, which has been four years in the making and was at Thorpe Park on its maiden voyage. Children were having great fun in the anatomically correct model, walking a similar path to which the blood would go. They were learning what makes a heart healthy or unhealthy and getting a sense of what the heart looks like, what's inside and exploring science in a context they wouldn't normally experience.

As Lisa explained, "Any teacher wants their child to experience learning as best they can, but schools are short on time and short on resources and in fact primary schools are also very short on people with science backgrounds, so science gets left out as it is not on the SATs (KS2 tests). So, it is brilliant to be able to come somewhere where there are experts and the children can immerse themselves. It is also a day out in the fresh air and not stuck in the classroom, all the ingredients you would want to teach a child."

I also met Ellen Shustik of charitable foundation Inner Wings, which offers free confidence-building programmes to primary schools. Find out more in the webinar and write up. •

If you are interested in exploring how to support schools to bridge the gap between learning and the world of work, then get in touch via education@relocatemagazine.com

Come to The Innovation Festival for Global Working – 7-9 June to explore the value of STEAM with colleagues across the education sector, international management and global mobility.



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Above: FOCUS team celebrate at their 40 years anniversary party

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GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

FOR PARENTS, EMPLOYERS & RELOCATION PROFESSIONAL

Our popular Guide to International Education & Schools is updated online for 2022/23.

Enjoy this Preview Supplement and share with international assignees and families changing school.

For your school or organisation to be included in the rolling programme of new features published in the 2022/23 edition, email education@relocatemagazine.com or call +44 (0)1892 891334.

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This guide will help you to engage confidently with parents who need school places in their new location, understand the education and family issues involved, and make fair and informed decisions that support your organisation's talent, allowing them to relocate as effectively as possible.

You will discover how to secure school places, smooth the path for families choosing schools, and minimise the risk of costly relocation or assignment failure.

Ideal for employees, whether in the early stages of considering a relocation or embarking on an international assignment, to help them make informed decisions about schooling options.

NEW ARTICLES

New Guide articles including those in this Supplement were published as part of our International Education & Schools Fair in November including insight and opinion pieces from leading international schools around the world.

Access here. <https://www.relocatemagazine.com/education-guides-international-articles-1122>

COUNTRY GUIDES

If you are trying to understand school options in different regions around the world, The Country Guide pages online will be an invaluable resource. See informative and engaging new articles in this Supplement on choosing a school in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.

Packed with expert information from schools, education consultants and relocation professionals, The Guide will reassure anxious parents and prepare them for the exciting journey ahead.

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BRIDGING CULTURES

The number of bilingual and multilingual schools is increasing, producing language-savvy students equipped for the global workforce.

Ruth Holmes reports.

A multilingual or bilingual education means much more than learning how to order cake with cream in German or parsing a verb. To write, speak and understand another language is to have a unique window on a country's culture.

"Language above all is a culture," says Françoise Zurbach, Head of French-English bilingual international school, EIFA, based in Marylebone, London, in a recent Relocate Global webinar on the subject. "It's the whole block: the language, the culture, the emotion. How we speak to people changes according to the language."

With global citizenship front of mind and internationally mobile families frequently blending more

than one cultural identity and heritage, the ability to speak and learn in multiple languages builds cultural awareness and sense of self – a critical aspect of healthy transitions for third-culture kids.

Bilingualism and multilingualism also nurture understanding of different perspectives and create valuable connections that would otherwise go missed.

"Often parents are multiple passport holders" says Johanna Mitchell, Director of Lumos Education, an education and relocation consultancy. "They want their children to have a sense of global mobility and global awareness. Being bilingual or multilingual gives their children opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have."



BENEFITS OF A BILINGUAL AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual and multilingual education is an increasingly relevant and accessible option for international families in our more mobile world where we code-switch between cultures many times a day at home, work and in education.

Data on international school trends published in August by international school researchers ISC credits the rise of bilingual and multilingual international schools – whether in English, French, German, Mandarin, Japanese or the multitude of other home languages – to the increasing number of local families choosing an international education in their home country.

This trend in international education honours the local, as well as the multicultural context, as educators and school communities nurture the next generation of globally aware leaders. Recent research by ISC Research into international mindedness highlights how bilingual and bicultural learning is increasing amongst international schools as a way of supporting a multicultural context that values the host country of the school.

“As international schools have become the domain for many more host children, language learning has shifted from English only to bilingual and multilingual offerings,” ISC comments. “International schools have a duty to promote internationalism, and for many schools that means starting with the promotion of languages.”

“One of the purposes of education is to prepare a child for the future. For an international child, who may be moving from one assignment to another, keeping all their language options open is crucial.”

SUSAN STEWART, HEAD OF MULTILINGUALISM AT ISL



The International School of Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia (ISKL) has long been known for its community where people of all backgrounds find a place to belong.

“Bilingualism and multilingualism are assets that are celebrated at ISKL,” says Head of School, Rami Madani. “ISKL welcomes linguistic diversity and promotes the development of English academic proficiency alongside the development of the home language.”

Language specialists and classroom teachers work together to ensure the best academic outcome possible within a happy, social framework. ISKL’s EAL team works in partnership with students and parents to support multilingual learners and help them fulfil their potential.

In Europe, Salem is one of two boarding schools in Germany that offer an English-speaking track and the IB programme. “So-called international schools can be found in the bigger cities all over Germany, but usually do not provide a boarding facility,” says Dr Stephanie Nau, Head of Admissions at the Schule Schloss Salem International Boarding School.

“Salem’s student community consists of 45 different nations. About 60% of our children speak German and about 40% of our children study German as a foreign

language at Salem but follow our lessons in English. Their mother language is fully accredited in the German curriculum, replacing our second foreign language.”

ACHIEVING POTENTIAL AND MAINTAINING ROOTEDNESS

The International School of London (ISL), which has schools in the UK and Qatar, is another well-established and highly respected international school group that has multilingualism at its heart. It teaches 22 home languages and 80% of students graduate with a bilingual qualification.

“One of the purposes of education is to prepare a child for the future,” says Susan Stewart, Head of Multilingualism at ISL. “For an international child, who may be moving from one assignment to another, keeping all their language options open is crucial.”

As well as supporting families as they make transitions in their host country, a truly bilingual and multilingual education at an international school has other highly sought-after bonuses. Academic Ellen Bialystok reviewed the effects and consequences of bilingual education on young children in a 2016 paper in the ‘International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism’.

Among the key conclusions drawn from research was that, bilingual instruction at school had long-term benefits for children’s literacy and language. Bilingual students showed higher levels of executive function, which is a predictor of academic success.

Being fluent in two languages develops all-round cognitive skills and higher executive function, builds confidence, fosters global mindedness and cultural awareness – highly transferable skills valued by prestigious universities and employers.

WHAT IS A BILINGUAL OR MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN PRACTICE?

In order to deliver these clear benefits, teaching and learning has to go way beyond simply having languages on the curriculum. How children are immersed in the language-learning experience as they acquire a second, third or fourth language is critical.

“Successful true bilingualism requires that both languages themselves be the medium of instruction,” says Francoise Zurbach, not just its subject. “This is why at EIFA its balanced English-French curriculum is delivered five days a week. Some bilingual schools teach a second language only part of the week. But if a child doesn’t speak the

language at home, then this means they can go four days or so without speaking their second language.”

There has also been much pedagogical and academic study into the concept of translanguaging. The original meaning is understood to mean “the planned and systematic use of two languages in the classroom by specifying and varying the language of input and output.” However, because of its significance and relevance to healthy transitions – the process enables children to relate their previous learning experiences to language acquisition in their new setting and interactions with other students – translanguaging has grown to encompass these and other aspects.

In most truly bilingual and multilingual international schools, language learning therefore takes place in the subject lesson itself – be it English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, German – as well as in other subjects, with the language the curriculum taught in dependent on the timetable.

EXAMS FOR BILINGUAL STUDENTS

Given the clear benefits – and often necessity – of a bilingual or multilingual school option for families on the move, curricula and

“International schools have a duty to promote internationalism, and for many schools that means starting with the promotion of languages.”

ISC RESEARCH

examination bodies around the world have adapted over decades to award qualifications that celebrate and support bilingualism. For example, the International Option of the French Baccalaureate (OIB) accredited by Cambridge Assessment International Education, is a Franco-British educational collaboration based on the French Bacc. Similarly, in the US, the French Ministry of Education has partnered with College Board to create American Section OIB exams.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma also supports bilingual identities through its Bilingual Diploma. Candidates awarded a grade 3 or higher in two languages selected from the DP language and literature courses will receive this certification. Students attaining a grade 3 or higher in an individual and societies or science subject, completed in a different language, will also be awarded the accolade.

With employers paying a premium for people proficient in more than one language, investment in a bilingual or multilingual education is a good and increasingly popular option. ●



LESSONS IN WELLBEING

Good international schools take the health and wellbeing of their students seriously, writes **Ruth Holmes**.

As well as ensuring a successful assignment for the whole family, international schools that prioritise the mental and physical health and wellbeing of their student body maximise overall student experience and educational attainment. Research shows that stress reduces intellectual capacity by as much as 10-15 IQ points.

Looking after students' wellbeing also encourages young people to be aware of their own and others' needs – skills that have lifelong importance and help to prepare young people for healthy adulthood and participation in thriving societies and workplaces. So, what wellbeing aspects should you look out for when researching and visiting international schools?

INCREASING AWARENESS OF MENTAL WELLBEING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Fortunately, the focus on the all-round health and wellbeing of children and young people has increased in schools in the past few years.

Intermittent lockdowns and enforced isolation due to the pandemic have taken their toll on all of our mental wellbeing, including the developmentally critical opportunities for children and young people. This unprecedented global event has helped heighten understanding and appreciation of our community and support networks. It has also deepened conversations around mental and physical wellbeing.

A UK survey conducted in 2021 found that 100% of NHS mental health service leaders reported demand for children's and young people's support had increased in the previous six months. For 80% of these professionals, this demand was a 'significant' increase.

How much of this is related to anxiety and other issues caused directly by the pandemic, and a backlog of referrals, and how much is related to heightened understanding of mental health issues, as well as new stressors like social media, is a complex issue. But whatever the cause, good schools are putting their student, parent and staff community first and doubling down on pastoral support.

CHILDREN'S WELLBEING KEY TO INTERNATIONAL MOVES

For children accompanying their parents on international assignments, wellbeing is an especially pertinent issue. Pandemic aside, moving home, work/school, peer group, daily routine and country is among the most stressful experiences for adults – even more so for children. This is also now increasingly being recognised.

Advice on how to make good transitions and why they are important is captured by Professor John Hattie in his definitive research on third-culture kids (TCKs). He concludes that well-managed transitions can add significant value to children's lives and their learning journey. Leading relocation management companies (RMCs) and international schools understand this. They treat relocating families as a group of unique individuals, as well as a collective.

Schools and RMCs following the guidance and training of organisations like SPAN – Safe Passage Across Networks – are helping families with invaluable support to manage transitions so they can get on with "learning, loving, growing, stretching, cross-cultural competence and joy."

These schools include Relocate Think Global People Award winners the International School of London and the International School of Kuala Lumpur. Both have shared how they support families year-round in Relocate Global's International Education and Schools Fair webinar series.

"Transition care and looking after the wellbeing of our families is so important at ISL," says Claudine Hakim, head of advancement, transitions and external relations International School of London. "The transient world we live in today and just coming out of the pandemic, families are in need of special care." Along with other high-quality international schools, ISL has a team dedicated to family and student welfare and that of the wider school community.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Alongside ongoing transitions support, student counsellors, named heads of pastoral care and specialist wellbeing, most schools

also offer age-appropriate advice in regular and one-off workshops, and awareness days. These are designed to inform children and parents on hot wellbeing topics, as well as signpost to more information and advice, these events are often led by guest speakers and subject experts on specific issues like internet and personal safety, alcohol and drug awareness, mental health, bullying, relationships and good study habits.

Faculty members are also important in role modelling positive wellbeing behaviours, mirroring the ongoing renegotiation between employers and employees around work-life balance and boundaries around remote work post-pandemic. For the British School of Manila, head of primary Kate Tomlinson described in TES magazine how setting aside a 'stop week' for staff offers an opportunity to lighten the load from meetings and other non-urgent administrative tasks.

"With a focus on staff wellbeing being prevalent across many schools, one solution to allow for that optimism and positivity to maintain is the introduction of 'stop weeks', writes Kate Tomlinson. "A stop week does not mean closing the school. The concept is to carefully consider the things that we could stop for just one week while also ensuring that nothing in terms of provision for children is lost or impacted. Stop weeks help provide us with time to reflect and pause."

Bringing together educators, parents and students, it's clear that healthy schools around the world build wellbeing into every aspect of what it does daily in a truly child-centred approach. ●



CHOOSING A SCHOOL IN AUSTRALIA

Most international families send their children to the county's state or private schools. The broad and well respected national curriculum allows for easy global transfers, writes **Sally Robinson**.



Blue skies, vibrant multicultural cities, good education and stunning natural beauty: Australia has always been a coveted destination for expat families.

Sydney and Melbourne are the most popular locations and, despite the rivalry between cities, their demographics are remarkably similar. According to the 2022 census both have populations of around 5 million, a median age of 37, thriving education systems and a range of growing industries from finance and professional services to IT and biotech. The 2022 Global Financial Centres Index ranks Sydney as the 13th and Melbourne as 31st centre out of 119 surveyed.

Sydney is largely seen as Australia's economic and financial centre (the Reserve Bank and Australian Stock Exchange are based here) and the strategic centre for banks, fund managers and insurance companies. Melbourne has more manufacturing and is home to 32 of Australia's top 100 companies, including the world's biggest mining company BHP.

THE COST OF LIVING FACTOR

Modelling for Australia's Centre for Population predicts Melbourne is likely to overtake Sydney to become Australian's most populated city by 2026.

According to the latest My Expatriate Market Pay Survey (which monitors expat pay levels globally) from mobility solutions company ECA International, Australia has risen significantly and now ranks in seventh position. This is due to the strengthening of its currencies, increased benefits costs and income tax changes in the past seven months.

That doesn't mean expats find Australia cheap: Sydney is one of 10 most expensive cities in the world in which to live, costlier than London or New York. According to digital property portal Domain, rental prices in Sydney have risen by 14% in the last year in Sydney and by 9% in Melbourne. Buying is expensive too: Demographia International's housing affordability survey for 2022 found Sydney is one of most expensive cities in the world to buy a home.

One of the reasons Australia is so popular with expats is its well respected education system. There are four types of schools: free state schools, private fee-paying schools, Catholic schools and a small number of international schools. Education is managed by the country's six separate states which oversee curriculum in all types of schools. Statistics from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show Australian students have similar attainment levels to those in the UK and US.

The Australian school year runs from January to December meaning students from the northern hemisphere may have to repeat part of the academic year, but schools generally find this is the best way to transfer.

State primary schools generally have a good reputation but a high proportion of Australians send their children to private senior schools. These vary from

Catholic schools (which tend to charge lower fees) to top-tier Sydney and Melbourne private schools where fees can be up to A\$43,000. To attend state schools, expats on temporary resident visas are charged \$5000 per year, per student.

“Around half of expats look for private education but we have recently seen more enter the state system, especially at primary level,” says Traci Crampton of Australian relocation consultancy Elite Woodhams.

State school places are determined by catchment areas so new arrivals need to find the school before looking for housing. Incoming temporary residence visa holders have to show a 12-month lease to prove they are in the catchment before being able to enrol in a school.

CHOOSING BETWEEN PRIVATE OR PUBLIC

In Sydney, most expats chose to live on the North Shore or in the eastern suburbs and the state primary schools in these areas are generally good. It’s a similar story in Melbourne’s affluent eastern and bayside suburbs, such as Kew, Hawthorn and Brighton.

State secondary education in Australia is considered less reliable than primary and many parents (around 40%) educate their children privately at this stage.

Private secondary schools are a big deal in Sydney and Melbourne, and the subject of endless discussion. The most elite schools have long waiting lists and it’s no urban myth that children are regularly registered from the maternity ward. Fees vary between around A\$20,000 and A\$43,000 and some offer boarding. Most are single sex with a few going co-ed for the senior years.

“Private schools in Sydney have the same long waiting lists as schools in the UK and, as a generalisation, it is hard to get a place, although things have eased after Covid,” says Julieanne McCartney, director of Sydney based Exec-Relocations.

“The hardest age group to place is 5-7,” says Elite Woodhams’ Crampton. “It’s easier to get high school students in who are strong academically.”

The traditional, long-established private schools in the more affluent suburbs favoured by expats are the most difficult to get into. Many of these are run along English public school lines with a strong sense of tradition, solid

“Families arrive thinking they need an IB school to get into university overseas but, after discussion with the school, they realise the VCE is easily transferable if their children take the more academic subjects”

TRACI CRAMPTON, ELITE WOODHAMS



academic results and fantastic facilities. These include Melbourne Grammar, (boys) Scotch College (boys), Ruyton (girls), PLC (girls) and Melbourne Girls Grammar in Melbourne and SCEGGS (girls), Sydney Grammar (boys) and the Scots College (boys) in Sydney.

Although most students are locals, expats usually fit in well. “Most private schools have solid expat communities and are used to families coming and going. If the school has places they welcome ex-pats for two or three years,” says Exec-Relocations McCartney.

Both public and private secondary schools work towards Australia’s end-of-school qualification at 18 – the Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Sydney and Victorian Certificate Education (VCE) in Melbourne. A minority of private schools also offer the IB as well, although take up is much smaller.

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS MARKET

There are 215 World IB schools in Australia including those offering the IB diploma or middle or primary years programmes. In Sydney schools offering the IB include SCEGGS (girls), Redland (co-ed), Queenwood (girls), Trinity Grammar (boys), Barker College (co-ed in last two years of school), Ravenswood School (girls), St. Andrews Cathedral School (co-ed), Newington College (boys) and MLC (girls).

In Melbourne, the co-ed Wesley College is one of the best respected IB schools where around 45 per cent of students follow the programme. Carey Baptist Grammar, Caulfield Grammar, Geelong Grammar, MLC and St Leonards are also well known for their IB programmes, offered alongside the traditional VCE.

“Families arrive thinking they need an IB school to get into university overseas but, after discussion with the school, they realise the VCE is easily transferable if their children take the more academic subjects,” says Elite Woodhams’ Traci Crampton.

When it comes to international schools, Australia is a relatively small market. “The demand for international schools is not high because Australia offers a national

curriculum and an approach to learning that many parents consider is reputable,” says ISC Research communications director Anne Keeling.

There are 147 schools in Australia that fall into criteria of an international school, according to ISC, mostly because they offer international curricula. This predominantly includes one or more of the International Baccalaureate programmes (Primary Years Programme, Middle Years Programme, DP or CP) or Cambridge Secondary and/or Cambridge Advanced. Most international schools deliver the IB programme and are based in Sydney.

Some international schools operate bilingual systems such as the German International School in Terrey Hills in Sydney, which opened in 1989 providing English or bi-lingual education and leading to the IB Diploma. Half students come from Australia with the rest from Germany, Austria and Switzerland..

The Lycee Condorcet de Sydney, the French international school, provides a bilingual education leading to the French Baccalaureate and, unlike other schools in Australia, operates on European term dates.

The International Grammar School in Ultimo is a secular co-ed through-train school with full language immersion programmes in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Chinese from aged 3 upwards.

Sydney’s Chinese International K-6 school has a dual language programme where 50 per cent of the curriculum is delivered in Mandarin and the Japanese School runs a dual curriculum – the international division follows the NSW curriculum with daily Japanese lessons up to year 6 and the Japanese curriculum is delivered up to year 9 with daily English lessons.

Expats looking for Muslim education are well catered for at the Australian International Academy of Education, set up in 1999, with four campuses in Melbourne, Sydney, and Abu Dhabi. All are World IB schools with Arabic or Turkish language programmes.

“These international schools tend to attract the nationality of the school as they have immersive language programs,” says Exec-Relocations McCartney. •

“The demand for international schools is not high because Australia offers a national curriculum and an approach to learning that many parents consider is reputable,”

ANNE KEELING, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, ISC RESEARCH



CHOOSING A SCHOOL IN HONG KONG

The city offers a huge choice of quality international schools and, post-Covid, places are easier to secure, writes **Sally Robinson**.



Ten years ago finding an international school place in Hong Kong was a challenge characterised by long waiting lists and demands for hefty debentures to secure admission.

Since then, the Covid pandemic, civil unrest and the new Beijing-decreed national security laws have left Hong Kong unrecognisable from the cosmopolitan metropolis which traded on the tag “Asia’s World City”.

Extreme quarantine requirements (three weeks in a hotel at one stage) and lengthy periods of school closures have only added to Hong Kong’s woes. It’s no surprise, then, that both expats and locals have been leaving in droves: the population fell by 1.6 per cent, or 121,500 in the year to June 2022 according to government data. This marks the third consecutive year of decline and the biggest drop in the last six decades.

Although quarantine restrictions

finally lifted in late September 2022 the hangover of the last five years has been enough to discourage expat movement to the territory. Families who have recently left say they are scarred by endless school closures (some primary schools can still only open half days) and the erosion of democracy and free speech in the territory.

Attracting expats back to Hong Kong is likely to be an uphill slog according to Lee Quane, regional director for Asia of relocation company ECA International. “Companies send staff to Hong Kong as the gateway to China, but as China continues its zero covid policy there is no point recruiting. Hong Kong needs a clear exit plan.”

The territory hopes its recent International Finance Summit (November 1-2) neatly scheduled to dovetail with the return of the city’s much loved Rugby Sevens, will turn things around.



“DEBENTURES ARE A THING OF THE PAST. THE SCHOOL MAY MENTION THEM ON A WEBSITE BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF WAIVERS AND NO FAMILY SHOULD BE BUYING ONE.”

RUTH BENNY, EDUCATION CONSULTANT AND FOUNDER OF TOP SCHOOLS

For now though, most of the territory’s 61 international schools have places. Historically they were required to have no more than 30 per cent local students but this was relaxed in the pandemic. Now it is unlikely to be reinstated and the extra spaces are being filled by locals. “Demand is now from Hong Kong families and mainlanders and not from international families,” says Ruth Benny, education consultant and founder of Top Schools.

“Hong Kong is a tough market for schools to operate in right now,” says Ashwin Assomull, partner at global strategy consultancy L.E.K Consulting. “The market has been in decline for the last two years. As the economy cranks up you would expect Hong Kong to recover, but it’s a slow growth market right now.”

For families who are relocating Hong Kong international schools offer a huge choice of curriculums including Australian, British, American, German and French. Relocating families also need to consider the school’s location. Traditionally, expats have preferred to live on Hong Kong island with easy access to the Central district where most business is done and the best restaurants and shopping are located.

“The most popular schools are still the longest established ones on the island including the Chinese International School (where all pupils spend year 10 in Hangzhou), the Hong Kong International Schools (HKIS), the German Swiss International (GSIS), the Canadian International (CIS) and Kellett, the British international school,” says Benny.

“It has been a tough couple of years,” says Laura Tyson, Kellett’s director of development and community relations, “but there is a real sense of renewed optimism this term.”

Kellett was founded in 1976 by a group of parents looking for a high quality British style education and now educates 1300 pupils at a primary school on the island in Pokfulam and at a purpose-built through-train school in Kowloon Bay which opened 10 years ago. It is one of only three schools in Hong Kong to offer A levels rather than IB. Traditionally the school has had long waiting lists and, even now, the sixth form is almost at capacity and there are only a few places at the

popular Pokfulam primary school. “We have been lucky to pick up students from other schools which has helped,” says Tyson.

In the last decade a handful of new international schools, many of them UK exports of existing schools, have opened in response to the pre-Covid shortage of places. Most have been built off the island in the New Territories where there is more space, with buses bringing pupils in from the island.

The first of the new internationals was Harrow which opened in 2012, bankrolled by oil executive Daniel Chiu. The vast Georgian-style through train school opened to 1500 pupils in Tuen Mun, in the far west of the New Territories, and is popular with mainlanders and Chinese locals. It follows the British curriculum, including GCSE and A level exams and offers weekly boarding. The bus takes one hour from Central, but many families have chosen to move out to Tuen Mun.

Malvern College, another British public school offshoot, opened in 2018 in a brand new campus in the New Territories, close to the Hong Kong Chinese University. It is part of a global network of Malvern schools (others are in Egypt, Qingdao, Chengdu and Switzerland with Barbados and Tokyo due to open in 2023) and is an IB World School.

Global educator Nord Anglia

has a network of 56 international schools in 26 countries including a new stand-alone secondary school in Kwun Tung, Kowloon, which opened in 2021. It joins Nord Anglia’s two primary schools in Hong Kong and follows the English curriculum to IGCSE followed by IB in years 12 and 13. The school encourages its pupils to see themselves as global citizens and has collaborations with world leading institutions such as the Juilliard School, MIT and UNICEF.

According to ISC Research these ultra-premium school brands (often offshoots of prestigious UK independent schools) make up just over one per cent of the internationals schools market, but it’s a growing segment. Parents seek out these brands because they are known to them, but they are also popular with wealthy locals as an alternative to sending their children away to boarding school.

A “flight to quality” is occurring in many countries, including Hong Kong, says Pia Maske, research manager for East Asia at ISC Research. “Some remaining families in Hong Kong are moving to international schools that were previously full,” says Maske.

ISC Research also identifies demand from local families for a quality education at a more affordable price and says there is a market here in the near future.

Pre-Covid, there was an

acute shortage of primary school places and the in 2017 the Hong Kong Bureau of Education gave the go ahead for several new schools including Shrewsbury International. The school opened a bright new campus for 3-11 year olds in Tseung Kwan in 2018 following the English curriculum. One year later, in 2019, Wycombe Abbey, an off shoot of the highly academic UK school, opened its doors in Aberdeen. It offers a bilingual curriculum with a strong emphasis on learning Mandarin and being part of Chinese culture. According to ISC Research, the number of bilingual schools is increasing globally and they now account for one third of the international schools market.

For many families relocating to Hong Kong, the English Schools Foundation (ESF) is the first choice with 22 preschool, primary and secondary schools. Founded in 1967 when demand for English language education was growing as a result of Hong Kong’s expanding economy, it offers an English medium curriculum with students taking IGCSE exams followed by the IB Diploma. Fees are more reasonable than at some other schools, but parents say class sizes are bigger (around 30) and there can be a huge range of abilities in each class.

Many international schools in Hong Kong have traditionally

operated a debenture system, which can be costly for new arrivals. Basically parents, or their employers, have to make a lump sum payment on admission which may be refundable, depreciating or non-refundable at the end of their child’s education, depending on the school. Increasingly, these are being replaced by capital levies – annual non-refundable one off fees. “Debentures are a thing of the past,” says Benny. “The school may mention them on a website but there are a lot of waivers and no family should be buying one.” •

“IT HAS BEEN A TOUGH COUPLE OF YEARS, BUT THERE IS A REAL SENSE OF RENEWED OPTIMISM THIS TERM.”

LAURA TYSON, KELLETT’S DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS



CHOOSING A SCHOOL IN SINGAPORE

Safe streets, green spaces, and a rigorous education system: Singapore has always been a magnet for international families. Now it has overtaken Hong Kong to become Asia's top financial centre (and the third largest in the world below New York and London), according to new figures from the Global Financial Centers Index. **Sally Robinson** reports.

In the last three years Singapore has seen an influx of ex-Hong Kongers driven out by the city's extreme Covid measures and stifling new national security laws. Scores of businesses have relocated, bringing their staff with them.

"Singapore managed the pandemic well," says Lee Quane, a director at global relocation consultancy ECA International. "It was good at rolling out the vaccine, had a clear plan and opened ahead of other cities in Asia."

The downside has been a marked increase in the cost of living: rent and school fees have both risen over the past 12 months. There is also increased demand for school places. Although Western expats are still coming into Singapore, ISC Research, which provides data and intelligence on the international schools' market, identifies most growth as coming from Asia, specifically China, Hong Kong, South Korea, India and Japan. Singaporean children are not permitted to attend international schools.

"Singapore has definitely benefited from Hong Kong's demise," says Ashwin Assomull, a partner at L.E.K consulting. "But the growth in education is not as strong as everyone envisaged. Enrolments are growing, but only by one of two per cent."

NEW SCHOOL OPENINGS

The last few years have been tough, but Singapore is still one of the world's most dynamic and competitive markets for K-12 international education. With over 60 international schools, it offers a diversity of curriculums and fee points. At 16+, IB is the most popular qualification but there are many good options for A levels too.

Despite the pandemic there has been considerable growth in Singapore's international school market. An influx of new schools, including three offshoots of premium British independents, all opened their doors in 2020.

Brighton College, a branch of the British public school known for its strong academics, welcomed pupils to its second partner school (the first is in Abu Dhabi) in August 2020. It offers a premium primary education (fees are SGD34,000) from nursery through to year 6.

A second UK import, the Cambridge-based Perse School, also established a primary school in 2020, following the UK's Cambridge Primary Curriculum. Its facilities are less sophisticated than at some schools, reflected in the more affordable fees (SGC25,000).

The last of the 2020 openings was North London Collegiate (NLCS) which already has schools in Jeju,



Above: Students from Nexus International

Dubai and Bangkok. Located on a swish purpose-built campus, the through-train school teaches an IB curriculum and describes itself as being for “scholars and critical thinkers”. Fees are among the most expensive in Singapore (up to SGD47,000).

“North London Collegiate has been a real success story,” says L.E.K’s Assomull. “It focuses on academic rigour which resonates with both Western ex pats and the Chinese.”

It’s a territory Dulwich College knows well. It was the first UK independent to open in Singapore in 2014 and quickly developed a reputation for strong academics. Located on a purpose-built campus in Bukit Batok, the high-end facilities command some of the most expensive fees in Singapore. Part of a network of 10 international schools in Asia, it offers a premium through-train education for 2000 students who take IGCSE and IB exams. The school is also well respected for its dual language early years programme which delivers lessons in English and Mandarin.

“BRANDED SCHOOLS ARE STILL SOMETHING EVERYONE WANTS TO GET INVOLVED IN. DEMAND FOR INTERNATIONAL K-12 EDUCATION IS GROWING AND THE PARENT SCHOOLS NEED THE INCOME.”

ASHWIN ASSOMULL, L.E.K CONSULTING

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRAND

In the next few years yet another UK import, Wellington College, is set to join the fray, developed in partnership with Singaporean billionaire Peter Lim. It joins Wellington offshoots in Thailand and China, and will cater for 2000 students following the English curriculum and offering IB.

As the new openings in Singapore attest, branded school groups are a growth area. ISC Research shows a global increase in their market share from 23 to 38 per cent in the past five years. Many are expensive but there is still strong demand – the enrolment rate at premium-fee schools has grown by 18 per cent in the last five years.

“Branded schools are still something everyone wants to get involved in,” says L.E.K’s Ashwin Assomull. “Demand for international K-12 education is growing and the parent schools need the income. The brand name gives the investor a head start: parents might not have heard of the school, but investors can refer to its academic track record. It’s a symbiotic relationship.”

New arrivals to Singapore often target the best-known long-established schools. These include the Singapore American School (SAS), Tanglin Trust, United World College of South East Asia (UWCSEA) and Dulwich College. United World College is the most international of the group, with two campuses, educating over 5000 students.

British families often head straight for Tanglin (over 50 per cent of pupils are British passport holders), famous for its lengthy waiting lists. Founded in 1925, it is the only international school in Singapore to offer both IB and A levels in the sixth form. It educates 2800 pupils from aged 3 to 18 and is one of the top performing international schools in Singapore for IB. “Our exam results last year were the highest they have ever been,” says Tom Evans, director of marketing and communications.

THE FUTURE: EXPECT MORE BILINGUAL AND AFFORDABLE OPTIONS

School reputation is very important in Singapore, says Janelle Torres, ISC’s research manager for SE Asia. “It is the reason why legacy school such as Dulwich, Tanglin Trust and UWCSEA are so popular.”

Not all new openings are British spin-offs. Nexus International, owned by Malaysia-based Taylor’s Schools, opened in 2011 and moved to an impressive new purpose-built vertical campus in Aljunied in 2020 which can accommodate 2000 pupils. Nexus offers a hybrid curriculum from early years to IGCSE and then IB diploma. The emphasis is on a flexible learning environment with open plan classrooms. The school has a strong reputation for sport, particularly swimming, thanks to its upscale aquatics centre with Olympic-size pool.

The Invictus International School, one of Singapore’s most affordable international schools (fees around SGD20,000), recently upgraded its facilities opening a new campus in 2021. The school started out as a small primary but the new location offers a K-12 education leading to IGCSE and A levels. Invictus also has an affordable bi-lingual primary school programme.

“We are seeing a greater inclination to learn Mandarin,” says L.E.K’s Assomull. “The schools with bilingual programmes are doing particularly well including the Canadian International School and Dulwich.”

One of the biggest growth areas in Singapore is in more affordable schools where fees hover around SGP\$20,000 (compared with SGP\$40,000 plus at the premium end of the market) and are popular with Chinese families.

“Mid-priced schools are a growth area in Singapore,” says L.E.K’s Assomull. “The government is encouraging this sector because it feels the market is dominated by the premium brands, which not everyone can afford. These less expensive schools get some amazing academic results.”

More affordable options include 5 Steps Academy, DPS International School, Invictus, the Grange, GIG International and Middleton International School. The latter delivers a bilingual education and is owned by education group Eton House, which has 130 schools spread across 11 countries. It has three campuses in Singapore including the West Coast campus which opened in 2022 offering nursery to grade five and the main Tampines campus up to year 12.

One World International in Jurong also offers more affordable fees and operates a 30 per cent nationality cap ensuring a truly diverse student body. It also has Chinese bilingual programme from grades 1 to 5 and a curriculum that blends the IB primary years with IGCSE and the IB diploma.

“It’s definitely possible to find a well-rounded international education at pocket friendly prices in Singapore,” says Anne Murphy, an education consultant at ITS Education Asia.

The move to more affordable schools reflects a global trend, according to ISC Research, which cites a 19 per cent increase in students enrolled in mid-market fee international schools between 2017 and 2022. Several factors have contributed to the growth including the reduction in expat benefits, which often included school fees, and more demand from host nation families. “The international schools’ market is broadening to meet the needs of a wider range of students,” says a recent ISC Research white paper. •

“MID-PRICED SCHOOLS ARE A GROWTH AREA IN SINGAPORE. THE GOVERNMENT IS ENCOURAGING THIS SECTOR BECAUSE IT FEELS THE MARKET IS DOMINATED BY THE PREMIUM BRANDS, WHICH NOT EVERYONE CAN AFFORD. THESE LESS EXPENSIVE SCHOOLS GET SOME AMAZING ACADEMIC RESULTS.”

ASHWIN ASSOMULL, L.E.K CONSULTING



Students from Tanglin Trust



Choosing a school in Malaysia

Malaysia's private education market is due to reach RM19 billion by 2026, with much of the growth coming from local families choosing an international education. **Sally Robinson** reports.

Back in 2012 the government changed the rule that only 40 per cent of international school students could be Malaysian, as part of its economic programme to make Malaysia a regional education hub. This altered the demographic of most international schools who now have at least 50 per cent local students.

Despite the estimated growth, enrolments in K-12 education has slowed in recent years, but there is still demand for quality, affordable education.

Post pandemic, Malaysia's economy is improving and international families are returning. According to the Malaysia Expatriate Talent Service Centre, which processes employment passes for expats, there was a 28 percent increase in applications in 2021 over the previous year, a trend that is likely to continue.

Malaysia is one of the most favoured destinations for international families in South East Asia, according to global mobility specialist ECA International. "This is partly due to its social and geographic diversity as well as its proximity to Singapore," says ECA's regional director, Lee Quane.

The company's MyExpatriate Market Pay Survey shows Malaysia is the cheapest place in Asia to hire expats. "Salaries are lower than in other locations such as China, Hong Kong and Singapore, partly due to Malaysia's low cost of living, but they are still attractive to employees," says Quane.

The housing rental market is still in recovery and there is plenty of stock in popular ex-pat areas such as Damansara Heights and Mount Kiara. Rents have decreased between 10 and 20 per cent over the last decade due to the reduction in expat benefits, fewer arrivals and oversupply.

CHOOSING A CURRICULUM

According to Malaysian education consultancy schooladvisor.my, there are 170 international schools in 16 cities in Malaysia with a wide range of fee points. Most are in Kuala Lumpur, Penang or Selangor and some of the newer premium schools offer boarding.

Kuala Lumpur is home to most international schools with the best known located in the popular ex-pat areas of Mount Kiara and Bangsar. In recent years, international schools have opened campuses in Johor Bahru, a special economic zone close to the Singapore border. "It is an attractive residential location for commuters and remote workers who benefit from higher salaries in Singapore and Malaysia's lower cost of living," says ECAs Quane.

The British curriculum is the most widely followed in Malaysia's international schools, but there are many others on offer from Indian and French to German and American. Post Covid, there are plenty of school places, even in traditionally over-subscribed schools. According to Ken Research, private schools are struggling to increase enrolments due to increasing competition and decreasing birth rates."

The premium schools, charging the highest fees, include the through-train Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur, the British International School of Kuala Lumpur, part of the Nord Anglia group, and a clutch of British public school offshoots including Repton, Marlborough and Charterhouse.

Alice Smith School was the first British international school in Malaysia, founded in 1946, and known for its sense of community. It has a spacious primary campus and a new purpose-built secondary campus and follows the British curriculum to IGCSE and A level. "There is a good mix of ex-pat and local children at the school so it feels diverse but also familiar as many



Students from ISKL

teachers are from the UK," says one recently arrived parent. "Since Covid the numbers are lower and we had no issues getting a place."

The popular Garden International School is the largest private co-educational school in Malaysia (educating 2000 students) is a respected alternative for families living in the affluent Mount Kiara area looking for the British curriculum. Established in 1951, it is one of the first schools in Malaysia to cater for ex-pats and still has high levels of British teaching staff. With over 65 nationalities, it is known for its inclusive community.

The British International school in Selangor, about 40 kilometres from the city centre, opened in 2009 and also follows the British curriculum. It educates around 1200 students from 2-18 years and is part of the Nord Anglia group which has 78 premium schools in 31 countries.

For families from the US, the International School of Kuala Lumpur, established in 1965 as a non-profit American school, is often the first choice. It delivers a blend of US and international curriculums and was Malaysia's first accredited

World IB school. In 2018 it moved to a new 25-hectare campus in Ampang with capacity for 1700 students from early years up.

Many Australian families choose the Australian International School, established in 2000 in the MINES Resort City as the southern end of Kuala Lumpur, around 40 minutes from the centre. It follows the Australian curriculum leading to the New South Wales Higher School Certificate.

AFFORDABLE OPTIONS

More affordable school options include Cempaka International School in Damansara Heights, popular with locals; GEMS International School; Sunway International School, which combines the Canadian curriculum with the IB and Taylor's International.

The least expensive schools include Wesley Methodist College which has schools in Kuala Lumpur and Penang, and St John's International.

The more affordable schools tend to employ locally-trained teachers and have more local students, while the premium schools usually employ

extra curricula programmes and the opportunity to board.

Marlborough college Malaysia was one of the first to open in Johor Bahru, Southern Malaysia's fast-growing economic zone 20km from the border with Singapore. The purpose built 90-acre site opened in 2012, complete with golf driving range, lake for water sports and organic farm. The K-12 school offers boarding for senior years where students take IGCSE exams followed by the IB.

THE GROWTH IN BRANDED EDUCATION

In 2020 Repton International opened, a rebranding of the Excelsior International school, on a 20-hectre forest site in Johor Bahru. Repton carried out a major refurbishment and delivers a curriculum leading to IGCSE followed by A levels and IB in the sixth form.

"International schools have established campuses in Johor Bahru in recent years due to its proximity to Singapore and the large expat community who work there," says Quane.

Epsom College opened in 2014, the first international branch of Epsom College in Surrey. It is a boarding and day school located on 50-acre campus one hours' drive south of Kuala Lumpur in Bandar Enstek, 15 minutes from the airport. Students take IGCSE and A level exams.

Last year Charterhouse International School opened a sixth form college close to the centre of the city and premium residential area Sri Hartamas. Pupils study the A level Cambridge curriculum in the purpose built "university inspired" campus in classes of no more than 12 pupils.

The latest of the UK branded schools to expand into Malaysia is the more affordable Stonyhurst International School in Penang which opened in September 2022. The K-12 school says it will build enrolments in phases and will eventually have 1200 pupils including over 300 boarders.

"Reputation tends to be the deciding factor of parents enrolling their children in international schools in Malaysia. Families who can afford it choose schools with long-standing reputations," says ISC Research's Torres. ●

"Reputation tends to be the deciding factor of parents enrolling their children in international schools in Malaysia. Families who can afford it choose schools with long-standing reputations."

JANELLE TORRES, ISC RESEARCH

Below: Students from Marlborough College





INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES MAKE THE GRADE

International university league tables are still dominated by the UK and the US, but tertiary institutions from Asia to Australia are increasingly offering a quality alternative. **Marianne Curphey** reports.

The Times Higher Education's 'World University Rankings 2023' assessed 1,799 universities in 104 countries across 13 measures focusing on teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.

The global top ten comes as little surprise. Some of the longest established US and UK universities continue to dominate the best universities list in this, the largest, international university comparison. Yet developments further down the rankings show how school-leavers today in international and local schools have far more choice when considering their higher education options around the world.

This is good news all round given the value of international collaboration and experience to thriving individuals, businesses and economies.

THE SHIFTING AXIS OF EXCELLENCE

The best universities are responding to today's ongoing geopolitical shifts and turbulence. The big story for 2022's international university rankings is the pandemic's impact on both teaching and admission, notes THE.

African universities, for example, are growing in influence and impact, offering more options for students in the process. Five countries enter the top 200 for the first time: Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Mauritius. Seventeen African countries also now feature in the ranking compared with nine in 2018, with 25 universities make their ranking debut this year.

Africa's biggest score increase in THE's measures came in the number of citations. "A lot of local researchers were engaged at the start of the pandemic to finish

off projects that global experts couldn't travel for," Gordon Adomdza, Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Ashesi University in Ghana, told the THE.

"I experienced this myself. So that could have increased involvement in research by local researchers, hence the uptick in citations. The real test is if it sustains post-pandemic."

Nigeria has seen the biggest rise in its scores, rising from an average of 27.9 to 31.5. It has overtaken Egypt to claim second place. Twelve universities in Nigeria – twice as many as last year – are now ranked

In Oceania, universities here have outperformed those in North America to secure the highest average overall score based on universities ranked each year since 2018. Australia achieved the highest average performance score, with the University of Melbourne (33 in



WORLD'S TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES 2023

1. University of Oxford
2. Harvard University
3. University of Cambridge
3. Stanford University
5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
6. California Institute of Technology
7. Princeton University
8. University of California, Berkeley
9. Yale University
10. Imperial College, London

Source: Times Higher Education's 'World University Rankings 2023' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2023/world-ranking>

TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES IN ASIA (2023 world rank in brackets)

1. Tsinghua University (16)
2. Peking University (17)
3. National University of Singapore (19)
4. University of Hong Kong (31)
5. Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (36)
6. The University of Tokyo (39)
7. Chinese University of Hong Kong (45)
8. Seoul National University (56)
9. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (58)
10. Fudan University (51)

Source: Times Higher Education's 'World University Rankings 2023' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2023/world-ranking>

the global ranking) in the top spot, followed by Monash University (44 in the global ranking). The country is increasingly attractive to international students, to the cost of universities in the US and UK.

Universities in Asia also fared particularly well, especially on international outlook. Together the figures suggest the economic pivot to Asia is also well underway now for tertiary education options. While Japan is the most-represented nation again this year (118 institutions, up from 116 last year), rising standards and demographic trends means it now has only one university in the regional top 10 (University of Tokyo) compared with two in 2021. Eight are now in the top 100 universities in Asia, down from 14 in 2020.

The global and regional rankings suggest that increasing competition, boosted by geopolitical shifts and one-off events, are bidding up the quality of offering in international higher education.

The expansion of world-class universities to more countries is having "a slight crowd-out effect in relation to US universities", commented Simon Marginson, Director of the Centre for Global Higher Education at the University of Oxford, in the THE. "The growing number of excellent universities outside of the US is causing a small relative decline in reputation, but this is not because the quality of American universities

themselves is impacted.

"There's no evidence that US research is weakening in an absolute sense, or US universities are in any way in decline." As the global rankings indeed show, "This continues to be the most prestigious system in the world."

STUDENTS STAYING CLOSER TO HOME?

With the quality of universities boosted across the board, some of the traditional reasons for seeking undergraduate study abroad may no longer be as relevant as they once were, including for third-country nationals who may consider returning to their home country to study for a degree.

So, is the appeal of an international degree on the wane? Figures from Universities UK released after the summer A level results show how the number of international students is yet to fully recover after Covid. But what do these trends mean for all-important knowledge sharing, cross-border collaboration, global citizenship and cultural awareness – all critical for 21st century challenges like climate change, social justice and what it means to be human in a digital age?

International students – already well-educated, culturally aware, often at least bilingual and recognisably entrepreneurial by the goal of studying abroad – make valuable contributions to economies and businesses around the world.

For every 14 international students in the UK, there's a £1mn benefit to local economy. At its core, the UK Government's policy paper, 'International Education Strategy: global potential, global growth' has the goal of increasing the number of international higher education students hosted in the UK to 600,000 per year by 2030.

"In sharing knowledge, skills and innovation with international partners around the world, we can also generate opportunities to help raise education standards both at home and around the world," it says, recognising the role of collaboration and knowledge transfer across borders in responding to shared challenges like climate change, as well as the quantifiable financial benefits.

Alongside perhaps temporary changes to the global mobility of international students, a study by graduate employer branding expert Universum shows the appetite for international careers has also been dented by uncertainty in recent years. This again suggests international Gen Z talent is hunkering down – at least for now.

Given that most new graduates regard themselves as 'globetrotting', the consultancy is confident that global careers will be back on the agenda. For now, vice-chancellors and boards are upping their game in the face of geopolitical headwinds around student visas on hot topics like wellbeing, equity and inclusion, safeguarding and free speech, as well as the quality of their accommodation and all-round student experience.

Universities like Tokyo University are seeking to attract a dwindling number of younger people in these more travel-averse times. It is looking to offer more undergraduate courses in English alongside opportunities to transfer and finish degrees in Japan. Students at university in their home countries can also benefit from international experience through exchange programmes like Erasmus in the EU and the Turing Scheme, the UK's global programme for studying, working and living abroad that offers once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for personal and professional development for students, as well as other scholarships.

WHAT DO GRADUATE EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR?

As well as the course, location, affordability and all-round experience, employability is also a key factor in choosing a university. The latest 'Global Employability University Ranking and Survey' (GEURS) run by higher education consultancy Emerging and published by THE defines employability as the combination of six drivers: internationality, academic excellence, specialisation, graduate skills, focus on work expertise and digital performance.

Employers' priorities have shifted since 2018 to the latest study in 2021 from academic excellence to graduate skills. Digital performance is also on the rise. For now, the top three universities for employability are in the US, despite the shifts outlined in THE and GEURS identifying "rapid global diversification of top universities and countries when measured by employability."

"When it comes to deciding where to study, employability is becoming an increasingly important factor," says the study. "Quite simply, students and parents want to know that the often-high costs of a degree-level education will lead to a beneficial outcome when it comes to stepping onto, and climbing, the career ladder.

"India's universities see a clear rise for the first time in a number of years thanks to the rise of soft skills and digital literacy and technical and research specialisation. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi holds on to 27th place and all other universities ranked last year (six total) climb an average of 20 places in the table. Bangalore University (249th) enters the ranking for the first time."

With so much on offer when choosing a university, students today really do have a world of opportunity. •

"In sharing knowledge, skills and innovation with international partners around the world, we can also generate opportunities to help raise education standards both at home and around the world"

UK GOVERNMENT'S POLICY PAPER, 'INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY: GLOBAL POTENTIAL, GLOBAL GROWTH'

EUROPE'S TOP TEN UNIVERSITIES 2023 (2023 world rank in brackets)

1. University of Oxford
2. University of Cambridge
3. Imperial College, London
4. ETH Zurich
5. UCL
6. University of Edinburgh
7. Technical University of Munich
8. LMU Munich
9. King's College London
10. London School of Economics and Political Science

Source: Times Higher Education's 'World University Rankings 2023' <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-europe>

TOP TEN COUNTRIES FOR UNIVERSITY EMPLOYABILITY

1. USA
2. France
3. UK
4. Germany
5. China
6. Canada
7. Japan
8. Australia
9. Switzerland
10. Netherlands

Source: GEURS 2021 <https://www.employability-ranking.com/ranking>



Eight things to bear in mind when choosing a university for your globally mobile teen

Expat families often face difficult choices when their children reach educational milestones – at 11 when joining secondary education, at 16 when considering A Levels, International Baccalaureate Diploma and other qualifications, and at 18 when looking for suitable universities and further education colleges for tertiary education, writes **Marianne Curphey**.

Here are the considerations that a parent and young adult need to think through particularly when choosing to study at a university in a country where your family is not currently living.

1. THE REPUTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Many parents are keen for their children to have the kudos of a university that is world-renown and has a reputation for academic excellence.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2023 includes more than 1,600 universities across 99 countries and territories, making them the largest and most diverse university rankings to date.

Among the UK higher education institutions, eight UK universities are featured in the top 50 global rankings. Along with the University of Oxford, which has just been named the best university in the world by the World Academic Summit and the University of Cambridge, UK universities offer fantastic tertiary education opportunities. Parents need to be clear about the difference in the UK between The Russell Group, whose 24 members are world-class, research-intensive universities, and Metropolitan Universities, which tend to offer more vocational courses and accept lower grades.

In the US, the Forbes list of America's top colleges lists Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as the best followed by Stanford University and University of California Berkeley.

The World University Rankings in 2022 placed the University of Oxford in the UK as its top global university, followed by the California Institute of Technology and Harvard University in third place. Two Chinese universities, Peking and Tsinghua, made the top 20 rankings in 2022.

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Courses vary widely and your teen may have a clear idea of the subject they wish to cover, but they will also need to research the details and modular structure of the course. Some courses are more practical than others, but if you are looking for a high-ranking university degree, then those institutions that have research facilities are likely to score highest in the rankings and require more intense academic work.

Many modern degree level courses are structured in terms of modules, which may be examined by traditional exams or by assessed dissertations or other pieces of work over the three years. It is possible in some humanities courses to be examined almost completely by coursework rather than timed exams. Universities have also embedded coursework such as presenting or hosting seminars into the curriculum in order to help students develop transferable skills which will be useful in the workplace.

Medical and veterinary courses often require students to pass a high threshold for first year exams in order to continue into the second and third years. Generally speaking, a Bachelor degree runs for three years, while a Masters lasts one year.



“Universities are aware that accommodation is a particularly important issue for international students. This has led to a lot of purpose-built student flats close to many of the campuses.”

3. POST-DEGREE EMPLOYABILITY

Having a degree from a prestigious university can certainly boost your career prospects. These days, however, universities are aware that it is very expensive to study at degree level and know that students want more information and support in order to access top-level graduate roles when they leave.

For this reason, top universities place a great deal of emphasis on post-degree employability. They offer add-ons such as language courses and careers help in order to help students stand out. Good universities will also have careers advisers and will incorporate transferable skills practice into the degree in order to prepare students for corporate life. Many offer work placements, either in the holidays or for one semester. It is also often possible to spend a year working at a partner university, or in industry as work experience. Sometimes this equates to an extra year of the degree, and sometimes it is incorporated into the three year undergraduate degree.

4. THE ACCOMMODATION & FACILITIES

Universities are aware that accommodation is a particularly important issue for international students. This has led to a lot of purpose-built student flats close to many of the campuses. In the UK, for example, many Russell Group universities guarantee that overseas students will be able to live in university-owned accommodation for the full length of their course. This promise is not always made to home students although many offer accommodation for first year students. Universities also recognise that students coming from

abroad may not go home at every holiday between the semesters. For this reason, accommodation that is offered to foreign students tends to provide a longer lease (eg 42 weeks of the year) to allow for this.

In order to ensure that you qualify for the university-owned accommodation it is important to apply by the deadlines. In the UK this is September before term starts.

When considering accommodation think about what sort of accommodation you want – historic or modern? One will be atmospheric and architecturally interesting, but a more modern, purpose built accommodation block may be better designed for student use with more communal areas. Broadband and wi-fi are usually included in the cost of the room, and you will have the choice of catered halls or self-catered accommodation. If your teen chooses shared self-catered accommodation they may be required to clean their own bathroom and to help keep the communal areas clean and tidy as many university flats do not provide a cleaning or housekeeping service. They may also need to share laundry facilities.

In the UK, accommodation is usually of mixed gender – if this is an issue you can contact the university and ask what options they have available for single-sex accommodation.

Some rooms are ensuite, or even self-contained flats, but depending on your budget you may wish to opt for shared facilities and kitchens, as this will be cheaper. It is also a good way to meet people and to socialise. Catering facilities may be reduced over holiday periods, particularly Christmas, and this is something to bear in mind if you won't be going home at those times.

Another important point to bear in mind is whether the university is campus-based or part of a city. Many universities are based on their own purpose-built campuses, with teaching, accommodation and leisure facilities onsite. Others are spread across different parts of the city and you may need to travel between departments and accommodation but you have the benefit of being in the heart of the city.

5. THE FEES & OVERALL COSTS

Tuition fees vary from one university to another and whether your family counts as domiciled in that jurisdiction. For example, home students studying in the UK have their tuition fees capped at £9,250 but foreign students pay much more.

For example, Oxford University explains that course fees cover the provision of tuition, supervision, academic services and facilities by the University (including your department or faculty) and the colleges, but do not include residential or other living costs. If you are an EU national and do not live in the UK then you are likely to be charged fees as an overseas student.

This means your annual tuition fee will be much higher than a home student and could vary from £25,000 to £45,000 depending on the course and university you have chosen. You will not be eligible for a tuition fee loan from the UK government and will have to fund the fees upfront or in termly instalments. It can be cheaper to pay upfront as you may be able to negotiate a discount.

Your fee status is based upon where you usually live and your nationality, so it is very important to think about this before you apply. Some families choose to relocate back to their home country in the years leading up to their children's tertiary education.

In the US it is very important to plan how you will

fund your course and living expenses if you are attending as an international rather than a home student. In order to satisfy U.S. Immigration requirements you will need to show that you have budgeted and can afford your tuition fees and living costs for the course.

6. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The university year starts at different times around the world and this is a particular consideration if you or your teen is planning to start an undergraduate degree in a different country.

In the UK the first academic semester starts in September, but in Australia the academic undergraduate year starts in March, and in the US the academic year typically starts in August. Bear in mind that you will need to allow time to move into your accommodation and complete any entry visa requirements if you are moving jurisdictions for study.

It is also important to check academic entry requirements, as many universities are flexible around secondary qualifications such as A Level exams in the UK and the European Baccalaureate diploma.

If you want to study at a UK university you will need to apply via the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admission Service) website and all of the process can be done online. When you are researching your course you need to check whether the university requires additional tests and interview. For example, medical schools, veterinary courses and Oxford and Cambridge Universities require students to sit assessments in September and to attend interviews before being offered a place to study which is conditional on their exam results the following August. For US universities you may need to take a Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) and to write an essay as part of your pre-application process.

7. YOUR PREDICTED GRADES

If you have already received your grades you can apply via UCAS in the UK. If, however, you are yet to take your exams you can apply via UCAS and may be offered a place based on you meeting the course requirement grades. The UCAS form officially has to be submitted by January 25, 2023 for entry into the academic year of September 2023. In practice most schools encourage their UK students to submit their application well before Christmas.

Grade offers differ between universities and courses, with Oxford and Cambridge requiring three A* grades for many courses, and Russell Group universities asking for three A grades. For this reason, UK schools often advise students to have a first choice university with an aspirational grade goal, and an “insurance” university which requires lower grade attainments. If you fail to make the grades for both your first choice and your insurance university you may be able to find a place on a UK university course via Clearing. This takes place immediately after A Level results (which for the next cohort will be August 17, 2023). Postgraduate students can apply directly to the chosen university if they meet the set requirements.

It used to be the case that some UK universities would give prospective students unconditional offers if they made them their first choice. This was seen as demotivating by the UK government and is now strongly discouraged.

While your predicted or achieved grades are very

important, they are only one part of the picture that universities build up. In the UK and US, admissions are also based on community involvement, leadership and distinction in extracurricular activities, and personal qualities and character. References from teachers and schools form part of the assessment process, as do a student's own personal statement and non-academic interests and achievements.

8. YOUR TRAVEL COSTS

For international families, an important consideration is travel to and from home, or wherever the rest of the family is going to be based while the student is at university.

Studying abroad may mean extra costs such as flights, trains and taxis, and these are important to build into your overall budget. If the wider family is planning to come and help the student settle in, they may need to book accommodation near to the university for a week or two. This tends to book up quickly so it is a good idea to organise it as early as you can.

Other additional costs will include registering for student visas, allowing for the cost of phone calls home (although Skype and FaceTime are free with a broadband connection) and buying railcards or transport passes.

Health insurance is an important consideration wherever you are studying, as is insurance for your possessions, particularly laptops and phones. Fluctuating currency rates can make it more difficult for students to budget effectively, and they will need to set up a new bank account in the country where they are planning to study. You can save on travel costs by signing up to airline points and rewards cards and checking term dates in order to book flights home as early as possible in order to take advantage of discounted rates. •

“For international families, an important consideration is travel to and from home, or wherever the rest of the family is going to be based while the student is at university.”



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