

Bridging Quality Assurance and Recognition Frameworks: The role of UNESCO regional conventions and challenges

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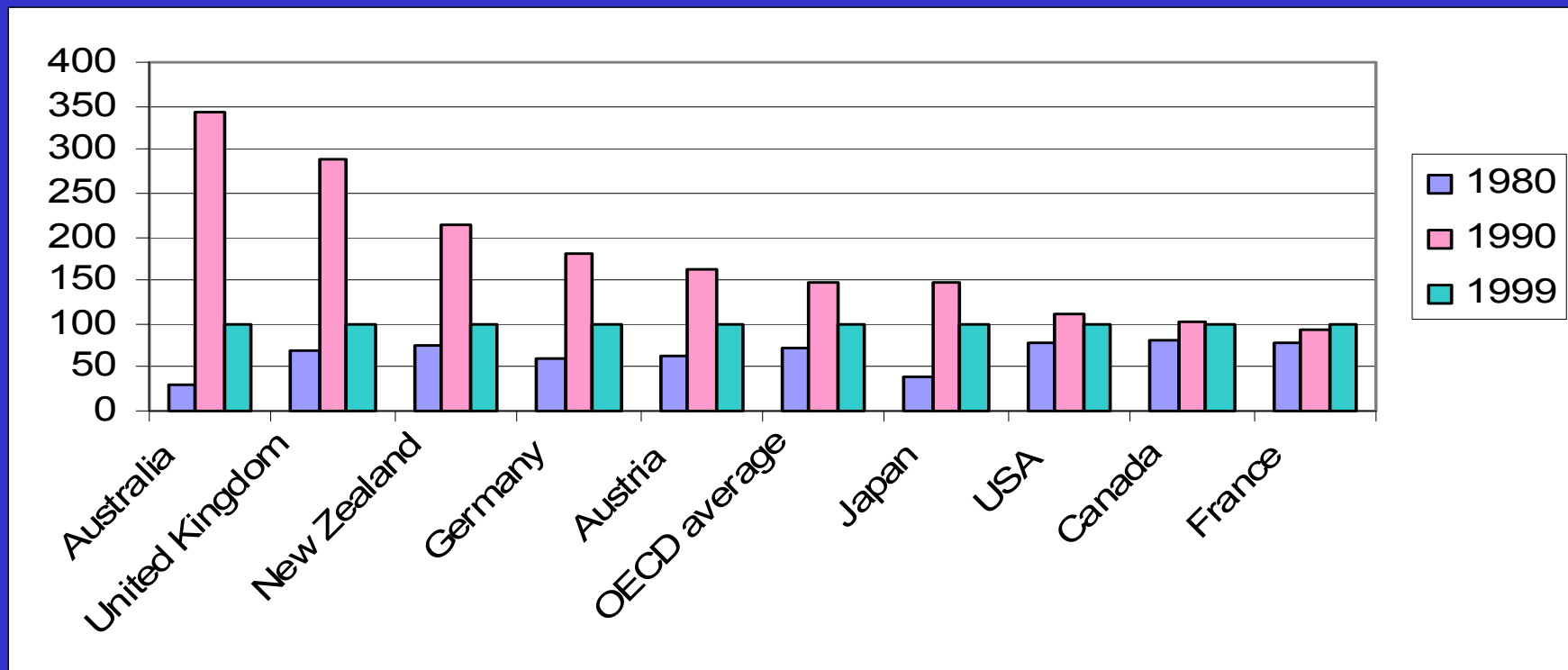
*UNESCO/Norway Global Forum on
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Implication for North-South Dialogue”*



Outline:

1. Trends in international student mobility, highly skilled personnel and trans-national education.
2. Challenges for national quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications.
3. Developments in international quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of academics qualifications.
4. Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions.
5. OECD work related to cross-border post-secondary education.

Increase of foreign tertiary students in OECD countries 1980 – 1999 (1990 = 100)



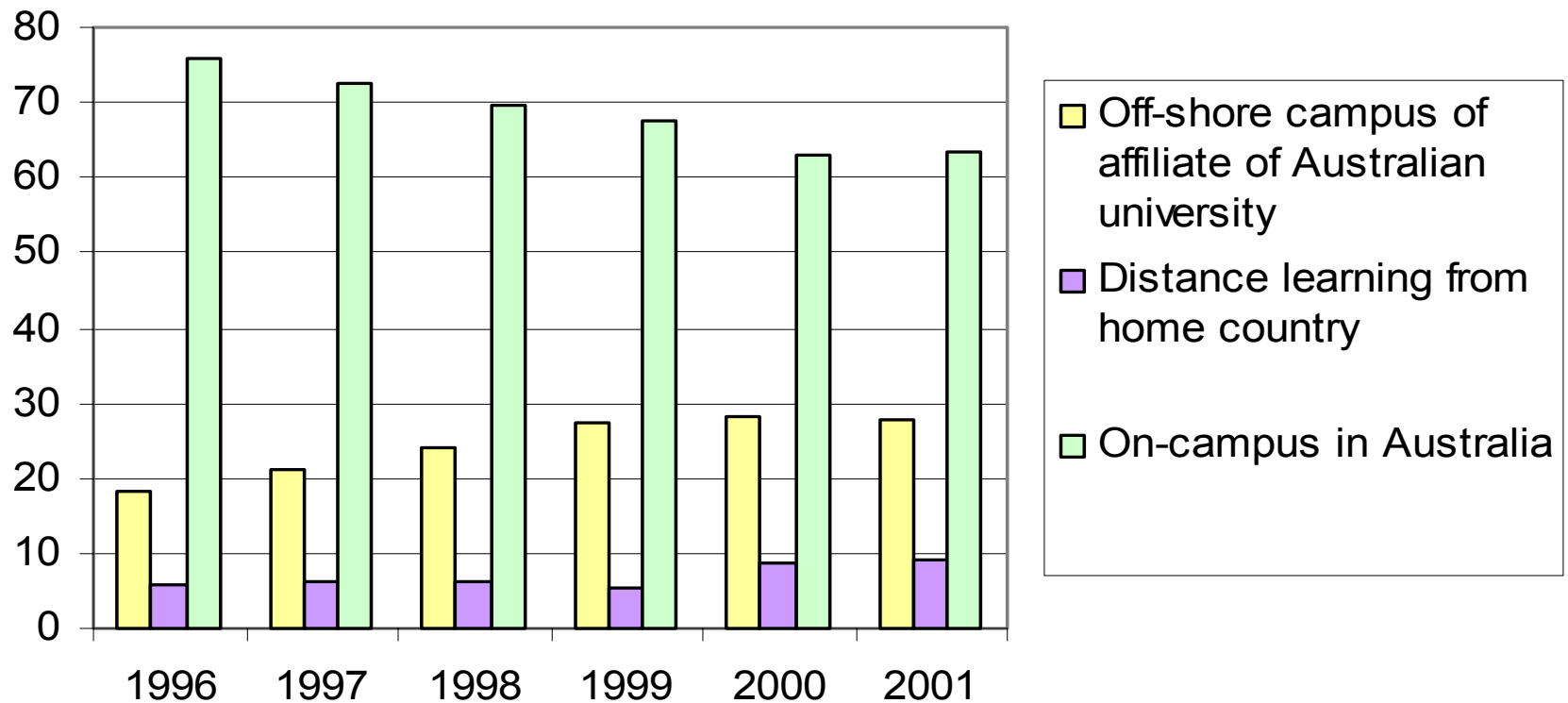
Source: UNESCO for 1980 and 1990, except for Japan (Ministry of Education); OECD for 1999.

Increase of foreign tertiary students in OECD countries from the 15 top sending countries (1999)

		Number of students sent to OECD countries	Share of tertiary students abroad within the OECD
1	China	98 813	7 %
2	Korea	69 840	5 %
3	Japan	63 340	4 %
4	Greece	57 825	4 %
5	Germany	52 239	4 %
6	France	48 764	3 %
7	India	48 515	3 %
8	Turkey	44 009	3 %
9	Malaysia	40 873	3 %
10	Italy	39 487	3 %
11	Morocco	36 504	3 %
12	Hong Kong China	32 476	2 %
13	USA	32 122	2 %
14	Indonesia	30 741	2 %
15	Canada	27 181	2 %

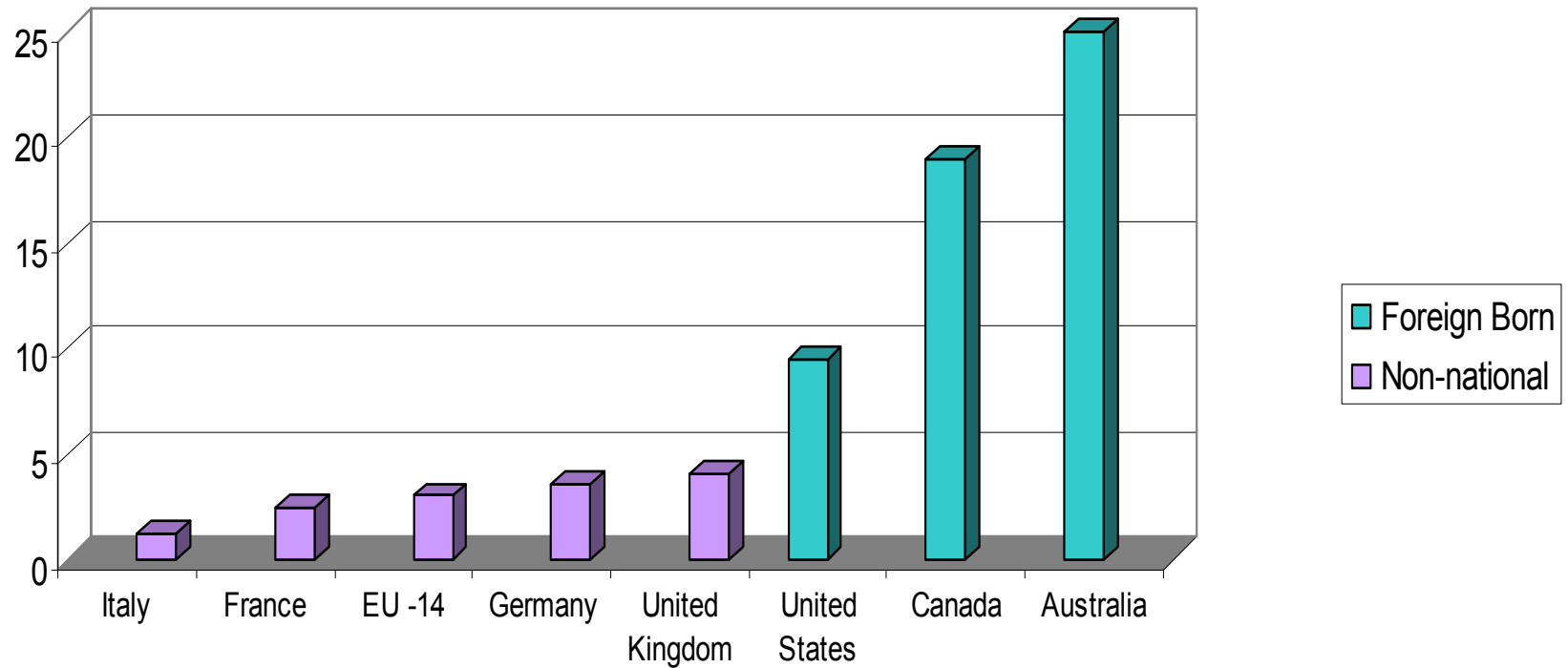
Source: OECD Education database

Distribution of international students in Australian universities by mode of study, 1996 to 2001



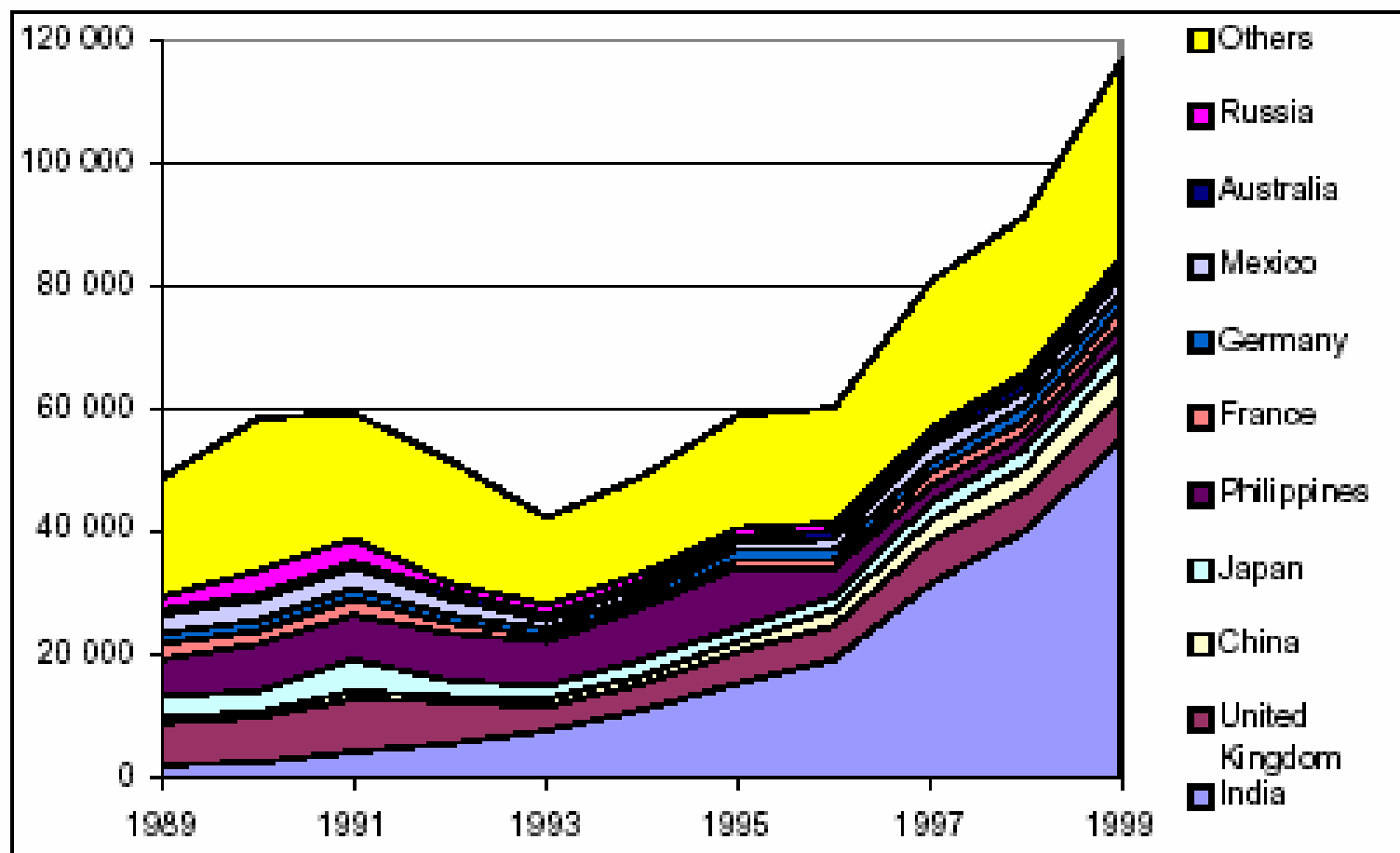
Source: IDP Education, Australia

Share of non-nationals or foreign, both in highly skilled employment



Source: Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard, OECD 2001; Trends in International Migration, OECD 2001.

US H-1 visas issued by country of origin, 1989 - 99



Source: OECD adapted from Lowell, 2000.

Trends in cross-border post-secondary education

- Both political and cultural, as well as economic motives have fuelled the growth in cross-border education;
- Unmet student demand for higher education especially in developing countries;
- Cross-border education has taken new forms, including universities operating abroad and educational programmes being supplied across borders through e-learning;
- Increasing public and private HE institutions are partnering with private providers. Some private for-profit providers are buying private HE institutions abroad;
- Public and private non-for-profit universities and colleges have a much higher share of commercial cross-border activities in higher education than private for-profit companies.

Challenges for national quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications

- Globally the challenges are very different. The international legislative instruments are in place in the enlarged Europe but not in many other parts of the world.
- Lifelong learning: less focus on formal learning and curriculum, more focus on learning outcomes.
- The emphasis is shifting towards evaluation for the labour market; professional recognition gaining in importance.
- Focus on building up national qualification frameworks.
- How to quality assure cross-border providers and programs?
- GATS discussions have put more pressure on implementing new or existing instruments for international quality assurance and recognition of academic qualifications.

Developments in international quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications

- Dirk van Damme's 4 models:
 1. Informal exchange of information and best practice.
 - Enhancing convergence
 - Enhancing convergence and including cross-border providers and programmes.
 2. Formal mutual recognition.
 3. Meta-accreditation.
 4. International accreditors.

Developments in international quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications

Examples:

Ad 1a) INQAAHE, ENQA, Bologna process on a European Higher Education Area etc.

Ad 1b) UNESCO and the Council of Europe: “Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Trans-national Education.” UK, Australia and the US assessing their cross-border education activities.

Ad 2) Academic recognition: UNESCO regional conventions. Mobility and credit transfer programmes.

Professional recognition: Stimulation through trade agreements, Washington Accord.

Ad 3) Establishing a world-wide quality register based on meta-accreditation.

Ad 4) International professional associations (EFMD – European Foundation for Management Development) + University networks (Universitas 21, Project by EVA etc.), Global accreditor?

Developments in international quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications

Conclusions:

- All four-five types of international cooperation already exist.
- The dominant one today is n°1.
- The three other types will increasingly gain importance.
- “Bottoms up” approaches are more sustainable.
- Different subjects can have different international cooperation on QAA.

Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions

- Great advantage - the UNESCO regional conventions have global coverage.
- The GATS discussions have put greater emphasis on the UNESCO regional conventions. There is greater pressure on implementing them nationally.
- The UNESCO regional conventions are based on international cooperation, best practices and trust between nations.
- Clearly, the Lisbon convention (UNESCO/Council of Europe) is the most updated compared to the other conventions.
- In the enlarged Europe (and Australia) the international legislative instruments are probably in place. The main focus should now be on implementation and enhanced cooperation.

Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions

- Implementation of Lisbon Convention is improving but not in all signatory countries (USA, Canada).
- The other regional conventions probably need to be updated. Cross-border education activities have increased and changed considerably over the last 20 years.
- In some cases, the “pressure” to cooperate internationally is related to the implementation of regional trade agreements (Mercosur, APEC etc.).

Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions

UNESCO regional convention and GATS:

There is a need to build a stronger education response to cross-border education issues. UNESCO's regional conventions might be one response.

- GATS will not deliver an education response.
- “Integrating” UNESCO regional conventions with reference to Article 6.4 in GATS would most likely be a major mistake.
- Uncertainty about Article 6.4 in GATS, which mandates the WTO to develop any necessary disciplines so that measures relating to qualification requirements and procedures, technical standards and licensing, is not more burdensome than necessary to ensure the quality of the service.

Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions

- It is questionable whether educational concerns can be effectively accommodated inside GATS which may bind countries to “least trade-restrictive” regulation.
- The “good will” component required to make mechanisms such as UNESCO's regional conventions operational may well be incompatible with the potentially adversarial nature of trade agreements.

Which role for UNESCO's regional conventions

Conclusions:

- The international education community must work on finding an educational response to international quality assurance and academic recognition of qualifications.
- The UNESCO regional conventions are readily available and they have global coverage. They might be one good response, but updating of some of the conventions is necessary.

And more importantly,

- Implementation of the conventions is crucial.

OECD work:

Major Fora on trade in educational services

- OECD/US Forum, May 2002
- OECD/Norway Forum, 3-4 November 2003
- OECD/Australia Forum, October 2004
- Analysing current trends in national policies, institutional/provider activities in cross-border post-secondary education in the three major regions of the OECD, North America, Europe and Asia Pacific.
- Mapping current trends in international quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications.
- Analysing e-learning case-studies of institutions in post secondary education.
- Future scenarios of universities.