



WORKING WITH AGENTS



**WORKING WITH EDUCATION AGENTS TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY
YOUR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLMENT**

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Globalisation has propelled the demand for overseas education to an unprecedented level. More students than ever wish to study abroad. Growing wealth and emerging middle classes in many economies are allowing larger numbers of students to do so.

With the increasing number of students, the competition among educators has grown. International student recruitment is becoming a bigger priority for institutions all over the world as new study destinations compete fiercely for market share and educators look for ways to bring their offerings to overseas markets.

The most cost-effective way of establishing your institution in a specific market on a long-term basis is to outsource your student recruitment to education agents. The agents' knowledge will help you penetrate the market, find new student sources, and help you increase your student intake quickly and effectively.



WHAT IS AN EDUCATION AGENT?

An education agent is an individual, organisation, or company that provides education support and placement services to students who are interested in studying abroad. An agent advises students and their families when selecting an institution, study programme, and study destination based on their individual needs.

TYPES OF AGENTS

Education agents and referral representatives

This type of agent represents a limited number of educational institutions, often specialising in particular programmes and destinations. Usually, an agreement has to be in place before agents in this category will start representing an institution.

Study abroad advisors

These professionals work from international advising centres, providing general information about study abroad opportunities, often under the umbrella of a public organisation.

Travel agents with an education division

These agents will sell educational programmes in addition to other travel packages. Although many educators initially shy away from working with travel agents, they do make good educational representatives. Travel agents often have a solid and wealthy customer base, offices in good locations, good English speaking skills, familiarity with visa administration, and international currency transactions. Low profit margins in the competitive travel industry give them an incentive to invest in educational departments as a means of expanding their business.

WHY WORK WITH EDUCATION AGENTS?

Professional educational advising is increasingly seen as a must-have service. In many countries, it is common practice for prospective students to use an education agent when seeking placement in an educational institution abroad. In some countries, 60–80% of international students are assisted by education agencies and advisors.

Agents who understand the local market can be your point of contact and act as an extension of your recruitment team. As a direct link to the students and their families, agents can answer any questions, reassure and guide them along the entire admissions process, and provide visa application support. Agents are best equipped to maximise the usage of social networks in their home countries and know best how to reach and recruit potential students.

WHAT CAN AN EDUCATION AGENT DO FOR YOU?

- Provide fast and direct access to specific local territories with their market and language knowledge as well as cultural familiarity
- Provide innovative suggestions for promotion suited to the target country
- Recruit students efficiently and with local expertise
- Considerably reduce your admissions department's workload by taking on significant recruitment duties without being a burden on your HR budget
- Help you diversify your enrolment across a number of countries without having to spend a considerable amount of money to market your programmes in each country
- Provide in-country support and thus reduce the need for frequent travel to markets
- Help you improve the quality of student applicants by using specified criteria to target appropriate students
- Help generate applications for less popular programmes
- Represent you on a year-round basis
- Provide you with local infrastructure
- Provide you with local student feedback



ADVANTAGES OF RECRUITING STUDENTS THROUGH EDUCATION AGENTS

Agents are a low-risk, low-cost way of increasing international student enrolment. Both your institution and students can benefit from the many advantages of outsourcing student recruitment to agents. Once a good network of agents is established, it will cost relatively little to service.



An agent is an accountable local person in whom students and their parents can confide and contact easily in their own country and language. This is especially important to students who are choosing a long-term study programme.



The agent will be familiar with both your institution's strengths and course offerings and the student's profile, needs, expectations, and abilities. They should be able to suggest a good match.



Agents offer useful value-added services to students such as assistance with application forms, travel arrangements, insurance, accommodation, exam preparation, and visa applications.



Agents also give valuable counselling, saving students' time and helping them make their decision, as well as provide them with useful pre-arrival information (e.g., about the city, local transport, cost of living, climate, social etiquette, cultural and social life, food, etc.)



If needed, agents can provide telephone and email support to students and their families once they are overseas.

Choosing where to study abroad is one of the most important decisions that students make in their lifetime. It also represents a considerable financial commitment often funded by their families. Moreover, travelling and living in a foreign country is not always easy even for the most seasoned of professionals, and for students who are shy or coming from rural areas, it can be an overwhelming experience.

As parent and student expectations continue to increase, the role of student recruitment agencies has changed and evolved beyond the admissions process to include additional services surrounding visas and travel, as well as the counselling process.

Most educators do not realise the prevalence of agent use in major sending destinations. Students need the services that agents provide and use them even if the agent does not have a formal agreement with a particular institution. Quite simply, students rely on agents for their expertise.