



An abstract graphic design consisting of several overlapping, tilted rectangular shapes in various shades of blue (from light to dark) against a dark blue background, creating a sense of depth and motion.

Annual report  
2013-2014

BRITISH UNIVERSITIES' INTERNATIONAL LIAISON ASSOCIATION



## Chair's Report

### Welcome from the Chair



The last year has continued to be a testing time for the sector with the new immigration bill and its suggestion of NHS contributions and Landlord checks; removal of TOEFL from the SELT list; an unimpressive recovery of 3% on the 2012/13 decline in international enrolments for

the first time in 16 years and continued budget constraints and priority changes. As the executive at BUILA sought to inform and support members to meet these challenges, we were also able to make real progress in taking forward our Manifesto, launched in July 2013. The Manifesto set out our plans to take a more proactive lobbying role, improve and increase the effectiveness of our communication with members and partners, and to deliver enhanced support to our members' professional development. You can read about the work we have been doing to achieve this in the Annual Report.

During 2013-2014 we strengthened our relationship with key existing partnerships and expanded our liaison to ensure our members voices were heard in a number of new areas crucial to those within the target markets and our universities, including QAA, and TNE. We have used this important network to provide feedback on various discussions on immigration changes, with the most recent change being the BID process and the newly published SELT list. The relationship with our partner organisations has also allowed us to support our members' personal development by speaking at partner conferences and workshops, and delivering joint training. We have improved communication with our members through the introduction of a Directors mailing list and are in the process of developing Specialist Regional Interest Groups, to be launched in 2015. These will allow us to tailor our communications and deliver up to the minute information to you around changes in relevant legislation, whilst seeking your opinions for a sector wide response to strategically important consultations and ad-hoc working groups.

We continue to keep a watching eye on some of the key initiatives introduced by our partners and those who have an impact on our work, providing feedback on their implementation and effectiveness in the target markets and within our universities. This year such initiatives have included, Science without Borders, the Great Campaign, Horizon 20/20 and the expansion of Chevening.

We are delighted that our membership grew yet again during the year; we now represent 138 of the Higher Education organisations in the UK, and the numbers increased once more at our 10th Annual Conference with many declaring that this is now the 'must go to' conference for the sector. BUILA members and partners enjoyed an impressive line-up of private and public sector speakers challenging and supporting the way we think and deliver our work, whilst finding the energy to put their best foot forward at the Ceilidh in the splendid surroundings of the former home of the Scottish Church. We are really pleased with your feedback that our aim, to ensure that the conference offers something for everyone to take away and implement in their everyday work life, was achieved.

On behalf of the executive and the membership I would like to thank all our sponsors and the members of the Conference Team who worked tirelessly to make the event such an outstanding success. We head to Liverpool during the second week of July 2015 for our 11th Annual Conference and the Conference team are busy planning a stunning array of speakers and topics plus 'something completely different' for the eagerly awaited Conference dinner.

As we continue our work with an enthusiastic and committed executive team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank long standing executive member Mike Gibbons for his work on the committee particularly in respect of his contribution to past BUILA Conferences and his role ensuring the BUILA voice was heard by the Joint Education Taskforce. Thanks must also go to our other outgoing members of the Executive team; Charlie Carter for his involvement supporting the development of an International Consultation Steering Group within UCAS, and Rachel Dodd for her work taking the BUILA Training agenda forward.

We look to the future where we may have a new government, where traditional recruitment continues to be tested and where competition continues to surprise us as new countries throw their hats into the ring. As BUILA continues to gain strength in its lobbying position, at a time when the sector needs it most, I hope you will continue to support the Association's activities to ensure the power of 'one voice'.

Charlene Allen, *Chair of BUILA*

BUILA launched a Manifesto at the Directors Forum in July 2013. The Manifesto set out our plans to take a more proactive lobbying role, improve and increase the effectiveness of our communication with members and partners, and to deliver enhanced support to our members' professional development. During 2013 - 2014 we began a programme developing and implementing the actions needed to achieve these ambitious aims.

### Increasing our lobbying effectiveness

We had two main objectives for increasing our Lobbying effectiveness:

- 1 Lobbying about BUILA.** To enhance BUILA's reputation as being an organisation to be consulted on all issues to do with international student recruitment and HE internationalisation generally.
- 2 Lobbying by BUILA.** To take a more proactive lobbying role, through development of a revolving/ evolving agenda of issues of concern generated by the membership and the Executive Committee on the membership's behalf.

To help us formulate our lobbying strategy the BUILA executive engaged professional lobbying experts to help examine the parameters of any future lobbying activity and to clarify the channels we should be lobbying through.

This helped us to confirm BUILA's unique position in offering the practitioners point of view as part of the UK HE lobbying landscape, highlighting BUILA's ability to:

- access data, from students and staff in Universities at the "front line" and to collate their views/ experiences on a range of issues;
- utilise the wealth of market knowledge from members and gain feedback from a wide range of international partners;

- provide an 'honest broker' "soft lobbying" approach;
- provide politicians and influencers the facts about the impact of their policy decisions on, for example:
  - International student numbers and the student experience at UK HEIs;
  - The UK's brand perception in key markets such as India and China and the UK's brand perception vis-à-vis competitors;
  - University revenue streams and the sustainability of UK HEIs;
  - Social cohesion and community relations and internationalising the student experience of home students.

At our very successful Directors Forum in July 2014 we received full support for our proposals to take our lobbying agenda forward, which included:

- mapping existing and potential partners and influencers;
- exploring a number of engagement channels and opportunities to act as a catalyst/broker or third party advocate for those organisations who have the capacity to participate in a public exchange with political parties as appropriate, such as Universities UK, HEIU, UKCISA;
- creating opportunities to provide information and ideas directly to political parties at a policy officer/ researcher level directly.

Plans are now underway to create relationships with policy advisors from the major parties' to influence policies on the international dimension of Higher Education in the UK and the place of international students vis-à-vis the immigration debate, in advance of the general election in May 2015.

## Partner review

One of our key building blocks to increase our lobbying effectiveness was the review and re-engagement of the key organisations and contacts BUILA interacts with. During 2013 – 2014 we looked at the challenges and issues facing the sector and recognising the importance of liaising with a number of new groups representing or influencing these issues, added the following to our liaison roles: QAA, TNE, BALEAP, and AGCAS. We worked closely with our existing partners to establish better ways of working and increased communication mechanisms.

## Highlights of partner activity

The BUILA executive continued to work on members' behalf during the year to ensure their views were heard by our partners and were used to help influence the international agenda. The report that BUILA co-funded with UKCISA looking at the effects of the government's policies on the international student visa regime and their wider impact on the education sector, was sent to senior policy advisors and various stakeholder networks. It received coverage on twitter, blogs, and several websites and featured in newspapers such as The Financial Times, The Telegraph and The Independent.

BUILA worked closely with UUK, UKHE International Unit and UKCISA to support their lobbying activities around the Immigration Bill and to provide input into the response to the parliamentary inquiry on the post-study work route. BUILA continues to attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Migration specifically looking at the impact of the removal of the Post Study Work Visa and to learn what the UK-Post Study Work Opportunities report will result in. The inquiry looked specifically at what impact the removal had on international students (student numbers or demographic profile), businesses, universities, and local economies, whilst considering how the change was viewed internationally and what the implications were for foreign trade, commerce or wider diplomatic relations.

NARIC members were invited to complete a survey regarding the Online Database Redesign and BUILA will be encouraging members to feedback via this survey. BUILA will also be providing input to the International Task Group and their online questionnaire aimed at the Association of Graduate Recruiters International members, to find out peak recruitment time frames, and recruitment methods in their particular country.



BUILA started to develop much closer links with **AGCAS's International Task Group** during the year; looking at ways through joint training and through the BUILA conference the two organisations could share good practice. We are currently exploring ways to harness the feedback from our recruitment professionals on the expectations of international students relating to careers service advice and employment opportunities during or after completion of studies.

### Improving and increasing the effectiveness of our communication with members

- 1 To make BUILA a more responsive service for members, enhancing and increasing the range and depth of information sought and communicated.
- 2 To achieve a clearer communication and better articulation of BUILA services.

As part of our bid to make our communications with members more effective, we began during 2013-2014 to create a number of new mechanisms for collecting members views and feedback, as well as communicating what the BUILA executive were planning.

We introduced regular 'News from the Chair' bulletins to share Information on the sector in general and our forthcoming activities, and established a new Directors Network to enhance our communication and dialogue with members at a decision making level. Using this Network a number of surveys are planned to canvas Directors' views and establish the main issues they would like BUILA to take forward on their behalf.

We have also begun to create a number of Specialist Regional Interest Groups. Focusing on the sharing of good practice and addressing relevant issues, the aim of these groups is to increase and enhance the knowledge of members in a particular market. Where there is some overlap, the groups will feed into the already established 'Communities of Practice' run by the International Unit. This will ensure that a more representative range of views and opinions are communicated through to policy and decision makers.



In addition to these specialist groups we are looking to introduce a series of BUILA Regional Road Shows to solicit views on major issues facing the sector and on planned BUILA activities. The feedback gained from these will be used to inform BUILA's lobbying Agenda. UKHE International Unit are keen to partner BUILA on these road shows to test out their planned activities and projects.

## Supporting the professional development of our members' staff

In response to conference and membership feedback, a new subsidised training programme began in 2013-14 re-launching the BUILA training provision and delivering real added value to the membership. The programme started with a revamped '101 Recruitment' which was introduced in January 2014 and repeated at our pre conference training in July 2014. Participants fed back that the content of the workshop was extremely useful particularly for those new to recruitment, covering essential information regarding recruitment strategies, working with agents, safety abroad and external factors. Here are just some of the many positive comments we received:

**“Very informative, practical with some thought provoking ideas.”**

**“The session was really well organised with lots of interesting input and a good variety of topics. The opportunity to meet colleagues from other universities and draw on experiences of the presenters was very useful.”**



We held a very successful Partnership Session in March 2014 which looked at what was happening in the TNE market and the kind of collaborations and models which were being developed and undertaken. The feedback was excellent and we plan to repeat the session in 2015.

**“Exactly what I was looking for in terms of information supplied, areas covered and the different expertise brought to the table by the different presenters.”**

**“It was excellent to be able to network with colleagues from such a diverse mix of institutions and hear about their experience with TNE. Everyone I spoke with had something useful to share. The speakers were great, each presenting a unique point of view on TNE.”**

Workshops on Social Media and Study Abroad and Mobility are planned during the new academic year; and we will continue to adapt and evolve our training programme as the roles and responsibilities of those working in International Offices change so we can help support the personal development of our members.

## BUILA value added services

BUILA continued to represent the sector on the **International Advisory Group (IAG)**, which reviewed the findings of the International Admissions Review (IAR) consultation launched in April 2014. The consultation was completed through an online survey and seven regional workshops. The **UCAS** Board approved the 15 recommendations in the IAR in September. The IAG supported the recommendations but identified that further input would be needed from the sector focused groups and forums to provide specific detail in order to implement change.

The priority recommendations included:

- enabling the upload of digital documents in UCAS Apply;
- improving information and advice available through UCAS for international and EU applicants;
- revising current UCAS deadlines for international fee paying applicants.

BUILA were invited to be a member of two new groups and were able to consult and feed back thoughts from the membership into two important consultations.

**The International Students Studying in the UK - Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers** was set up to review the existing guidance produced before the publication of the new Quality Code. This looks at the student journey from marketing right through to graduation for students studying in the UK. The group has completed its work and consultation on the report will commence in January 2015.

**TNE Implementation Group:** In 2013 the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills asked QAA and the UK International Unit for Higher Education to consult publicly on 'what is needed to strengthen the quality assurance of TNE?'



The consultation (by the QAA) was published in December 2013 and closed in March 2014. The Implementation Group was established to take forward some of the outcomes of the consultation held in spring 2014, on strengthening the quality assurance of the UK's transnational higher education. This followed concerns expressed by the UK Government about potential issues with quality standards in TNE.

## Regional Liaison

### BUILA Northern Ireland

The International Project Team within the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI) continued to meet to deliver on the internationalisation agenda in the HE sector in Northern Ireland. The work of the group reflects the commitments made in the current HE strategy for Northern Ireland, *Graduating to Success*.

The group involves representation from the two universities in Northern Ireland along with the FE sector and Universities UK. Their goals are to:

- Promote an increase in international outreach in key target countries;
- Develop ways in which to increase student numbers on international mobility programmes within current budget constraints;
- Revise and update HEI international strategies, including measurable targets for inward and outward mobility of students and staff and the development of international partnerships;
- Strengthen and develop new linkages between businesses and institutions in regard to internationalisation;
- Promote an increase in the number of students and teaching staff from Northern Irish HEIs engaged in international activity;
- Promote an increase in the number of international students enrolled in Northern Irish HEIs.

This forum provides an additional opportunity for HEIs in Northern Ireland to work collaboratively to continue to grow international activity in the region in a co-ordinated fashion.

### BUILA Wales

The sector in Wales has been re-finding its feet following the number of mergers of the previous academic year, but a new drive has come from Higher Education Wales for the re-establishment of a co-ordinated international collaboration.

'Universities Wales' started during the year to lead on organising inward and outward missions with key stakeholders including the British Council and the Welsh Government. In June 2014, a delegation representing Wales' universities undertook an intensive five day mission to Indonesia, supported by the British Council Indonesia, showcasing Wales' strengths both in research, and in learning and teaching, whilst forging new strategic partnerships to benefit both Indonesia and Wales.

Universities in Wales hosted a 'Study in Wales' booth at the NAFSA conference and expo 2014 in San Diego. The Welsh presence was joint funded by HEW, Welsh Government, and British Council Wales. The universities also hosted a 'Wales reception' event, which was an opportunity to engage new and existing partners, and formally launch Wales' Chronicle web pages.

BUILA will be looking to share the best practice from this collaboration during our 11th Annual conference in July 2015 and will be considering how the planned analysis of the impact of international students on the Welsh economy, including separate results for EU students and non EU students, can inform future lobbying to government and promotional work to stakeholders.

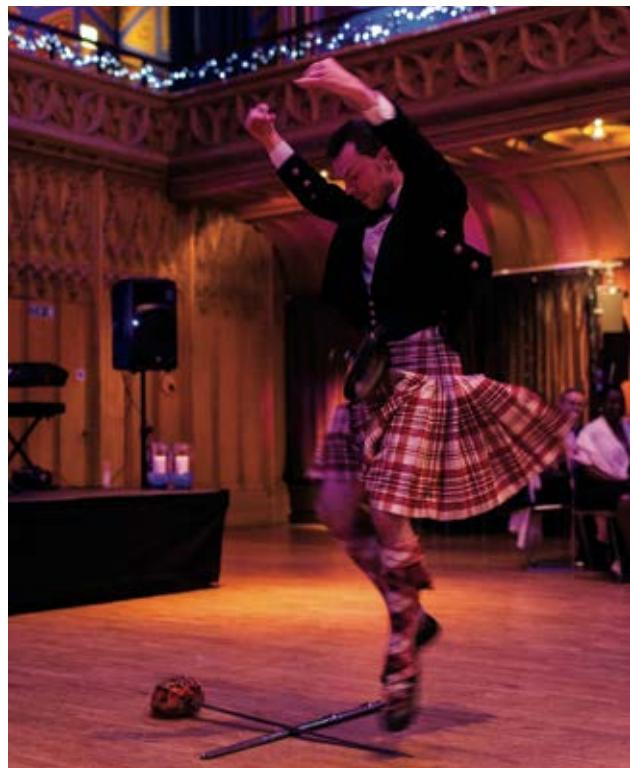
## Regional Liaison

### BUILA Scotland

'Connected Scotland' was launched in June 2014 with a three year plan to increase the sector's export income from international student recruitment, delivery of transnational education and the development of new research and commercialisation partnerships. Although still in development the 'Connected Scotland' brand may be used in international promotion in the future.

Under this umbrella the Vice Chancellors of the Scottish universities were invited to look at collaborative work and the creation of a lobbying and influencing manifesto. Part of this was a Post Study Work (PSW) discussion and a working party has been created to look at how if PSW visas were to return to Scotland the process might work.

BUILA will again be looking to share the lessons learnt from this collaboration with our membership and to use any model for PSW visas that could be extrapolated to a UK wide system in our lobbying activity with partners.



## Executive Team

### Current executive team lead roles and responsibilities 2014/2015

Role	Executive members	University
Chair	Charlene Allen	University of Southampton
Vice Chairs	Bobby Mehta	University of South Wales
	Martyn Edwards	Loughborough University
UUK	Charlene Allen	
JET	Jeremy Burgess	University of Warwick
NARIC	Sioned Evans	University of Gloucestershire
UCAS	Sioned Evans	
AGCAS	Sioned Evans	
British Council	Martyn Edwards	
UKCISA	Bobby Mehta	
Governance	Jeremy Burgess	
Training	Naomi Graham	Edinburgh Napier University
Lobbying	Roisin McEvoy	Ulster University
	Andrew Mandebura	University of Huddersfield
QAA & BALEAP/TNE	Keith Brown	Teesside
Conference Lead	Kim Hadley	University of Portsmouth
Conference Team	David Tobin	
Conference Team	Martin Maule	City University London
Marketing	David Tobin	Aston University
Scottish Representative	Naomi Graham	
Welsh Liaison	Bobby Mehta	
Northern Ireland Liaison	Roisin McEvoy	
Secretary/Marketing/Conference	Philippa Collins Robson	

## Accounts

The accounts opposite have been subjected to an “independent examination,” rather than a full audit in line with our role as an association.

The four income streams during the financial year were from the annual membership subscriptions, sponsorship generated for the conference, training fees and a small amount of bank interest. The main streams of expenditure were for the Secretary costs, continued investment in the website, the establishment of a fuller training programme and BUILA executive costs. It should be noted that the

latter only relate to the travel and subsistence costs incurred by the executive team in their liaison role with partners, who as unpaid officers represent excellent value for money.

There has been a conscious increase in expenditure this year as the Association has continued to invest in a number of areas outlined in the Manifesto to enhance and increase the services and benefits to the membership.

## **British Universities International Liaison Association Income and expenditure account**

Year ended 31 July 2014

	Note	2014	2013
		£	£
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>141,454</b>	94,932
Expenditure		<b>104,970</b>	73,732
<b>Gross surplus</b>		<b>36,484</b>	21,200
Overheads		<b>30,525</b>	38,228
<b>Operating surplus/(Deficit)</b>	2	<b>5,959</b>	(17,028)
Interest receivable		<b>7</b>	25
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary activities before taxation</b>		<b>5,966</b>	(17,003)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the financial year</b>		<b>5,966</b>	(17,003)

## British Universities International Liaison Association Balance sheet

Year ended 31 July 2014

	Note	2014 £	2013 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	4	<b>34,808</b>	49,069
Cash at bank	5	<b>85,500</b>	39,250
		<b>120,308</b>	88,319
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	6	<b>59,246</b>	33,223
		<b>61,062</b>	55,096
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>61,062</b>	55,096
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Income and expenditure account	8	<b>61,062</b>	55,096
		<b>61,062</b>	55,096

In accordance with the engagement letter dated 27 October 2008, we approve the financial information which comprises Income and Expenditure Account, Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses, Balance Sheet, Accounting Policies and the related notes. We acknowledge our responsibility for the financial information, including the appropriateness of the accounting basis as set out in note 1, and for providing Fawley Judge & Easton with all information and explanations necessary for its compilation.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

For more information on BUILA please visit: [www.buila.ac.uk](http://www.buila.ac.uk)  
For any queries contact: [secretary@buila.ac.uk](mailto:secretary@buila.ac.uk)



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