



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

MEMO

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FROM Kent Anderson – Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Global – The University of Newcastle
DATE 26/04/2022
SUBJECT The University of Newcastle's engagement in the UAE and broader GCC countries

Overview of the University of Newcastle's Presence in Region

The University of Newcastle has had an international office presence in the United Arab Emirates since January 2019, with one staff member based in Dubai. The university conducts recruitment agent management and sales activities for the wider MENA (with a heavy emphasis on the GCC) and African regions from this location in Dubai and aligns its student recruitment activities with research commercialisation opportunities, for example in transitional energy.

Student Recruitment

Student recruitment from this region is divided into two areas, recruitment of GCC nationals, and recruitment of expatriates living within the GCC. For the United Arab Emirates, most students fall into the latter category of South Asian Expatriates, whereas for other GCC countries such as Oman, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to bulk of recruited students are GCC nationality sponsored students. This is for multiple reasons, it is partially due to the Australian borders being closed for the duration of our presence in the UAE, but also it is mainly due to the fact that the expatriate population capable of international mobility in the UAE is much higher than in other countries in the region.

The recruitment process for sponsored students is slightly different to the expatriate market and does requires engagement with local government bodies to both promote the institution and its courses as well as facilitate the students' progression to Australia. For the UAE the experience in dealing with these bodies is positive. Scholarship programmes that are administered by ADEK (Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge), are clear and easy to get information on due to their good staffing structure, proactive work with Austrade and clear points of contact.

For the scholarship programmes where no such central unit exists, understanding where the University of Newcastle can offer benefit, and matching courses/training to specific industry requirements becomes a little more complicated, and it can be quite difficult to find out information around basic requirements the individual sponsor may have, such as rankings or course names. Some of the wider region's institutions may have very rigid definitions of certain requirements and limited opportunities to provide clarification when needed.

Ease of Business

Generally the ease of doing business in the UAE is very high, it remains a priority hub for travel to the wider MENA region and beyond. The UAE is aggressively rebranding itself as an inbound study destination a sector in which Australia is well represented with three Australian University branch campuses in Dubai and several Australian Curriculum international high schools, which do well to promote the quality and standards of Australian Education and help with branding.

Overall, the services relevant to our industry that are offered by the Australian government in the UAE, Such as DHA visa services, are of a good level which is something that is key to maintaining a good experience in the region.

The item that would provide most benefit to the University's activities in the UAE (and in the wider region in general) is regular market updates, communication and information sharing at a higher UAE – Australia level on key research priorities' investments, education and skills training requirements within the UAE. This would enable better sharing of information between industry and educational institutions and lead to better matching of training programmes and courses to specific needs.