

# **Impact And The Reputation Of UK Higher Education**



Higher education in the UK is a world class sector. The UK universities rank amongst the best and produce highly-regarded research, making them attractive to international students and staff. In 1992 John Major's government passed a Further and Higher Education Act. This brought dramatic change to higher education which also received the royal assent in the same year. The Acts had long been anticipated by higher education institutions which, by then, were teaching more undergraduate and postgraduate students than those that had already gained university title. Within months, almost 40 universities had used the Acts' provisions and were awarded full teaching and research degree awarding powers, fulfilling demanding criteria on both counts. The successful application and award of university title entitled these institutions to describe themselves as universities in their own right. New names sprang up on campuses signifying that modern universities had indeed arrived.

Several years of significant funding challenges followed the Further and Higher Education Acts and the unit of resource in higher education declined. However, modern universities brought a new dynamism to higher education to the benefit of students, staff and society.

Today, higher education in the UK is a global success. UK universities are highly regarded worldwide according to different rankings. There are number of universities in the world's top 10 and produce world-class research. The UK is ranked first by field-weighted citation impact, an indicator of research quality, and produces 15.9% of the world's most highly-cited articles. The UK is the fourth most popular destination in the world for international students.

**All The Evidence Confirms That Modern Universities Have Proved Beyond Doubt That They Can Compete On Equal Terms With Regards To Academic Quality And Excellence.**

UK universities, together with their international students and visitors, generated an annual output of £ 95 billion for the UK economy 2014-15; (an increase of 15% in real terms between 2011-12 and 2014-15) contributing 3% of GDP and supporting over 940,000 jobs. Professor Janet Beer, president of Universities UK and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, said: "This study highlights the huge and increasingly significant impact that universities have on the UK economy and jobs. This puts the UK's university sector above many other established sectors in terms of economic impact and regional job creation." International students generated a total of £ 25.8 billion in gross output and supported 250,000 jobs.

Twenty five years on, what has been achieved? All the evidence confirms that modern universities have proved beyond doubt that they can compete on equal terms with regards to academic quality and excellence; they have driven student-centred teaching and innovative curriculum design. They continue to offer traditional courses such as history, philosophy, economics and the sciences. These universities also developed new subject offers and multidisciplinary courses to respond to emerging markets and technologies. This is one reason why the UK is now a world leader in design and the creative industries.

***For more information on how you could take the first steps towards beginning a satisfying higher education in the UK, please call the British Council on (+94-11) 452 1521 or [visit britishcouncil.lk/study-uk](http://britishcouncil.lk/study-uk).***