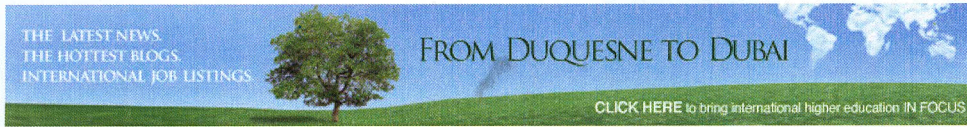


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Study documents geographic shift in branch campuses ^[1]

Submitted by [John Morgan for Times Higher Education](#) ^[2] on January 12, 2012 - 3:00am

The number of overseas branch campuses set up by universities has reached 200, with another 37 planned, as activity shifts from the Gulf region to Asia.

The findings come in the latest report from the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, published this month. British universities are at the forefront of growth, nearly doubling their number of outposts in the past two years to 25.

The OBHE report was published as the University of Central Lancashire announced plans to become the first British institution to open a campus in Thailand. The Universities of Reading and Lancaster also recently announced offshoots in Malaysia and China respectively. Central Lancashire aims to open its venture, in which it will invest £7.5 million (more than \$11.5 million), in 2014, and to build student numbers to 5,000 within 10 years.

"International Branch Campuses: Data and Developments," written by OBHE director William Lawton and research analyst Alex Katsomitros, updates its last such study in September 2009. The 200 branch campuses identified globally represent an increase of 23 percent on the number cited in the previous report.

However, the new analysis revises the definition of a branch campus – for example, excluding those offering only pre-degree-level courses – making direct comparisons with the 2009 figures difficult.

The report provides a list of 37 branch campuses planned by universities and scheduled to open in 2012 or 2013 (13 from the U.S.). ^[3]

Fees data were collected from 154 branch campuses, with the undergraduate mean average for 2010-11 of \$13,800 (£8,918) and the median average of \$9,700 casting "doubt on any notion that study at branch campuses represents a cheap alternative."

For universities, the benefits of branches include "greater access to an expanding student market, especially in Asia where demand ... is expected to continue to outstrip supply for another 20 years," the report says. For many governments, especially in Asia and Africa, hosting campuses is "preferable to the outward migration of young people."

American universities still account for the greatest number of campuses abroad (78). While the United Arab Emirates continues to host the largest number (37), the report notes that there are no new branches planned there. "The center of gravity is clearly shifting eastwards from the Gulf," it states.

The report says that this movement shows the responsiveness of Western institutions to China's "determination to act on the world stage in higher education – a determination backed up with state funding."

Lower-risk niche campuses focusing on specific subject areas "represent a trend which is likely to assume greater prominence in coming years – and may become the typical branch-campus model," the report adds.

International Branch Campuses ^[4]

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