

## How Agent Management is Changing: New Trends with Student Recruitment Agents

### Description

**How has the coronavirus changed the influence student recruitment agents have over prospective international students, and how can universities effectively build upon these relationships?**

Agents have played a major role in student recruitment for over a decade, often being the first point of contact for many prospective students around the world, while providing cultural awareness and regional market intelligence that universities rely on.

The [2019 ICEF Agent Barometer](#) showed a very confident agent market with the 2,065 agents surveyed placing 548,610 students.

The report states that: "Agents are less troubled than at any other point in the past decade by the global economic and political environment in terms of their ability to refer students to foreign institutions."

The [QS International Student Survey](#) also shows an increase in the number of prospective international students who plan on using agents, with 22% of prospective international students stating that they used an agent in their enrolment journey this year, up 8% from 2018.

Student recruitment agencies are growing rapidly, and while COVID-19 has presented the same challenges to agents as it has to higher education institutions, some experts believe this growth in agent use will continue.

A recent [AgentBee](#) article suggests that agent use is primed for growth in four of the five key study destinations, with only Australia (with 75% of international students recruited by education agents) close to saturation.

They expect New Zealand, Canada, the UK, and the US to all increase their reliance on agents in coming years. This potential need has led them to conclude that "the use of education agents will soar" in the coming years.

Indeed, QS Enrolment Solutions' data reveals a greater reliance from prospective international students on agent recommendations than ever before.

When comparing the reasons students accepted their offer of enrolment to an Australian university for semester one to semester two, they found that agent recommendations had an increase in influence of over 7.8%, going from 1.1% in semester one of 2020 to 8.9% in semester one of 2021 so far.

This massive increase in use of agents means that universities must see agents as major players in target markets. They will have a potentially decisive influence on prospective students, whether universit

ies work with them or not. With less access to other traditional elements of student recruitment like fairs, prospective international students may see their local agents as a reliable way to make connections with universities.

What all this points to is that agents are set to remain a major force in international student recruitment in the coming years and that universities must continue to build strong relationships with them in order to expand their international student recruitment in the future.

New times call for new opportunities and new methods of management, the latest QS white paper, [\*How to Navigate the Challenges of Agent Management in 2021\*](#), investigates the potential agent-student information gap, and ways to manage those issues effectively.

[Download the free white paper](#) to learn how your institution can best work with student recruitment agents next year.

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