

SAFSA OPENING EVENT

„Improving student services to attract students – what does this mean for the student advisor?“

Thursday, 17 September, 14:00-16:00

SAFSA Opening Event 2009



Introduction of the Board Members (2008-2010)

Karin Klitgaard Møller, University of Copenhagen (Chair)

Ewa Derkowska-Rybicka, Nicolaus Copernicus University

Barbara A. Boldt, Lecturer in Intercultural Management

Astrid Revhaug, University of Tromsø

Ingrid Gehrke, FH JOANNEUM – University of Applied Sciences



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„Improving student services to attract students – what does this mean for the student advisor?“

SPEAKERS

Tim Rogers, International Education Consultants UK

Line Verbik, CIRIUS, Denmark

Maria Kelo, Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)



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Budget 2009

Total budget available in 2009	19.523
Costs:	
Travelcosts	3.041
Design/printing and miscellaneous	0
Feewaivers	0
Total Costs 2009	3.041
Result 2009	16.482
Result 2009 transferable to 2010 (75% of the money not yet spent up to a max of 6.500)	6.500



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Financial Result: Training Courses 2009

Advising International Students	5.910
Cultural Learning in Education Abroad (still to be held)	
Intercultural Competency (still to be held)	
Result training courses 2009 transferable to 2010	5.910

Result Workshops Madrid 2009

WK 2	Co-shared	403	
WK 15		-1.120	
WK 20	Co-shared	990	
WK 28		70	
WK 35		1.890	
Result workshops Madrid 2009, transferable to 2010:			2.233



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Budget 2010

PS budget allocation 2010	3.640
Supplement budget allocation	455
Result 2009 transferable to 2010	6.500
Result training courses 2009 transferable to 2010	5.910
Result workshops 2009 transferable to 2010	2.233
Total budget available in 2010 (not final)	18.738



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WHAT COMPETENCES MAKE AN
ADVISOR SUCCESSFUL?



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JOB AD – 1

We would like to see an applicant that

- Has interest for and preferably experience in working in an international and intercultural environment with international students
- Wants to work with and advise students
- Has experience with service advising and communication
- Is independent, open and takes initiative
- Functions well as a coordinator, both internally and externally
- Contributes actively to the work environment
- Speaks and writes English at a high level
- Likes to work in a busy and dynamic environment



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JOB AD – 2

The holder of the position will have to cover a wide array of tasks within the field:

- Information and guidance for prospective foreign applicants
- Application handling
- Admission and reception of new students
- Information, guidance and preparation for the university's students and staff who would like or plan to spend a period at a foreign partner institution
- Recognition of foreign credentials
- Reporting of student data (exchange numbers)
- Monitoring of international projects
- Quality assurance
- The work field requires close contact with students and staff, faculties, partner institutions, public institutions.
- We are looking for a person able to maintain administrative functions at a high level and to take on tasks of a more developmental and analytical nature. The applicant should be results oriented, systematic and independent, yet cooperative and service minded.



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JOB AD – 3

Tasks

- Advising students who are planning to study abroad
- Administrative responsibility for stipends for outgoing students
- Organization of events for students
- Responsibility for ECTS

We would like to see an applicant who:

- Likes to work with students
- Has experience in advising
- Speaks English and preferably another foreign language fluently
- Likes to work in a team



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Any competencies that you identified missing in these job profiles?

- 1.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5



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- We have/need a bundle of competencies for our work
- Different competences are needed according to size of the office
 - one person office
 - small office
 - medium size...
- Priorities are important – not all the people need to have the same competencies



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- What can we as SAFSA board do to help you improve your competencies?
- Training courses
 - Advising international students (SAFSA 1)
 - Cultural learning in education abroad
 - Intercultural competency: making internationalization work on campuses (SAFSA 2)
- Workshops at EAIE conferences
- HELP US TO DEVELOP MORE!!



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- ACTION PLAN



Enhancing attractiveness through international student services

Maria Kelo, ACA

Line Verbik, CIRIUS

Tim Rogers, International Education
Consultants

Agenda

- Introduction to the project
- National policies and national level support
- Good practice examples
- The role of advisors in providing support
- Conclusions

ENATIS: setting the scene



- The provision of services – academic and others – is increasingly seen by students as a significant factor in their decision-making process
- The recognition of this situation amongst European universities, however, is inconsistent and has a potentially adverse impact on the attractiveness of these universities



ENATIS: Enhancing attractiveness through international student services



The principal aims of the study are to:

- to discover the support needs of international degree students, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and especially those coming from significantly different cultural and religious backgrounds;
- to provide recommendations on how to meet those needs at institutional and other levels in strategic and organisational terms, based on a series of examples of good practice;
- propose guidelines of good practice for international student support at European level



Changing HE scene



- Increasing numbers of international students in (European) higher education, beyond exchanges, and also at masters entry level
- Changing backgrounds (more variety, from further away)
- Old tendency: concentration on exchange students → what will change as degree student numbers grow thanks to improved promotion and recruitment strategies?
- Changing needs and expectations of students and institutions; fees and other factors (competitive environment, even when not 'commercial')



Exchange students

– special status



- In Europe exchange students have been the focus → more attention, specific services
- Never get *less* than international *degree* students
- Additional services justified on different grounds:
 - services as part of exchange arrangements → need to do what would not do otherwise
 - specific financial pocket available
 - short study period: cannot waste time (changing for degree students, too?)
 - institutions have a shorter time to ‘make an impression’: need to make sure students leave happy
 - ‘guests’: allowed to have higher expectations (changing with fees?)





Why student support?

– main motivations



- improving student retention, performance, and success rate
 - responsibility for the students' overall well-being
 - responding to the (raising) expectations of students (especially in programmes which charge **fees**, but not only!)
 - the international attractiveness of the institution (more competition → more services?); services a part of the **quality** of an institution
- “Needs-based”, “fees-based” and “interest-based” justifications/motivations





Why student support? – student perspective



- enhancing the overall student experience, integration and academic performance
- levelling the disadvantages of international students *vis-à-vis* home students

Complication created by the heterogeneity of international student body:

- services should be designed keeping in mind composition of the institution's student body
- some students expect a lot of support (Asia), others do not like to be 'held by hand'





National level: policy

- Rare cases of real national level policy on services (first step: international students) → lack of incentives/budgets to institutions and lack of national standards/guidelines
- Why?
 - No history of ‘students as clients’
 - Low or no fees → changing
 - Philosophical question of ‘what are universities for’ and ‘what is it to be a student’ → the role and ‘autonomy’ of teaching staff
 - Lack of awareness and data of the impact of student support on study success, satisfaction, integration, etc. → attractiveness
 - Internal competition (the UK → Australia?)
 - No “need” for more international students (??)
 - National students envy/”tax payers money” -arguments...



National level: services

- Some level of support in most countries
- Concentration on (general) information provision/promotion (“Study-in-...”) and print material, presence at fairs, etc.
- Legal/formal aspects (e.g. recognition of degrees)
- Sometimes: support through institutions e.g. training of staff
- DAAD PROFIN initiative

- In some countries institutions desire for more intervention and support, in others the opposite (intervention = bad)...
- National level guidelines would be recommendable to support national level marketing and to guarantee a minimum consistency of quality across a country
- → ambitious goal: achieve something like this at European level

Examples of good practice – introduction



- International full-degree students – whose responsibility?
- The importance of a whole-of-institution approach
- Start developing the support services before the students are there
- What can the institution do?



Examples of good practice

- Registration/visas, etc
- Accommodation
- Bank accounts
- Facilities
- Integration
- Careers advice
- Feedback mechanisms
- Communication
- Concluding remarks

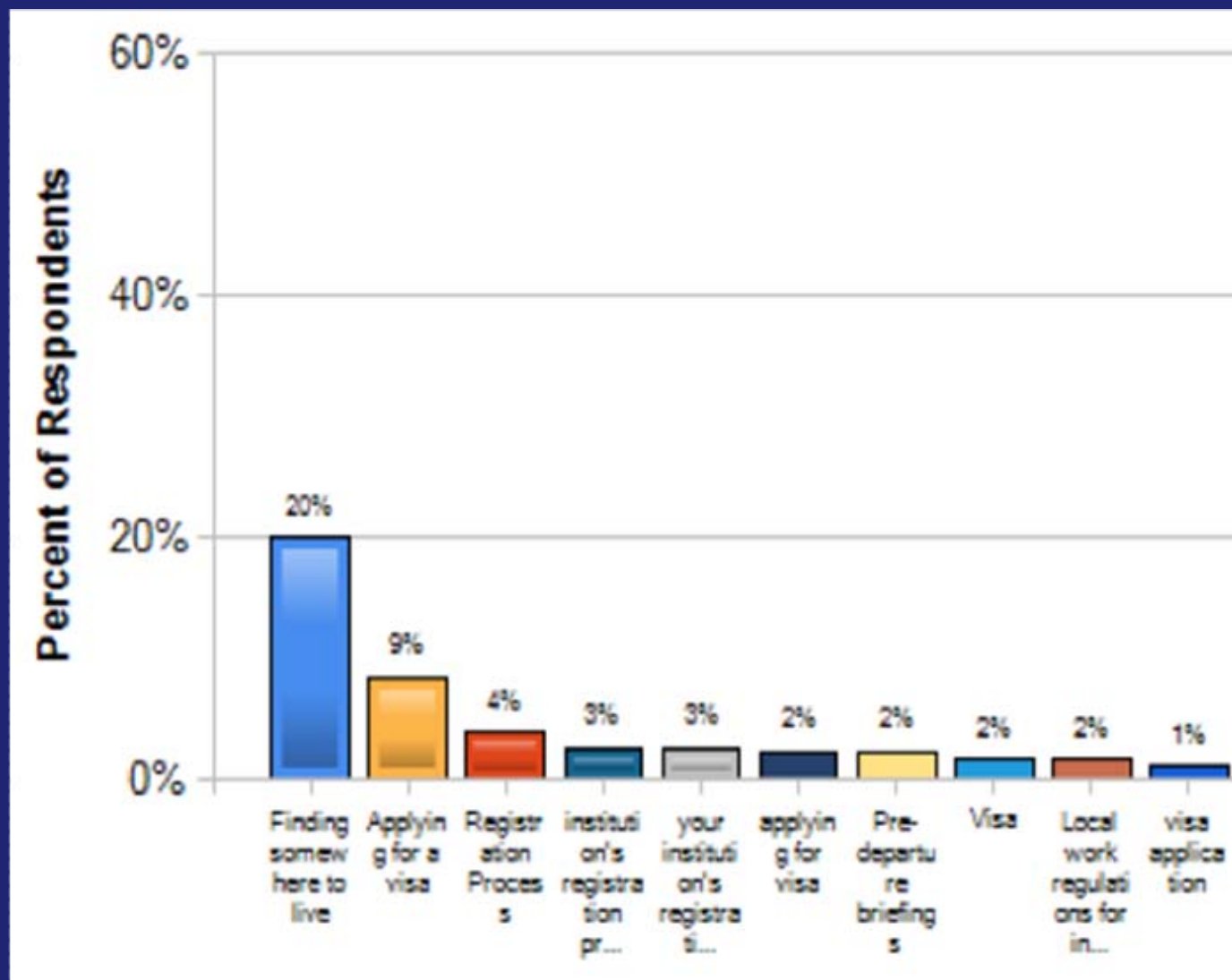
The role of advisors

- In this sense, advising students and the institution on non-EU student affairs
- Often seen as working in isolation or on the periphery of other activities
- Working across a range of areas – International Offices, central administration, student organisations, faculties and other academic departments
- Relationships with other parts of the institution is crucial for “success”

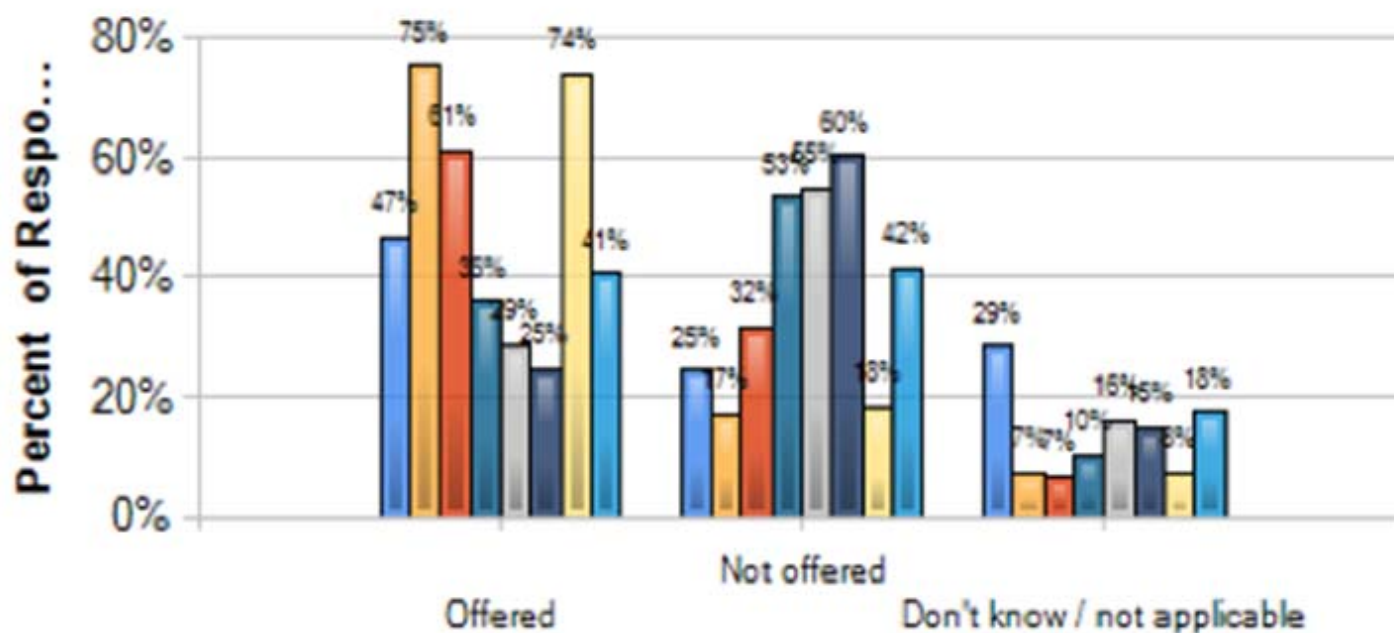
What do students want/need?

- Clear hierarchy of needs, often recognised by advisors, and expressed by students
- Some differences by countries/institutions: increasing evidence that where an institution offers more services, students expect/demand more
- Differences between pre-arrival and on-arrival services is crucial
- There are also differences between what a student considers essential and what are “nice to have’s”

Pre-arrival: most important service offered?



Were you provided with information on...

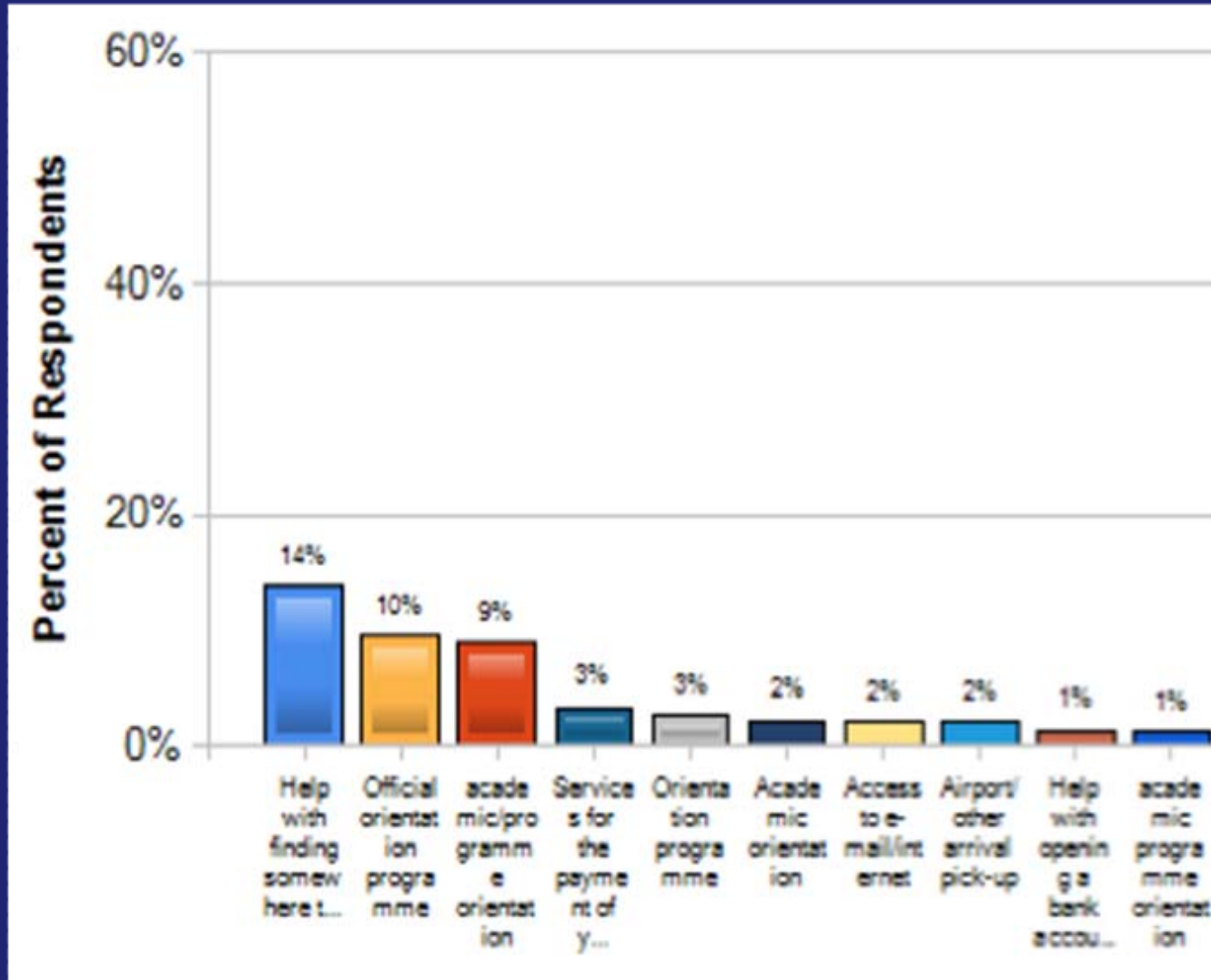


Answers

- Applying for a visa (if appli...)
- Your institution's registrati...
- Finding somewhere to live
- Setting up a local bank account
- Local work regulations for in...
- Meeting other applicants befo...
- The area where the institutio...
- Pre-departure briefings



Arrival: most important service offered?



Are the following academic services available to you?



	Offered	Not offered	Don't know/Not used	Total Responses
Individual academic tutor	501 40%	548 44%	205 16%	1254
Support for academic problems	692 55%	372 30%	196 16%	1260
Language support	588 47%	411 33%	256 20%	1255
Library and research support	1041 83%	130 10%	84 7%	1255
Table Summary	2822	1461	741	5024



Meeting the demands of students



- Two clear concerns for non-EU students pre-arrival: housing and visa advice
- Other aspects appear to be dependent on a mix of perception of the availability of services, tuition fees and pre-arrival contact
- Information is, in the main, generic rather tailored to students
- Individual academic support is also variable
- The provision of services across European institutions is variable



Lobbying for resources



- Important but difficult role for advisors
- Often an institutional recognition of the importance of services, but rarely translated into the investment of resources
- Increasing appreciation of services vs. cultural changes vs. other priorities
- Link to either an internationalisation or institutional strategy is variable: very often, these services are not seen as essential





Thank you

