

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING EUROPEAN MARKETS FOR YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

STEPHEN VICKERS

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT

ABOUT ME

- BA Politics Sussex, PhD International Economics Warwick, PGCE Lancaster, ISCA self-study, DMS Wolverhampton (CNAAB)
- Subject Officer, then HR Manager. Univ of Oxford Delegacy of Local Exams (“Oxford Board”)
- HR Manager (Oxford and Eastleigh), Univ of Cambridge Local Exams Syndicate (“Cambridge Board”)
- QA Manager, HM Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
- Chief Executive, NEBOSH, 2000-2006
- Chief Executive, British Accreditation Council, 2006-2009
- Chief Executive for a TVE AO, 2009-2016
- Various other AO tasks and consultancy work, mostly South-East Asia, Caribbean, East Africa, Mediterranean.
- Member and former chair, UK-NARIC Qualifications Standards Group
- Former Treasurer and Hon European Officer, Federation of Awarding Bodies
- Now a publisher and exporter of Baha’i books, 85% exported to 25 countries.

STUPID FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS, NUMBER ONE

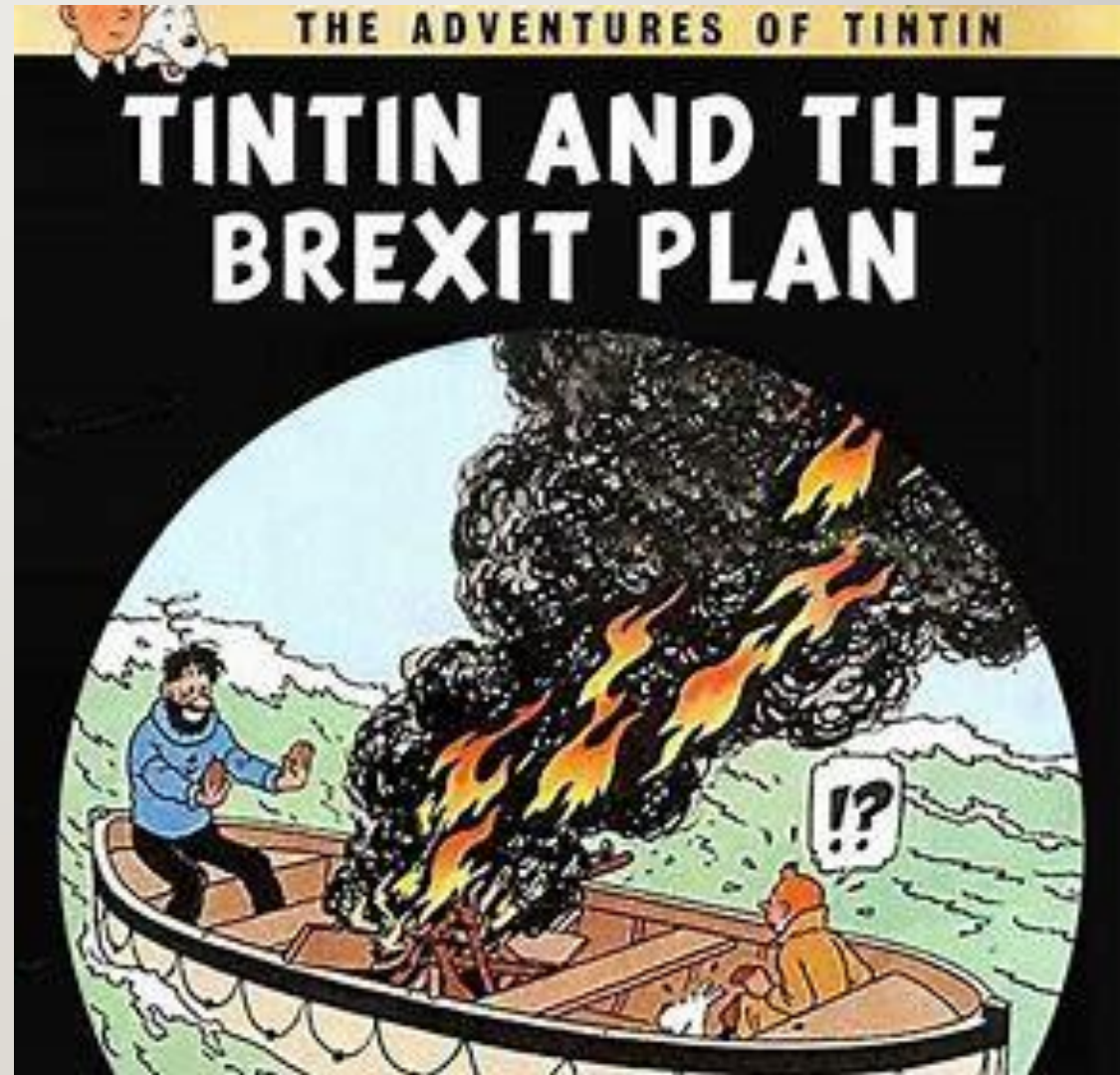
“Say what you like about those Greeks; they don’t bear grudges! Ten years of war, 23 sacked cities, thousands of deaths and they still leave us a gift. Why don’t we bring it into the city and leave it unguarded overnight?”



STUPID FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS: NUMBER TWO

“What good is being in the biggest free trade area in the world when we have to accept someone else’s definitions of Cornish Pasties and Champagne?”

Why don’t we ask The Sun and the Daily Mail to educate the public and then have a plebiscite?”



ASININE THOUGH BREXIT IS, THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL MARKET IS NOT CLOSED TO US AS A RESULT

- The drop in the pound versus the Euro far dwarfs the WTO tariff. Bureaucracy, not price, will be the stumbling block.
- The Europeanisation of education was a Council of Europe (established 1949) initiative rather than an EU one. The Council's emphasis was initially upon HE study abroad as an essential element of European integration.
- This became global rather than European with UNESCO's joining the Council in creating The Lisbon Recognition Convention of April 1997, which established the mechanisms needed "for official recognition by the competent authority of the value of foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational activities and/or employment"
- Lisbon also emphasised conditions that need be met in order to achieve these set goals, i.e., the processes of assessment and recognition of the qualifications "solely on the basis of the achieved knowledge and skills".
- The Bologna Declaration of 1999 started with universities, and from there extended to other levels.
- The European University Association's Lisbon Declaration of 2007 "Europe's Universities beyond 2010: Diversity with a common purpose" led to the establishment in 2010 at Vienna of a European Educational Space.

THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SPACE IS EXTENSIVE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



EU AND APPLICANTS



REALLY STRONG BRANDS DON'T EVEN NEED REGULATION OR ACCREDITATION. MOST OF US DO!

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- Big Universities – Oxford, Cambridge are instantly admired
 - ACCA has no accreditation from any country, yet flourishes everywhere. After 50 years you may be able to do this, but not now. Respect has to be earned.

SO, IF THERE IS A LEVEL LEGAL PLAYING FIELD, WHAT ELEMENTS DETERMINE DEMAND FOR BRITISH EDUCATION?

- Sentiment towards “UK PLC”: The prestige or derision accorded to the UK across Europe
- The image and European credibility of the individual AO
- The English language
- Portability to other jurisdictions
- Wide Recognition within the customer’s country
- Relevance to local employment
- Quality

THE IMAGE AND EUROPEAN CREDIBILITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL AO

- Set a strategy and stick to it for several years.
- In a target country, talk to users as well as training providers.
- A single visit to a country is not enough. NEBOSH in 2000 derived 3% of its income from exports. With supply chain requirements growing, the SMT decided that if the AO didn't work at becoming the world leader, somebody else would. There were 3-4 visits to some countries before a single training provider there was convinced that the AO was in it for the long haul. Following the strategy through and using big customers as vectors, now 70+% of NEBOSH income derives from exports.
- Few AOs make an effort to export in Europe. As of 2016, only two AOs had received the Queen's Award for Exports, NEBOSH and Highfield. Some, notably Cambridge and C and G, have outstanding records. Know your EQF (gather information from SQA, CCEA, Qualifications Wales, OFQUAL International Group – "Qualifications can cross boundaries")
- Attend FAB's International Group and UK NARIC conferences, also ask the British Council for advice.
- Send people to conferences who speak another European language and know something about wider history and culture. You and your senior staff are part of the product. This is particularly true of the Middle East, but also holds true in Europe.

FORWARD OVERSEAS
PHONE CALLS
DIRECTLY TO STAFF
WHO KNOW A BIT
ABOUT THE WORLD!

A true BBC story, 1940

“Bert, it’s Gertie in reception.
I’ll got this bloke ‘ere.
He’s..... Sorry, where did
you say you wuz king of”?



SENTIMENT TOWARDS “UK PLC”: THE PRESTIGE OR DERISION ACCORDED TO THE UK ACROSS EUROPE

- Some might see HMG as complicit in allowing the UK's historic position in education to erode. Until 1988 almost every university in the world set as one of its three or four entrance criteria a definition in terms of A and O Levels. Such quals were therefore very portable and widely recognised. Neither regulators, nor FCO, TVET, BTI have made no effort to keep these requirements alive, in fact OFQUAL declares itself uninterested in exports.
- Some immigration controls make it difficult for visitors from beyond the EU to study in the UK other than at elite universities.
- The decline in the volume and quality of European language study in the UK - a 16% decline in the numbers taking a MFL first degree, 2007 to 2015 - acts as a “tax on trade” (CBI, 2015) Vicky Gough, Schools Adviser at the British Council, said: 'The unfortunate reality is that language learning at university level is in decline with little to suggest that this is set to change any time soon.. Half of all MFL A Level passes are obtained in private schools.
- “The rhetoric and the discourse around Europe and the anti-European discourse is not helpful for languages,” Teresa Tinsley, 2013. One suspects that the braying rudeness with which Nigel Farage addressed the European Parliament the day after the Brexit vote has, for instance, cost us exports, both in education and other sectors.
- Murder rate, drug usage rate, boorish conduct in Crete and Ibiza, newspapers like comics, all damage our educational image.
- So UK prestige in Europe is declining. We need as AOs to employ more linguists, we need to engage with European educational discourse. Britain is very well represented in this area, yet AO staff are rarely present.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

- The English language is our friend. Even if Brexit happens, it will still strengthen as the European lingua franca.
 - Multinational companies,
 - inertia,
 - number and range of English-speaking countries with whom the EU deals.
 - In the EU only Ireland and Malta, 1% of the population of the EU, have English as an official language. Over half the EU citizens with a second language have English.
- Sweden, Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Austria all offer English-medium degrees.
- Perhaps a quarter of the population will accept your assessment in English; if you want to expand demand, offer your most popular quals also in the vernacular. Make sure that you have a marking mechanism which ensures comparability between languages (not always easy, e.g. expertise in Hair and Beauty apparently negatively correlated with expertise in MFLs.).
- Stress in your marketing the portability of qualifications taken in English medium.

PORTABILITY TO OTHER JURISDICTIONS

- Do not create shoddy “trade goods”. The qualification framework, your progression routes, your parity of esteem, are part of your offer. Students and training providers are taking your qualifications from utility rather than sentiment. E.g.s Assn of Greek Colleges and the BAC
- Also, progression gives you more than one bite of each cherry; repeat business.
- Every time the UK revises its own system, we have to keep our customers informed.
- If you have an articulation deal with a UK university, use it. If you can make one with a local university in addition, so much the better.
- Seize the commanding heights (e.g. NEBOSH and ILO)

WIDE RECOGNITION WITHIN THE STATE WHERE TAKEN

- Look at dysfunctional elements within the national system in which you are operating, and address the problems. Provincial chambers of commerce in Italy, particularly in Calabria, can unlawfully discriminate against holders of qualifications from other provinces, without fear that their parent provincial authorities will enforce the law. The British qualifications, whose recognition the Italian central government will enforce, are therefore more useful.
- Put effort into talking to the government. I found that Mauritius and Rwanda (not Europe, I know), paid more attention to what Cambridge said about other UK AOs than the developing international law of qualifications. Malta was for years a bit suspicious of UK TVE, notwithstanding the European Educational space. Show them that your AO is high-grade.
- Remember their sovereignty. Example of the Republic of Ireland (talking pays!)

RELEVANCE TO LOCAL EMPLOYMENT

- The best qualification is one enables their holder to meet a legal requirement – NEBOSH, CIEH, etc.
- Talk to local employers and ask their advice.
- Don't ignore trade unions. Education, Training and Skills, along with Health, Safety and Environment, are issues in which trade unions and the employers are both interested.
- A major threat to the relevance to employment of our qualifications is the beggaring of UK FE which has taken place over the past 20 years, to the point where many British qualifications include far less class contact or practice than elsewhere..
- An English Level 3 Hairdressing student puts in less than half as many class and salon hours as her/his Finnish counterpart. Bridgewater College prides itself on two pits for training mechanics for articulated lorries; most Finnish FE colleges have five or more such pits. There is a danger that by offering UK quals we will be offering quals unfit for a highly skilled economy.
- Don't expect your customer to buy DfE thinking. Nobody in Europe wants a “vocationally-related” qual which doesn't confer trade qualification.

QUALITY

- We must pay attention to integrated assessment where appropriate. Multiple choice is a good way to ensure that a student has covered the syllabus, yet not that (s)he can apply it; some integrated assessment is needed to test competence.
- In qualification and assessment design, use when appropriate a taxonomy of cognitive skills. GCSE generally claims to test only K, U and E. Many vocational qualifications claim to address only K and U, and often the U represents parroted Understanding rather than genuine U.
- Pay attention to the quality of questions, mark schemes and comparability of marking, to discrimination, and to reliability. Examples of best practice are woefully rare among TV AOs.
- In all your communications, identify with education: The customer doesn't want to know if you're "an inspirational visionary leader with a unique blend of entrepreneurial skills and business acumen". They want to know the quality of your quals, your assessment instruments and your devotion to education.

AIDS TO SUCCESS ONE

- In many Western European countries there is a well-developed and diverse system of qualifications, which leave us scant scope.
- There are often regulations about work which differ from ours (e.g. Beauty Therapists or nurses for some procedures, N v S Europe)
- Countries with lower populations are unlikely to have quals covering all industries, which grants us opportunity, Ireland, islands, the Balkans.
- Eastern Europeans, having undertaken your quals in the UK, returning home may wish to become training providers in their home country.

AIDS TO SUCCESS TWO

- Don't be too greedy. Find a fee mechanism that suits the local GDP per capita
- Talk to customers' governments
- Negotiate qual holders' access to professional bodies, even for Associate status
- One can offend people, as BAC and I did in Kosovo
- Even the Privy Council makes mistakes (example)

GO NATIVE

- Get involved in Erasmus Plus
- Sponsor competitions, etc, e.g. European Youth Award (ask me).
- Learn from UK NARIC
- Consult the British Council
- Use your languages
- Make friends, including with training providers

HAPPY TO ENGAGE IN FURTHER DISCUSSION

stephen@vickers.education

Stephen and Rebecca Vickers Partnership, Oxford and Singapore