

6 May 2021

## **HSBC Sri Lanka conducts webinar to share global insights on overseas education**

HSBC Sri Lanka held its second webinar on '*overseas education in a post pandemic world*' to support parents and prospective students who wish to pursue overseas education in 2021/22. The webinar featured education experts from Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) which are popular destinations and emerging corridor – Canada for overseas study among Sri Lankan students with over 450 registering for the event

The panel included David Hawkins, founder of The University Guys and Claire Bingley, Regional Manager at the University of Melbourne, together with Nadeesha Senaratne, Country Head of Wealth & Personal Banking for HSBC. The webinar was moderated by Tharanga Gunasekera, Head of Marketing and Communications from HSBC, and was joined by customers and their children.

With the many changes experienced since the first Lockdown in March 2020, the webinar was organised to discuss the evolving landscape of international education amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic, with particular emphasis on the current admission process, teaching and delivery and most importantly the impact on student life overseas. The discussion also enabled participants to get deeper understanding on how universities have adapted their curriculums and embraced new study practices with online learning. The panelists also elaborated on the opportunities of higher education in UK/Canada and Australia. The webinar also explored the avenues of HSBC's partnerships and services that make the journey more convenient right from the very beginning of planning for higher education to the time the student lands in the destination and continues till the very end.

According to HSBC research, over 21,000 students are based overseas on higher education each year, with Australia and the UK ranked among the top destinations for study among Sri Lanka students, followed by the United States (US), Malaysia and India, and Canada emerging as a new destination.

Nadeesha Senaratne, Country Head of Wealth and Personal Banking mentioned "At HSBC we want to open up a world of opportunity for our customers and support their ambitions. We understand that sending your child overseas is an extremely important decision in a parent's life, that's why we want to make the journey seamless through our international student proposition, that is designed to meet the needs of Sri Lankan student's overseas ambitions. With our financial expertise and global connectivity, it makes it convenient for us to offer the best in class services to support the overseas education aspirations of students with easier, faster and simpler cross-border banking. By collaborating within our network and with key education stakeholders, we are able to facilitate an enriching overseas education journey for your child."

With HSBC's international student proposition, getting students ready for overseas education has never been easier. HSBC supports by providing all the essential banking services such as opening student files,

facilitating payments, opening an overseas account and arranging for a debit card prior to departure of the student.

HSBC will continue to hold these webinars on a regular basis to provide knowledge and global insights to prepare prospective students for their higher education in key education corridors where HSBC is present, given the rapidly evolving landscape and uncertainties around the world.

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**Media enquiries to:**

Tharanga Gunasekera  
94 11 44511350  
[tharangagunasekera@hsbc.com.lk](mailto:tharangagunasekera@hsbc.com.lk)

**Note to editors: additional information for reference**

**1. Have there been any changes to the admission process post pandemic?**

**Australia**

Yes, where exams and assessment have been impacted by Covid-19, universities have been working closely with various qualification and examination boards to adapt their entry requirements. For example, where students cannot sit examinations, many universities are accepting school assessed course work and predicted/calculated grades. Many universities are also extending the validity of English language proficiency tests such as IELTS and TOEFL.

**UK/Canada**

The main disruption has been issues with testing, be these national exams, entrance tests such as SAT, ACT, BMAT etc., or proof of English tests. Universities have had to adapt to these changes in many different ways. Where possible, some have become 'test optional', whereas in other cases universities have found other ways to assess student learning. Universities have worked closely with exam boards to make things work for students.

**2. How have universities adapted to the new normal teaching, delivery and student life?**

**Australia**

Universities have worked incredibly hard to move much of their teaching and learning online; delivering lectures, tutorials practical classes and even internships, virtually, for over a year now. Universities have invested heavily in the technology to support their virtual classrooms and continue to learn and adapt their teaching so that subjects can continue to be offered in both face to face and online as well as in a hybrid (dual delivery) mode.

Universities have also transitioned their student support services online and student clubs and societies have also adapted their activities to be able to offer crucial social connection, peer to peer support and valuable networking and community engagement opportunities virtually.

**UK/Canada**

This depends very much on the exact situation a university is facing. Countries with high-rates of Covid, universities with restricted physical space, and courses with high-touch elements, have all been impacted by

the need to reduce physical interaction. However, for rural, large universities in isolated areas for courses that involve independent study, the situation is different. Universities have all done their best within the situation they face.

**3. The pandemic has shown the need to up skill and future proof yourself. What changes have universities made to adapt in terms of curriculum, learning and others.**

**Australia**

Universities have been developing curriculum and future proofing graduates for many years but the importance of this has further emphasized over the last 12 months. Universities work closely with industry partners to develop curriculum that aligns with industry needs and focuses on developing the skills, knowledge crucial to career success. Highly sought after graduates often undertake a well-rounded, multidisciplinary education and make the most of opportunities inside and outside of the classroom (eg. extracurricular activities, leadership and professional skills development, mentoring, networking, volunteering, internships, exchange and study abroad).

**UK/Canada**

The pivot to remote, online delivery has allowed much innovation, from asynchronous learning, virtual proctoring of assessment and a different focus on pedagogy. Some of this will be retained when the pandemic is over.

**4. What is the best advice that you can give to parents now who are planning to send their child overseas for higher education in a few years?**

**Australia**

In an uncertain world, don't just make a plan A, make a plan A, B and C. Think about alternate destinations and consider a wider range of institutions so you're prepared to respond and adapt as conditions change.

**UK/Canada**

The pandemic has shown that the best-laid plans can very easily fall apart. Rather than focus on one particular country or university, families need to take a broader view of the opportunities available to them and work on a Plan A, B and C.

**5. What insights can you share on how students are settling in their academics and student life in UK, Canada and Australia?**

**Australia**

Students have adapted well to the changes in delivery mode and have learnt valuable lessons regarding how to approach their studies and maximise the university experience. Students have also learnt how important it is to stay connected with their peers and the wider academic community and the value of strong social and academic support networks. While students still favour face to face interaction, they are finding meaningful ways to connect with each other, despite being physically separated.

## **UK/Canada**

In the UK, students have been able to get to campus, so there has been much in-person learning and students have had a fairly strong campus experience. This has not been the same in Canada, where it was very difficult for students to enter the country until relatively recently.

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### **The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited**

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