



**Birmingham**  
Commonwealth  
Association  
Partnerships / Collaboration / Outcomes

Education  
Group



# Birmingham Commonwealth Association: Education Group

The BCA Education Group is unique in that it draws support from the major universities/colleges in Birmingham and beyond to celebrate and recognise the significance of our Commonwealth connections. The vision driving the group is encapsulated in its aspiration to:

*...co-ordinate the efforts of all members in developing the international dimension of collaborative engagement between Birmingham's educational institutions and their Commonwealth counterparts. Such engagement encompasses social and academic enrichment and in attracting overseas students to the city as a source of revenue and as future ambassadors to enhance the influence of Birmingham on the world stage*

In recognition of the economic, social and cultural contribution that foreign students and Commonwealth students in particular make to the Birmingham economy, the group has produced a report to highlight these contributions.

In terms of the economic contribution, the report notes that in 2013/14 the city's universities and colleges played host to 10,782 international, non-EU students. This figure does not include 24 private institutions whose enrolment figures were not available, so the real figure is certainly higher than this. The report estimates that nearly 25% of all international students studying in the city are now from the Commonwealth. When the economic benefits of international students to the city are taken into consideration, and exclude any financial benefits arising from research, the Education Focus Group working with Marketing Birmingham has calculated these to be approximately £400 million. This figure is estimated to be even higher, closer to nearly half a billion pounds if the spending of friends and relatives who come to the city to visit these students or attend their graduations are included in the calculation. The group aims to build on this research and also has a number of potential project ideas for exploration in 2016/2017.



## Potential ideas trialed in the past and for consideration in 2016/2017 include:

- Provision of equipment such as computers to schools and training of teachers to utilise new facilities. (Set up in the Gauteng Provincial Government and Soweto Organisation, South Africa)
- Working with Birmingham's universities to help their third year education students by offering them a placement in different bodies such as government, private organisations or supplementary schools to broaden their experience and knowledge to help them develop a more effective approach when teaching students with Commonwealth/foreign backgrounds here in the UK
- The Royal Commonwealth Society has an education agenda and the BCA will endeavour to explore how it can at a local level assist in the delivery of that agenda

## Chair of Education Group

Prof. Melvyn Pryer

As Director of the International Student Centre, Professor Melvyn Pryer (University College Birmingham) is perfectly placed to drive forward the Commonwealth agenda for the Education Focus Group. He is keen to put the contribution of education's Commonwealth connections in the spotlight and build on the potential that these offer.





We work with a number of agencies including:

Universities

Aston University

Birmingham City University

University College Birmingham

University of Birmingham

University of Worcester

Newman University

Colleges

South & City College Birmingham

Birmingham Metropolitan College

Other

Marketing Birmingham

Two of the many organisations which fully endorse the activities of the BCA include the Association of Commonwealth Universities and Marketing Birmingham.

Association of Commonwealth Universities

The Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) is the world's first and oldest international university network. A UK-registered charity, it has over 500 member institutions across the Commonwealth. It seeks to address issues in international higher education through a range of projects, networks, and events.

The ACU administers scholarships, provides academic research and leadership on issues in the sector, and promotes inter-university cooperation and the sharing of good practice. Birmingham City University, University College Birmingham, and the University of Birmingham are members of the ACU. The ACU endorses the BCA's Education focus group's efforts to enhance the links between educational institutions and the Commonwealth.

Marketing Birmingham

Marketing Birmingham (MB) is the city's strategic marketing

partnership and the driving force behind its growing reputation as a place to visit, meet and invest. It operates the city's leisure and business tourism programmes; Visit and Meet Birmingham as well as inward investment programme Business Birmingham. MB's vision for the future is for a city which is a thriving economic hub that is proud of its story and confident of its future. Marketing Birmingham fully endorses the work of the BCA.

The Association of Commonwealth Universities

