



Beyond Compliance: **Agent Quality through Digital Transformation**



Sheffield | September 15 - 16 2025



Message from the Managing Director

Welcome to our inaugural conference: Beyond Compliance – Driving Agent Quality & Impact through Digital Transformation.

At a time when the UK higher education sector is facing increased regulatory scrutiny, shifting global demand, and growing complexity in international student recruitment, it's never been more important for us to come together – not only to share knowledge, but to shape the standards we hold ourselves and our partners to.

We've created this event to provide a space for honest conversation, shared experience, and practical tools that help universities move from reactive compliance to proactive, intelligent decision-making. With the renewed focus on improving student outcomes; whether it's making tough calls on agent contracts, improving student outcomes, or building trust through financial transparency, these are challenges we all face – and ones we believe technology can help solve.

Over the past few years, our team at SAMS Global has worked closely with universities across the UK to develop solutions tailored to these pressures – SAMS360 for agent performance monitoring, SAMS Pay for secure commission processing, and SAMS CRM for professionalising agent engagement and recruitment communication. These products were not built in isolation – they are a reflection of what the sector has asked for, and what it needs to move forward.

I'm proud that today brings together not only university leaders and experts, but also some of the most forward-thinking organisations working at the intersection of education and technology.

My sincere thanks go to our speakers, facilitators, and the team at the University of Sheffield for helping us host this event. And of course, thank you to each of you – our guests – for taking the time to attend. I hope the day leaves you inspired, challenged, and better equipped to lead the next phase of your international strategy.

Warm regards,



Sham Ghani
Managing Director
SAMS Global Solutions

Arrival- 15th Sep 26



ibis Budget Sheffield Centre St Marys Gate

Velocity Tower, 10A St Mary's Gate,
Broomhall, Sheffield S1 4LR
Phone: 0114 350 4050



**Drinks reception & Network
dinner at 7.30pm.** Taxis and
chaperones to be available at
the hotel reception by 7pm.

Conference Venue

The Wave, The University of Sheffield
2 Whitham Rd, Sheffield S10 2AH

Key contacts:

Sham Ghani, 07792992914;
s.ghani@samsglobal.co.uk

Hamid Gharda,
h.gharda@samsglobal.co.uk

Conference & Media Partners





Conference Agenda – 16th Sep 26

08.20–08.50	Arrival & Coffee
09.00–09.10	Welcome & Opening Remarks
09.15–09.45	Keynote 1: UK government's expectations on agent oversight Keynote 2: How the UK's global position is shifting & How has the sector responded to the AQF
09.50–11.00	Panel – Translating AQF into Institutional Strategy
11.00–11.10	Coffee Break
11.15–11.45	Discussion: Agent management & reviews, the story so far
11.50–12.30	Panel – From Chaos to Control? Universities and the Challenge of Agent Management
12.30–13.30	Networking Lunch – Inox, University of Sheffield Student Union
13.35–14.10	Product Spotlight – SAMS Pay: Is your commission process a barrier to...?
14.15–15.00	Workshop – Agent management & reviews redefined (SAMS360)
15.05–15.25	Coffee & Cake Break
15.30.16.10	Product Spotlight–SAMS CRM: Whose responsibility is it anyway?
16.15–16.30	Closing Remarks & Next Steps

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Amy Jones

Senior International
Recruitment Manager,
University of Sheffield

With over 20 years of experience in higher education, Amy has held a variety of roles across alumni relations, communications, marketing, and student recruitment. For the past eight years, she has specialised in international recruitment, leading a regional team spanning the Americas, Europe, UK & Ireland, and Central Asia.

Amy also oversees the University of Sheffield's work with education agents, including alignment with the Agent Quality Framework (AQF) and pathway providers.

Amy is passionate about the power of collaboration across institutional boundaries, which she finds immensely rewarding, and has actively contributed to numerous consortiums and sector groupings to advance the interests and global reputation of UK higher education.



Andrew Bird

- Vice-Chair of the British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA)
- Member of the British Council Higher Education Advisory Group
- Executive member of the Southampton GO (BID)
- Executive member of the Southampton Chamber of Commerce

Andrew provides strategic leadership for developing, championing and implementing the Southampton Solent University strategies for Recruitment, Reputation, Internationalisation and Communication.

With over 20 years' experience in higher education marketing, communications and recruitment, Andrew is passionate about the role education has in supporting positive change at an individual, institutional and regional level.

Having previously worked at Oxford Brookes University, the University of Southampton and Bournemouth University, while also representing the higher education sector on a range of boards and advisory groups, Andrew has a proven track record of creating impactful solutions aligned to each organisation's strategic objectives.



Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Cath McLeod

Senior International
Recruitment Manager,
University of Sheffield

Cath McLeod is an experienced student recruitment and marketing professional with over 20 years of experience in higher education.

Currently Deputy Director of Student Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions at University of the Arts London, Cath has a proven track record of meeting challenging recruitment targets, driving international diversity, and steering agent management strategies at a range of UK universities.



Donna Ball

Senior Partnerships
Director, Study Portals

Donna Ball has worked in international recruitment and marketing for over 16 years. Having worked across several universities, in a variety of roles, from operational to strategic roles, she has extensive hands-on experience of devising and delivering international recruitment strategies to deliver results.

In her current role, Donna has responsibility for establishing relationships and partnerships with UK universities, to contribute towards their goals and objectives through benefiting from Studyportals services.

Utilising her prior knowledge and experience of the university structures, obstacles, processes and procedures, she has positioned herself as an asset to current and prospective UK university partners of Studyportals.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Enzo Ramio

International Higher
Education Consultant

Vincenzo (Enzo) Raimo helps universities bridge the gap between their international strategies and their real-world goals.

A former International Director at the University of Nottingham and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) at the University of Reading, he now works independently with universities, governments and investors on international student recruitment, transnational education and global strategy.

A recognised expert on education agents and co-editor of *Student Recruitment Agents in International Higher Education*, Enzo is also a trustee of International House London and a regular contributor to HEPI, PIE News, Research Professional and WonkHE, often in pursuit of clarity, impact, and the occasional unpopular truth.



Felicity
Lawrence

Head of Global Operations,
University of Leicester

Felicity Lawrence is Head of Global Operations at the University of Leicester, with over 20 years of experience in higher education. She leads a multi-functional team covering Business Systems, Finance, Agent Management, Recruitment Partnerships, Student Ambassador engagement, and Fees and Scholarships.

Felicity has a strong track record of delivering operational excellence and developing innovative initiatives that support both home and international recruitment and engagement. She has held several strategic roles at the University, including Global Business Operations Manager and Senior International Officer, with a particular focus on partnerships and external relations.

Felicity brings expertise in project management, cross-functional collaboration, and change leadership.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Jacquie
Jenkins

Director of Networks and
Engagement, The PIE
News

Jacquie is the former Global Programme Lead for International Student Mobility at the British Council. She led how the British Council works with those that influence prospective international students including agents, counsellors, pathway providers and sponsors.

Jacquie launched the UK's agent and counsellor training and engagement platform in December 2022, which became an integral part of the UK's Agent Quality Framework. Jacquie has had an extensive career at the British Council and has been instrumental in setting up Going Global conference (2004-13), the global Alumni Awards (2013-17) and the Study UK Campaign (2016-19).



Jake Duffin

Associate Director of
International Recruitment,
University of Sheffield

Jake has over 20 years of experience in higher education and has led international student recruitment at Queen Mary University of London from 2019 until recently joining the University of Sheffield as Assistant Director for International Student Recruitment in September 2025.

During his tenure at Queen Mary, Jake oversaw a diverse team across London, Beijing, Delhi, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Lahore, and Ohio. He was responsible for developing and refining recruitment strategies that aligned with international trends, sector developments, and government policies.

Jake is an elected member of the BUILA Executive, where he oversees the organisation's collaboration with the British Council and plays a key role in UCAS engagement and the implementation of the Agent Quality Framework. He also serves on several agent advisory boards and maintains a strong professional focus on strengthening university-agent relationships.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Jill Molyneux

Regional Manager (UK)
and Agent Compliance,
University of Sheffield

With 18 years of experience in higher education, I've built a strong background in International recruitment across various markets, business relationship management, and communications.

In my roles in Global Engagement, as well as previous positions as Departmental Manager and Faculty Recruitment and Marketing Manager, I have developed and executed key strategies to support overarching institutional aims.

My current focus is on quality assurance and agent compliance, where I actively collaborate with peers and experts to seek best practices across the sector.



Katie Layt

Director of Growth and
Retention, Enroly

Katie brings over 19 years of expertise, and a whole lot of passion to her role as Director of Growth, Retention, and Services at Enroly.

She's all about making the international student journey smoother, smarter, and more efficient, with a laser focus on enhancing student experiences, boosting retention, and streamlining operations.

Katie's career has taken her through senior roles at the University of Hertfordshire and Navitas, where she led business development and built relationships that truly last.

Now, she's channeling her love of innovation and tech to help universities and education providers deliver scalable, impactful solutions that stick.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Leo Cutting

Client Director, IDP

Leo Cutting is a Client Director at IDP Education. In this role he collaborates with IDP partner universities to deliver their international student recruitment strategy.

Prior to joining IDP, Leo spent ten years working in international student recruitment, first at the University of Nottingham and subsequently at the University of Sussex.

Leo has particular experience and expertise in South Asian markets but has also managed recruitment from Europe, Central Asia, East Africa and the Middle East.



Nick Golding

Co-founder & CEO, GERSA

Nick is a seasoned 'edupreneur' with a 40-year career in international education, pioneering student mobility at scale. He co-founded CATS Colleges, Cambridge School of Visual & Performing Arts, Cambridge Education Group and On-Campus. Subsequently, as a Cambridge Angels investor, he backed and exited several EdTech ventures, including The Ambassador Platform (TAP), before it was sold to IDP.

Following stints at The PIE and ICEF, his latest venture is GERSA (Global Education Recruitment Standards Authority), a not-for-profit organisation, aiming to elevate standards in international student recruitment and eliminate exploitation of the vulnerabilities in the status quo.

Nick is passionate about mentoring young entrepreneurs and promoting international student mobility.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Paul Davy

Agent Compliance
Manager, University of
Leeds

Paul Davy is the Agent Compliance Manager at the University of Leeds. With over 21 years in the HE sector, and over 15 years as a management accountant, he specialises in agent commission processing.

He shares and promotes systems and knowledge that will help Universities with their compliance with the AQF (Agent Quality Framework) and their agent management practices.



Sam
Whiteside

Regional Manager Americas,
Southeast Asia, UKI and Europe,
University of Lancashire

Sam Whiteside is Regional Manager for the Americas, South East Asia, UKI and Europe at the University of Lancashire, formerly the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), one of the UK's largest and most inclusive institutions.

Over the past four years, they have held several roles within the university's international office including leading the international recruitment strategy for the overseas campus in Cyprus and overseeing activity across the Asia Pacific region.

In their current post, they provide strategic leadership across key regions, overseeing partner engagement, conversion activity, and regional growth. Recent achievements include establishing a new LATAM agent network, and establishing a regionally based international office in Malaysia. Their work is underpinned by a strong focus on data-led strategy, partnership development, and sustainable international growth.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



**Semra Yalçın
Dogan**

Founder and Director,
FutureMe

Semra Yalçın Doğan joined the British Council, where she spent 20 years working closely with UK education institutions. She has led numerous education projects, building strong links between Türkiye and the UK.

In 2024, she founded FutureMe, drawing on her extensive network and expertise to connect students, counsellors, and education providers. She has a particular interest in fostering partnerships that enhance international education opportunities and promote British education in Türkiye.



Tony Lee

Chief Visionary Officer, ICEF

Formerly the Global Digital Marketing Director at Study Group, Tony led teams in Singapore, Shanghai, Sydney, New York & the UK recruiting students for universities in the USA, Australia, and Europe.

Before this, he established the digital marketing footprint for INTO University Partnerships. Tony was a co-founder of Global Campus, serving on the board alongside Sir Drummond Bone, Sir Anthony Smith & Sir Graeme Davies.

Tony studied Digital Disruption Strategy at Oxford University and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Speakers, Facilitators and Panellists



Vejay Naidu

Senior International
Recruitment Manager,
University of Sheffield

Exnet International was founded in 1999 by Vijay Naidu and within 5-6 years earned the confidence of UK Universities as their authorised representative in India.

Exnet would participate in BC Exhibitions, follow up with students, help with college and school visits, and identify potential institutions for collaboration. Exnet also works with BC and attends their events and workshops.

Exnet has UK Certified counsellors. In past 25 years, Exnet has sent many students to the UK and is widely identified as a UK-only brand in the Study Abroad Industry. In short, Exnet comes up as an advisor, friend or mentor for students, through their academic journey and thereafter.



The SAMS Global Core Team



Sham Ghani
Managing Director



Jen Marsden-Lambert
Director,
Corporate Services



Hadi Rahman
Product Director



Hamid Gharda
Director, Business
Development



Faye Lewis
HR Business Partner



David Cliffe
Business Development
Manager



Adnan Habib
Product Specialist



Heather McKinlay
Operations Manager



Development Partners

From day one, our mission has been to develop practical, reliable solutions that solve real challenges in international student recruitment, agent management, compliance, and student experience.

But we've never believed that can be achieved in isolation. That's why our development model is rooted in collaboration with forward-thinking university & agent partners.



Our development partners play a crucial role in every phase of our product journey, from concept and design, to testing and refinement. Their insights shape the features we prioritise, the workflows we design, and the ways our platforms integrate with real organisational structures and pressures.

But perhaps most importantly, our partnerships are based on trust. We value honest feedback, long-term relationships, and mutual respect for the work that universities do every day. In return, our partners get early access to innovation, influence over product development, and the confidence that their needs are being heard, not just serviced.



Our Products



Commission Transparency. Automated. Auditable. Secure.

Our purpose-built platform for managing agent commission payments with confidence and compliance. Designed in close collaboration with UK universities, SAMS Pay provides a centralised, auditable system for processing agent claims, managing approval workflows, and ensuring payment accuracy, all while maintaining strict data security standards.



Agent Performance. Quality Assurance. Institutional Control.

Built for managing agents from a central place, our system oversees annual reviews, partner tiering, and contract decisions. SAMS360 supports a range of performance metrics: conversion, engagement, visa success, compliance trends, and more. It also enables cross-team collaboration, bringing in insights from regional offices, academic departments, and compliance teams.

With four unique modules, SAMS 360 incorporates our training platform and our trip planner module, a must for all 'road warriors' allowing teams to plan trips involving agents and being able to assign costs to all agents.



Professionalising Agent-Led Recruitment at Every Stage

In a climate where universities are under pressure to demonstrate agent quality and compliance, SAMS CRM gives agents the tools to operate more professionally and transparently. By using the CRM to share updates, upload documents, and communicate effectively with students and university partners, agents can show exactly how they're supporting applicants at every stage of the journey.



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