

Study in Europe: Higher Education Institutions' Training Session

## **Converting Interest into Enrolment: Optimising International Student Recruitment**

25-26 June 2026, Comet, Brussels

European universities invest significant resources in generating interest from prospective international students through marketing campaigns, education fairs, digital outreach and agent networks. However, converting this initial interest into actual enrolments remains a persistent challenge. Many institutions report high inquiry volumes but struggle with conversion rates at critical stages: from inquiry to application, application to offer, and offer to enrolment.

**Understanding and optimising the recruitment funnel**—the journey prospective students take from first awareness to final enrolment—has become essential for effective and efficient international recruitment. Rather than simply increasing lead generation efforts, institutions need to **focus on where and why prospective students drop out** of the process and implement **targeted strategies** to improve conversion at each stage.

This training session examines the **international student recruitment process** through a conversion lens, helping institutions identify bottlenecks in their recruitment funnel, understand what drives student decision-making at each stage, and implement evidence-based strategies to improve enrolment outcomes. By focusing on conversion optimisation, institutions can achieve better recruitment results with existing resources whilst providing prospective students with more responsive, supportive experiences throughout their decision-making journey.

By the end of this training session, participants will:

1. **Understand the recruitment funnel framework** and be able to identify key conversion stages and common drop-off points in the international student journey from inquiry to enrolment.
2. **Analyse institutional recruitment data** to diagnose where conversion challenges exist and prioritise improvement efforts based on evidence rather than assumptions.
3. **Apply proven conversion strategies** from peer institutions and recruitment experts to improve performance at critical stages: inquiry-to-application, application-to-offer, and offer-to-enrolment.
4. **Develop actionable plans for improving conversion rates** within their own institutional context, taking into account resource constraints, organisational structures and market conditions.



## Programme

Thursday, 25 June - Day 1:

Time	Session
11:30 – 13:30	Registration
12:15 – 13:30	Welcome Coffee and Light Lunch
13:30 – 13:45	Welcome by the European Commission and EACEA – Talent attraction as an EU objective
13:45 – 14:30	<b>Setting the scene:</b> Improving conversion from interest to enrolment Potential speaker: Raul Ranne, Academic Cooperation Association
14:30 – 15:00	Coffee Break
15:00 – 16:00	<b>An AI-ready Strategy for Visibility</b> Gerrit Bruno Blöss, Founder & CEO of Study.eu As traffic by potential international students is vanishing and being replaced with AI agents providing advice, universities need to react to be seen, and to be seen by the right audience in the right context. This session delves into the context of lead nurturing from the 'why' aspect – why nurturing becomes more important, as traffic winds down. <i>Discussion with the audience – sharing own cases</i>
16:00 – 17:00	<b>Case study 1:</b> Thomas Buerman, Head of the International Support and Admissions team, Ghent University <i>Discussion with the audience – sharing own cases</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Short Break
17:15 – 18:00	<b>Case study 2:</b> Kadri Leit-Tromp, Internationalisation Coordinator, Tallinn University <i>Discussion with the audience – sharing own cases</i>
18:00 – 18:15	Wrap-up
19:30	Networking Dinner, Moxy Hotel – Brussels City Centre Address: Rue du Prince Albert 2, 1050 Bruxelles



## Friday, 26 June - Day 2:

Time	Session
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Overview: From leads to enrolment - a conversion framework Sara Sandford, Edified</p> <p>This session introduces the core principles of student-centred conversion — what drives prospective students to say yes, and where institutions typically lose them. Participants will leave with a shared framework to anchor the practical workshops that follow.</p>
09:30 – 10:45	<p>Parallel Sessions Round 1 (<i>allocation based on current challenges experienced by participants</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workshop A: Alternative lead finding channels, Gerrit Bruno Blöss</b></li> </ul> <p>This session delves into lead generation in non-traditional ways. Reddit is a social media channel that is ever more widely used, and it is notably used in training of AI tools. This session showcases Reddit and its importance and relevance for visibility and conversion, finding relevant discussions and participating in discussions – leading to new ways for universities in identifying and converting leads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Workshop B: Converting applicants to students, Sara Sandford, Edified</b></li> </ul> <p>Drawing on student-centric sales methodology, this practical workshop builds skills in crafting personalised communications, positioning institutional value, and navigating the conversations that turn offer holders into enrolled students.</p>
10:45 – 11:10	Coffee Break
11:10 – 13:15	<p>Parallel Sessions Round 2 (<i>allocation based on current challenges experienced by participants</i>): (tbc)</p>
13:15 – 13:30	Closing and next steps
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch

