

24.8.2025

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Title

International students of speech and language therapy in the UK : choices about where to study and whether to return / J. Goldbart ; J. Marshall ; I. R. Evans

Publication year

2005

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education. - 50 (2005) 1, S. 89 - 109

Inventory number

19598

Keywords

Ausland : Großbritannien : Studium, Studenten, Lehre ; Ausland : Großbritannien : einzelne Hochschulen ; Studentenschaft : Studienverhalten ; Ausländische Studenten : allgemein

Abstract

The qualification leading to professional practice in speech and language therapy (SLT, also known as speech and language pathology) is not evenly available across the world. Geographic mobility and the availability of information are greater than at any other time in our history. Thus, initial SLT qualification courses in many countries are likely to have students from overseas among their intake. The professional nature of SLT programmes means that many aspects are culturally and linguistically bound. This may impact adversely on international students' success on such courses. A study of all initial SLT qualifying courses in the UK was undertaken to identify the countries of origin of past and current international students, to explore the reasons behind their decision to study in the UK and to find out where and in what role they planned to work, or were already working, on qualification. Analysis of questionnaire and interview data revealed a wide variety of reasons for studying in the UK; linguistic, cultural, financial, and personal. The students come primarily from Europe,

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particularly Greece; but also from Asia; Africa and the Americas. Familiarity with English language and the perceived status of UK higher education, together with the related colonial and post-colonial links between the student's country of origin and the UK, appear to have an impact on students' decision to study in the UK. The short- and long-term employment plans of respondents are discussed, along with factors influencing decisions about whether to work in Britain, their home country or elsewhere. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)