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**Abstract**

The international branch campus is a phenomenon on the rise, but we still have limited knowledge of the strategic choices underlying the start of these ventures. The objective of this paper is to shed light on the motivations and decisions of universities to engage (or not) with the establishment of international branch campuses. As a point of departure, institutional theory has been selected to frame the potential motives for starting an international branch campus. Secondary literature, including professional journals and university reports and websites, has been analysed to obtain information that alludes to the motivations of universities for adopting particular strategies. It was found that university managements' considerations can be explained by the concepts of legitimacy, status, institutional distance, risk-taking, risk-avoidance and the desire to secure new sources of revenue. We argue that universities should avoid decisions that are based largely on a single dimension, such as legitimacy, but rather consider a broad spectrum of motivations and considerations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Wilkins, Stephen, E-Mail: S.J.K.Wilkins@bath.ac.uk