APAIE 2024

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Collaborating for sustainable impact: partnerships across the Asia Pacific

APAIE Perth 4 - 8 March 2024

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Asia-Pacific Association
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Session 14E: Thurs 7th March, 10:30 – 11:00

Relationships and policies: Building an agency certification and management process

Rita Chen
Seneca Polytechnic, Canada

Chair

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Seneca POLYTECHNIC

March 7, 2024

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Audience survey

Tell me what words come to mind when you hear the phrase: **"International education in Canada"**

To participate:

1) Join menti.com on your phone or laptop
2) Enter code: 3311 1489
3) Share as many words as desired

Background

Canada has seen an accelerated increase in international students (from 527,195 study permits in 2020 to 1,040,985 in 2023); it's estimated up to half are sent by student recruitment agencies*

While institutions in Canada have extensive experience and robust processes for working with agencies…as of 2021, there were no formal agency management policies

In December 2021, the Auditor General of Ontario released Value-for-Money report for public colleges with these specific recommendations:

- Public colleges should have a formal policy for the selection and removal of international student recruitment agencies; and

- Public colleges should monitor agency advertisements at regular intervals of 3-6 months.

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Seneca

- Publicly funded polytechnic in Ontario, Canada

- 6 campuses across province

- Full-time student population of 39,800; 61% of which are international students hailing from 150+ countries

- Approximately 400+ agent partners

- Agents account for approximately 60% of international students

- International activities managed within Seneca International, with centralized teams for Admissions, Student Services, and Marketing

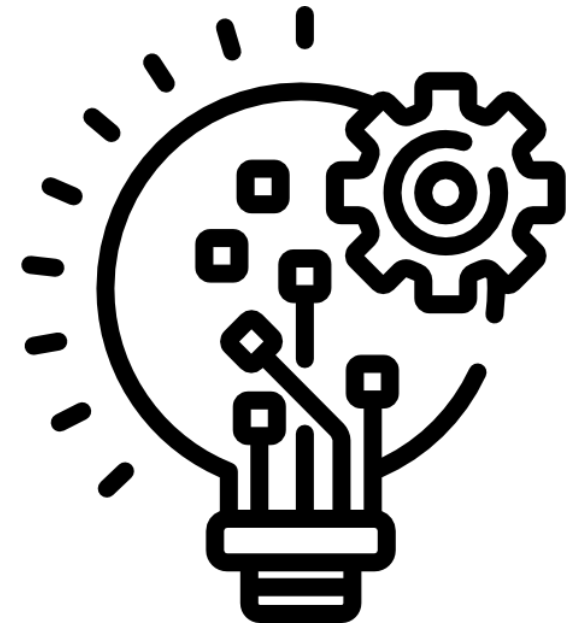**Seneca**
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Guiding principles

Three principles guided the creation of Seneca's agency management policy

Auditing and Enforceability

Efficiency and Automation

Innovation and Best practices (industry and cross-sector)

Blueprint

Policy blueprint developed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data

Research	Stakeholders	Frameworks
Online search for existing policies in Canada and abroad Tables of content, policy sections, and writing styles (e.g. high-level vs. detailed) charted and compared Skeleton outline drafted from consolidated findings	Consultations held with 14 stakeholders across 10 functional groups: • Communications • English Language Institute • Finance • Registrar's Office • Seneca International • Seneca International Academy • Student Services	Internal: • Seneca Au Large (sustainable, equitable, virtual) • Eight Seneca policies External: • British Council's *London Statement* • Australia International Education and Training's *Agent Code of Ethics*

Process

With the guiding principles and the ends in mind, policy creation was executed based a project plan

Timeline: 6 months (December 2021 – May 2022)

Tasks:

Activities*	Approximate Time Spent
Research and Project planning	4 weeks
Consultations	6 weeks
Document drafting and creation	5 weeks
Revisions	5 weeks
Approval and Finalization	4 weeks

* Some activities occurred concurrently.

Resources: Staff x 3 people (1 lead; 2 reviewers)

Deliverables:
- International Student Recruitment Agency Management Policy
- Agency Code of Conduct
- Agency Certificate

Challenges and considerations

Agent aggregators – how do we ensure sub-agents are compliant?

- Make the aggregator responsible – reflected in updated agreement

Implementation – immediate need versus what can be done later?

- Implementation to be rolled out in phases

Measurements – how we do evaluate success?

- Create a certification process for agencies that ties together – policy, agreement, code of conduct, and training

- Track compliance through receipt of documentation and other reporting mechanisms

- Measure conversion against training efforts

Adoption – how we gain the buy-in of stakeholders?

- Involve stakeholders in the process whenever possible or appropriate

- Create clear, timely messaging that relays the reasoning for and benefits of the changes

Phase 1 consisted of:
- International Student Recruitment Agency Management Policy
- Agency Code of Conduct
- Agency Certificate

Policy and supporting documents released in June 2022, six months after the release of the Auditor General report
- First Mover – Agency Management Policy and Agency Code of Conduct among peers

Communication on agency certification process sent to agencies in November 2022

Agency Code of Conduct sent to agencies for signing in January 2023
- 100% signing rate

Result

Phase 1 of larger agency management policy project successfully launched at Seneca

Next steps

Wrapping up Phase 2 and making in-roads on Phase 3

Phase	Activity	Status
2	AMLS and international sanctions clearance checks embedded into agency application form	Complete
2	Centralization of signing processes	Complete
2	Online agency training course	Spring 2024
3	Website and social media monitoring tool	In-progress
3	Employee code of conduct and operating manual	In-progress
3	Re-vamp of renewal processes	Not started

Final thoughts

Agency management is an evolving function that requires consistent monitoring and oversight…by

i)   keeping an eye on industry trends and developments,

ii) being open to re-assessing current processes, and

iii) sharing best practices,

institutions can effectively navigate the agency management process and create better relationships for all involved.

"I had a dream in which our questions miraculously all had answers."

ANDREWGENN/GETTY IMAGES

Questions?

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Thank you.

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