

# Asian Higher Education Outlook 2018

## Executive Summary

The center of academic gravity is shifting towards a rising Asia, which hosts the largest enrolment in higher education in the world after more than two decades of growth in access and participation. Asia is also emerging as a global center of excellence in research and innovation, supported by a strong national commitment for strategic investment in higher education. The rise of higher education in Asia is both a drive and outcome of the continent's robust population growth, dynamic economy, innovative entrepreneurship and profound social transformation.

The founding of the Asian Universities Alliance (AUA) on 29 April, 2017 marks a new milestone in Asian higher education. AUA brings together 15 universities from 13 countries across Asia to form a creative partnership with a mission "to jointly address regional and global challenges, specifically related to higher education and economic, scientific and technological development, by strengthening collaboration among member institutions."

This 2017 Report is the first of the planned annual series entitled *Asian Higher Education Outlook*. The Report sets the scene for the establishment and direction of the AUA<sup>1</sup>. It represents an effort to engage in deliberation and exploration of the rationale and mission of AUA through the collective and individual strength and expectations of its members.

The early chapters of this Report set out the nature and position of Asian higher education in its global and national contexts by examining major trends in the transformation of Asia and Asian higher education. The chapters to follow examine the diverse institutional characteristics and initiatives of AUA members. The report explores the roles of Asian universities in expanded participation and diversified provision through transnational education. This was accomplished by identifying alignment with the directions and needs of government, industry, and the wider community, driving the rise of the innovative and the entrepreneurial character of universities, and mapping emerging trends in the field of Asia's higher education studies. A key feature of the Report is the outcome of the AUA member survey about expectations, and ways to ensure the future success of AUA as a whole, as well as provide added value for member institutions. The Report concludes with specific recommendations to achieve AUA's mission.

---

1. The data analysis for this report is based on research literature and document analyses, data analytics using international publication and citation databases, participatory observation and fieldwork, interactions with representatives from member universities as well as experts in higher education studies and comparative and international education, survey of members, and comments and views expressed by the Presidents and delegates of members at the AUA Summit in Beijing on April 28-29, 2017.