

News release

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Graphite Capital backs Higher Ed International

Graphite Capital, a leading UK mid-market private equity specialist, is backing Higher Ed International, a fast-growing global online programme manager. HEI partners with universities in the UK, continental Europe, Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East, supporting them in building high-quality online degree programmes.

HEI was founded by Randy Best and Dr Justyna Dymerska to focus on international markets, drawing on their decade's experience developing Academic Partnerships, a leading US OPM, which they divested in 2019.

Trading as Higher Ed Partners, the company has the expertise and technology to project-manage the creation of online programmes across all aspects of marketing, student recruitment, support and retention. The group helps its university partners in Europe, South America and Africa grow their online enrolment and revenue.

The global online higher education market is forecast to more than double from \$36 billion in 2019 to \$74 billion in 2025, with the global OPM market forecast to grow from \$3.9 billion in 2020 to \$9.9 billion in 2025.

Online students include full-time professionals, who take a post-graduate course to boost their career options, and 'late access' students seeking higher education later in life to enter the job market or change career direction, often through professional courses such as nursing. In addition, domestic and international students are attracted by the affordability and greater convenience of online learning.

Graphite has acquired a significant minority stake in HEI as the sole institutional investor.

Dr Dymerska, HEI's executive chairman, commented: "Developing meaningful partnerships with high-quality universities to help achieve their social and economic

mission is fundamental to the success of our business. We are well placed for strong growth in the years ahead, building on our existing partnerships and extensive new business pipeline. We are pleased to welcome Graphite as an investor and are looking forward to benefitting from its significant expertise in the education and technology-enabled business service sectors.”

Graphite senior partner Mark Hall added: “We are delighted to be partnering with Justyna, Randy and the first-class team at HEI, supporting their global ambitions. Their extensive track record and customer offering are extremely attractive elements in this high-growth market.”

Graphite managing partner Andy Gray said: “HEI is our sixth investment from our ninth fund. It fits perfectly with our strategy of backing best-in-class management teams in sectors with significant growth opportunities. We look forward to working together to scale up its university partnerships globally.”

Mudassir Khan, partner, Tony Saade, investment director, and Zoe Jackson, investment executive, also worked on the transaction.