

The Social Weighted Impact of University International Conferences on Glasgow

Topic: Murals and miniatures: applying social accounting with a very broad brush, and with fine strokes to precious cameos

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Abstract

Universities are known to be important in supporting economic activity in their host cities and regions. Their role in attracting business tourism has however been less studied. This paper uses an extended Input-Output framework to provide empirical estimates of the impacts on both the city and Scottish economy arising from international conference activities in Glasgow that are associated with the three City Universities (University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Strathclyde).

An integrated applied Input-Output and gravity modelling framework is used to provide GDP and employment impact estimates for Scotland, the city of Glasgow and for communities across Glasgow based on Scottish Parliament constituencies. The study uses visitor data collected from the universities and the Glasgow Convention Bureau for the financial year 2016-17.

An additional innovation is the analysis of the relative social value to Glasgow City of the University International Conference impact. Based on fundamental welfare economic principles, appropriate social weights are derived to convert original impact estimates into socially modified economic values.

The social weights are designed to reflect the dimensions of inclusive growth, including income distribution and deprivation, as recently set out by the Scottish Government. Comparisons with the weighted impacts of other activities on the communities of Glasgow are made and conclusions drawn.