

Study UK

Guide for US Counsellors



Study UK

The Study UK campaign, delivered by the British Council in partnership with the UK government's GREAT Britain campaign, promotes the UK as a first-choice study destination all over the world.

This guide has been created to support every counsellor who is working with internationally mobile students and their families. It includes useful resources and the latest information about studying in the UK, and it will help you to support, inspire and inform students as they make important choices about their education.

We value your input and support and, together, we want to build greater recognition of the UK and make it the first-choice destination for international students.

Introduction

You can reassure students that the UK is one of the best countries in the world to study in*, and we're grateful for your help in encouraging them to choose the UK for their university education.

To help you, we've created a presentation to use at student-facing meetings and events. It includes helpful speaking notes and can be downloaded from the **British Council's Brand Hub**.

*Top ten places in the world to study, Educations, 2021.

About the UK

The United Kingdom (UK) consists of England, Wales, Scotland (which together make up Great Britain) and Northern Ireland.

The capital city of the UK is London, which is also the capital of England. For Wales the capital is Cardiff, for Scotland it is Edinburgh, and for Northern Ireland it is Belfast.

The population of the UK is estimated to be around 65 million.

The UK is one of the world's leading business locations. The UK is one of the top ten manufacturers in the world and has the largest industries in Europe for Life Sciences, ICT and the Creative Industries.

The currency of the UK is pounds sterling (£).



About the UK

The UK has a fascinating history dating back to 6500 BC. All over the UK you'll find buildings and monuments marking its history, from Stonehenge to Buckingham Palace.

The UK is also home to 31 cultural and natural UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Our **dedicated blog** and **Tik Tok channel** give students an idea of what it's like to be an international student in the UK – with many posts by international students who are already studying here.

Here is one of our latest blogs by a student from the USA:
Connect with nature while studying in the UK: my life as an international student in Belfast.

Here are three of our latest Tik Tok videos, all of which feature students from the USA who are currently studying in the UK:

1. **Three things I wish I knew before coming to study in the UK**
2. **Three reasons why I chose to study in the UK**
3. **Three things I love about living in London as an international student**

An exceptional education that leads to a successful career

Most international students who have studied in the UK report a significant competitive edge over peers educated in other countries, with over 69 per cent saying they are progressing further, being promoted quicker, and earning more because of the prestigious education they have received*.

Our students learn in a supportive environment at their institutions, benefitting from teaching methods that encourage independent thought. The UK has a long history of pioneering approaches to teaching that expand and build on the traditional, so students get the most from their studies – and themselves.

While your students will want to know more about studying here, their parents will have their own concerns and questions about being an international student at a UK university.

To help you answer questions and reassure families, we have created a **special Study UK guide specifically for parents.**

*International Graduate Outcomes, Universities UK International, 2019.

A chance to study diverse and fascinating subjects

We know that many students appreciate the range of study options that are available in the UK, and you can reassure them that our universities have one of the most diverse subject offerings in the world – with over 50,000 undergraduate courses available (UCAS 2021).

Flexibility is built into most of these courses and many UK universities allow students to choose from different subject ‘modules’, so they can build a course programme that suits them, specialising as the course develops for a perfectly tailored experience.

Explore some of the subjects most popular with our international students.

It means that, no matter what your students are passionate about, the UK is a fantastic place for them to pursue any academic or career interest.

A great investment in your students' futures

Investing a considerable sum in your education is an important decision. To reassure your students that the UK is a great choice, we've compiled a range of helpful information around money and budgeting on our [website](#).

In addition, we've also created a short animation about money and budgeting, as well as a [printable flyer](#), which can be downloaded from the British Council's Brand Hub.



UK higher education at a glance

This chart includes some of the key differences between US and UK undergraduate education.

	US Education	UK Education
Award title	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
Duration	Four years	Three* or four years (Scotland)
General Education	Common	No General Education requirements
Major	Commonly declared during study	Declared at admissions (course)
Honours Track	Restricted	All students
Admissions Philosophy	Fit for institution and course of study	Fit for course or degree programme
Application process	Direct to institution or via the Common Application	Via Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) at undergraduate level
Changing Major	Common	Not common among students but institutions usually allow this
Transferring Institution	Common	Rare – Typically only happens for students studying externally accredited professional programmes
Tutor	Additional help with a class subject	Member of academic staff –teachers and in some cases is student's academic advisor

* England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Undergraduate programme structure

Programme type	Explanation	Example
Single honours	One subject major	BA (Hons) in English Literature Literature
Interdisciplinary degrees	Broad-based major	BA (Hons) in Humanities
Combined and joint honours	Double major or major/minor	BSc (Hons) in Computer Science and English
Extra year	Non-credit programmes	Work placement year (also known as a sandwich year) or year abroad
Professional degrees	Professional accredited programmes taught at the undergraduate level	LLB in Law BArch in Architecture MB BS in Medicine

Grades

UK Classification	UK Percentage	US Grade	US GPA
First	70-100	A	4.0
Upper Second	60-69	B+/B	3.0-3.3
Lower Second	50-59	B/B-	2.7-3.0
Third	40-49	C	2.0
Fail	0-39	F	0

Applying to universities in the UK

Every year, over 500,000 undergraduates and postgraduates choose the UK over other countries, and students here will meet people from all backgrounds, and from all walks of life*.

In the UK, students enter a focused programme of study and the majority of their classes will be directly relevant to their chosen major, and the admissions process reflects the focused nature of the UK's education model.

*Universities UK International, 2020. HESA, 2022

1. Decide on a university and course

To ensure your students choose the course and university that is right for them and for what they want to achieve, it is best to read as much as they can about the range of courses, colleges and universities available and compare them.



Applying to universities in the UK

It is also important to check the course entry requirements. You can do this using the course profiles on the institutions' websites. If you or your students have any questions, you can contact the university directly, who will be very happy to help you find the information you need.

Some helpful resources in the university search:

- The **Study UK website** is administered by the British Council and is a resource hub for international students when interested in studying in the UK.
- **UCAS** is responsible for managing applications to higher education programmes in the UK. It provides comprehensive information and tools helping students and advisers navigate the admissions process in the UK.
- A good place to start is **DiscoverUni**, the official website for comparing UK higher education course data. On this website you can select and compare subjects, modes of study, teaching outcomes and location to help you learn more about the courses on offer.

Applying to universities in the UK

2. Register on UCAS and apply

Applying for an undergraduate degree in the UK is very simple. Your students can apply for up to five courses at once through UCAS for a small administration fee, and UCAS handles everything else. They do not need to get in touch with lots of universities individually.

Summary of UCAS application process:

- First, go to the **UCAS website** where your students can fill in their application form.
- Then they will need to write their personal statement. This is their chance to stand out from the crowd by explaining why they are interested in the course, the skills they have that make them suitable, and their life experiences and achievements.
- They also need to include a written reference from someone who can confirm their ability to do the course. This could be completed by you, or by a teacher or tutor.

Applying to universities in the UK

3. Receiving an offer

The university or college will contact your student directly (usually via email) to tell them whether they have received an offer to study.

If they are accepted with an unconditional offer, they have a place, and they can accept straightaway.

If they are accepted with a conditional offer, the place is theirs if they meet a few extra requirements. This could be achieving certain exam grades.

For some courses, students may be asked for an interview before they receive an offer, either on the phone or sometimes in person. Check the course information before your students apply to find out whether this is required.

Once your student has decided to accept an offer then they can respond to it through the UCAS website – then they're on their way to becoming a UK student.

4. Arranging funding

Now is the time to arrange funding. Students may be eligible for one of the many scholarships available to help with the cost of their studies.

- **US Federal Loans**

A US citizen or US National may apply for US Federal Student Loans or Private Loans for educational related costs to study at undergraduate level at many UK universities. Students should check the requirements and eligibility with each university they are applying to for more information. Check the **US Federal Student Aid website** to find out which universities are registered.

Read our blog which shares our **6 top tips on applying for a scholarship**.

Applying to universities in the UK

5. Applying for a visa

Most international students will need a student visa to study in the UK. The process is straightforward, and you can find out more about immigration requirements, please visit the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

If your students have questions about their visa application, please direct them to their local [UK Visas and Immigration service](#).

To help you to explain the UK's university application process, we have created a [guide](#), outlining the steps students should take.



University application deadlines

1 September

UCAS application system opens.

15 October

For courses at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and for most courses in medicine, veterinary medicine, science, and dentistry.

15 January

For most undergraduate courses. Recommended deadline for equal consideration.

30 June

Late deadline for most undergraduate courses. Applications received after this deadline will automatically go into 'Clearing', so students will not be guaranteed their first choice.

Students can apply after the January deadline right up until 30 June, but it is better to apply early.

What is Clearing?

Clearing is how universities and colleges in the UK fill any places they still have on their courses. From 6 July to 20 October, students can apply for a course using Clearing if they are not already holding an offer from a university or college, and the course still has places.

Students can use clearing if:

- they are applying after 30 June
- they didn't receive any offers (or none they wanted to accept)
- they didn't meet the conditions of their offers
- they've declined their firm place using the 'decline my place' button in Track

For more information about Clearing, [visit the UCAS website](#).

Postgraduate studies

Many UK universities handle their own postgraduate applications and students can often apply directly through their websites. Many postgraduate courses do not have a fixed application deadline. However, it is always best to apply early to make sure you have the best chance of being accepted – from six months to a year before your course begins.

For more information about applying for postgraduate courses in the UK, visit the [Study UK website](#) and the [Prospects website](#).



Scholarships and financial support

Your students may be eligible for a scholarship, to help cover the costs of study in the UK. There are a range of options available, depending on their home country and choice of subject.

Global scholarships

Students can apply for any of the following scholarships, provided they are course-appropriate:

- **Chevening Award:** Postgraduate scholarships from the UK government aimed at students with potential as future leaders.
- **Country-specific scholarships and funding:** Eligibility for some scholarships depends on which country the student is from. For more information, please visit the **Study UK website**.



Helping students prepare for their UK education

The students you are supporting could benefit from a free, four-week online course that teaches them what they need to know about higher education in the UK, before they travel.

Hosted on the **FutureLearn online course platform**, it teaches students about everything from teaching methods, course structures and how coursework will be assessed.

During the course, there will also be plenty of opportunities for them to interact with other, like-minded individuals who are preparing for their UK education. They could even start making friends before they arrive in the UK.

The online course is entirely free and takes only four weeks to complete, although students can complete it faster if they wish. Upon successful completion, students will receive a digital certificate. The course is provided twice a year and the next available dates can be found on the registration page.

Students can register [here](#).

The immigration health surcharge

International students will need to pay a healthcare surcharge as part of their immigration application. This costs £470 per year for a student, giving access to NHS services without further charge (subject to a few exceptions such as prescription charges in England).

Surcharge levels are competitive, compared with health insurance requirements in comparable countries. The surcharge represents about one per cent of the total cost of studying in the UK (for a three-year undergraduate course). For more information, visit the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.



Helping students with their budgeting

The cost of living varies, according to where in the UK you decide to study. London and other big cities are more expensive than other areas, for example. But depending on where you study, you should expect to budget from between £800 and £1,300 a month to cover your rent, bills, entertainment and other living costs.

You can use the **Student Calculator** to estimate what the likely cost of living will be based on your lifestyle.



Course fees

Fees for UK courses vary depending on your study level and where in the UK you are studying (as there are different rules for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales). International students can expect to pay between £10,000 and £26,000 annually, and typically an undergraduate degree course will last for three years in England, Northern Ireland in Wales. In Scotland they typically last four years.

Medical degrees may cost more, and many UK master's degrees can be completed in one year, meaning lower living costs and faster entry into employment.

You can advise your students to check the cost of course fees with the university or college you are applying to. Most often, this information will be listed on their website.



Covid-19 FAQs

We know that Covid-19 continues to cause a lot of uncertainty for international students. To help you reassure them (and their families), please refer to relevant pages on the Study UK website:

- [Covid-19 information](#)
- [Covid-19: Frequently Asked Questions](#)



Staying in the UK with the new Graduate Route

The UK's Graduate Route allows international students to apply to stay in the UK and work, or look for work, upon graduation. International students who have successfully completed an undergraduate or master's degree will be able to apply to stay in the UK for up to two years. PhD graduates will be able to apply to stay for up to three years.

For more information, visit the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Read some blogs by recent graduate on their experience of staying in the UK through the Graduate Route:

- **'The Graduate Route was a fast and simple way for me to stay in the UK after my studies'**, Guy, from New Zealand
- **'Studying in the UK has given me the confidence and the practical knowledge to launch my career as an actuary'**, Lan, from China
- **'Since graduating I've been applying all of the knowledge I gained during my master's in the real world'**, Yashodhra, from India

Additional guidance for students

Sports and student athletes

Most universities have on-campus sports facilities, including gym and track-and-field spaces. As well as official sports clubs run by the institution, there are often societies that are formed by students through the students' union representing sports from ice hockey to Tae Kwon Do and everything in between. Universities usually provide a nominated day per week for sport, to enable students to fit it into their studies. If students wish to join a sports club or private gym, they should always check whether there is a student discount.

British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS), the national governing body for Higher Education sports in the UK, covers 16 official sports. Find out more [on their website](#).

Religious observance

UK universities are home to students of multiple faiths and support students in the observance of different religions and beliefs. Many of them have designated representatives across multiple faiths and religions who are able to introduce students to their local community.

University policies offer flexibility to students if observance of a religious holiday prevents a student from attending class or completing an assignment if discussed with a lecturer in advance.

Students with disabilities

British universities provide excellent support facilities for students who have disabilities and offer additional tailored support for students who need it. While all UK universities offer strong services in this area there are variations in the level of support students can receive in order to meet their particular needs.

Students should contact the disability support office on campus early in the application process to ensure that the university has the resources and capabilities to meet their needs. The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 prohibits education and training providers to discriminate against disabled people. Universities are required to make reasonable adjustments to serve disabled students, so they are not at a substantial disadvantage.

Additional guidance for students

LGBT+ culture in the UK

UK universities are inclusive organisations who are welcoming to all people. They do not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and there are thriving LGBT+ communities in most UK universities. There are also laws in the UK that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation and universities must comply with that law.

Rankings

Referred to as league tables, rankings are released by many newspapers. University and subject league tables (or rankings) allow prospective students to search for and compare data and information on universities and colleges from across the UK.

University rankings give an indication of a university's overall strengths, while subject rankings provide an indication of the strengths of a university in a student's chosen major. Given the focused nature of the UK system, subject rankings are the most relevant.

League tables should not be used in isolation but are a good source to help students start researching their university options. Here are some of the league tables that are popular in the UK:

- The Times Higher Education
- Top Universities (QS)
- The Guardian

Study UK on social media

Facebook: www.facebook.com/StudyUK.BritishCouncil

Instagram: www.instagram.com/StudyUK_BritishCouncil

TikTok: www.tiktok.com/@studyuk_britishcouncil

Twitter: www.twitter.com/StudyUKBritish

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/showcase/study-uk-british-council

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/StudyInTheUK

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