

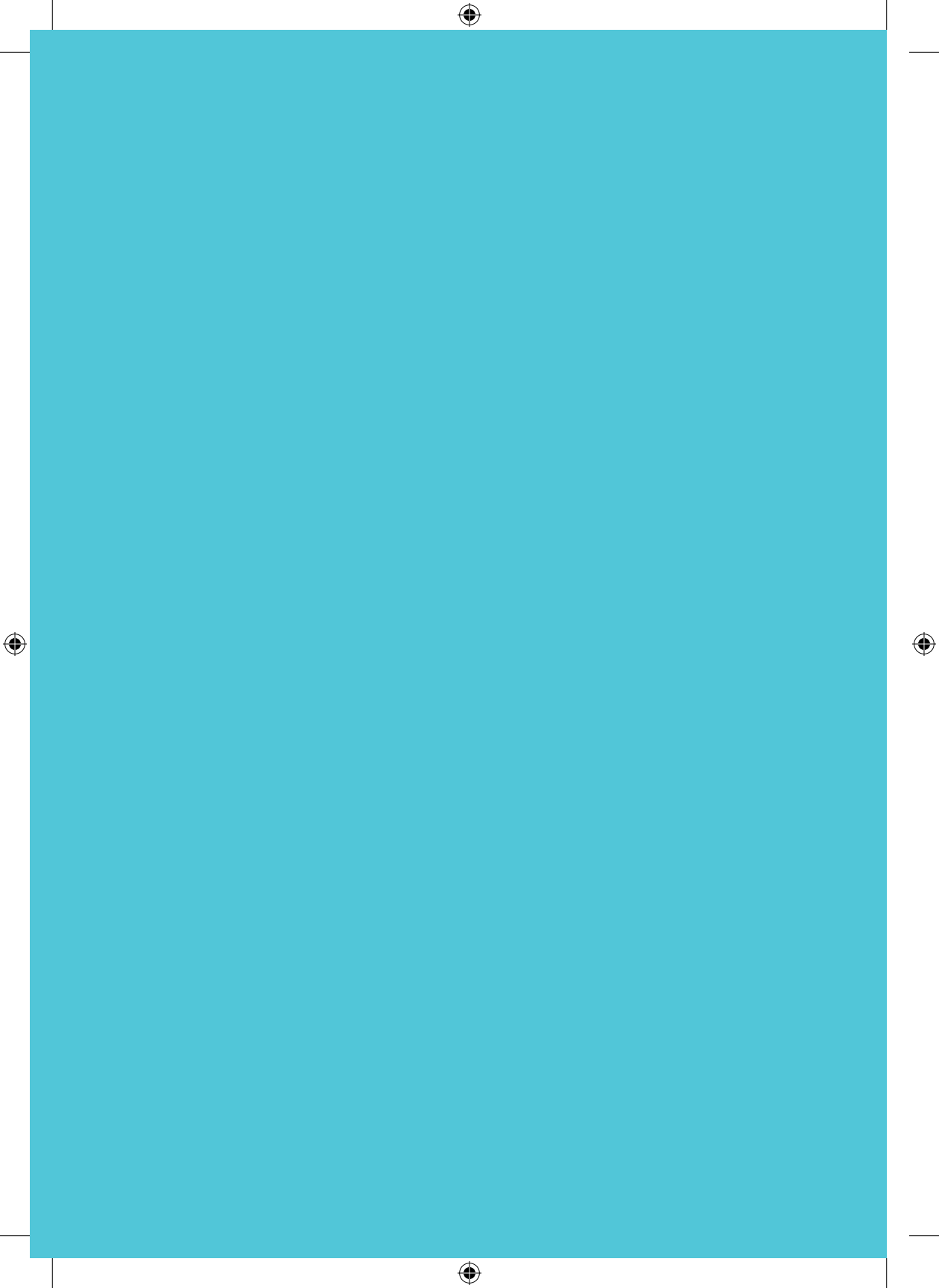
UK Council
for International
Student Affairs

Mobility matters

Forty years of
international students
Forty years of UKCISA

40

UKCISA 40 | 1968
2008



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This 40th Anniversary history and guide was researched and compiled by
Dr Mary Stiasny, Institute of Education, with assistance from Natalia Jones.



UKCISA is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them.

It does so through research, print and web-based publications, a national training programme, dedicated advice lines for students and advisors, and liaison and advocacy with institutions, agencies and government.

Its members include all UK universities, those further and higher education colleges which are active internationally, and a range of specialist and representative bodies.

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Foreword from the Minister for Higher Education

I am delighted to take this opportunity to congratulate UKCISA on its 40 anniversary and to pay tribute to all those who work with such dedication to support the hundreds of thousands of international students who choose to study in the UK.

The international student experience which we offer is, I believe, one of the UK's great success stories and it is because of the investment which we make in this area that our reputation and satisfaction ratings are as high as they are to-day.



We in government have a role to play in this – through the Prime Minister's Initiative and by ensuring that regulations and entitlements are as attractive as possible.

Institutions across the UK have increasingly developed extensive menus of often innovative services.

But it is often those individuals who work on a day to day basis to support and advise individual international students who will be remembered most and so I am delighted to applaud the work they do and the development over the years of such an effective membership organisation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'DL', on a light-colored background.

David Lammy MP

Minister of State for Higher Education and Intellectual Property

Introduction from the President of UKCISA

Anniversaries are a time for reflection and celebration. UKCISA's 40th anniversary provides such an opportunity and I am delighted to see, in this brief history of events what it has achieved and the contribution it has made.

I have long believed – as I think is now widely accepted in Whitehall, Westminster and the devolved administrations – that international students have enriched our campuses and communities immeasurably over the years. 400,000 of them annually help to bring to the UK that international dimension and international insight which is one of the hallmarks of contemporary, multicultural Britain today.



The last few months have demonstrated how inter-dependent we are. Issues such as climate change and the credit crunch have illustrated this. If we continue to ensure that students, in even larger numbers, broaden each others' horizons through international study, we will create, far better communities for us all.

I have been associated with UKCISA for over 20 years and now as its President I am very proud of the contribution that UKCISA has made over the decades and will continue to make. I wish it and all its supporters, across the sector and more widely, much success in the future. May it continue to thrive.

Baroness Usha Prashar

Chair, UK Judicial Appointments Commission and former Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society

Lessons from the past, priorities for the future – from the Chair of UKCISA's Board of Trustees

One of the reasons why we commissioned this brief history of the UK's international student story over the last four decades is that, by reflecting on some of the successes but also challenges of the past, we can consider and more ably start to plot the future.

Clearly, as is noted elsewhere, there have indeed been enormous successes and the growth in student numbers has been quite dramatic. There has also been an ever growing realisation of the very particular needs of those students, far from home, and a massive increase in the professionalisation and services which we provide for them.



Indeed, this anniversary publication is, in many ways, a testament and tribute to the efforts, energies, dedication and commitment of all those who work in our universities and colleges to advise, encourage and support those who have put their trust in the UK. There are many titles for them – international student advisers are often the most involved but also those in international departments, accommodation offices, ELT and study skills centres, those who provide careers advice, personal tutors, counsellors, academics and even, I would like to think, Vice-Chancellors and Principals! They all play a critical part.

But anyone who reads this account will also see that there have indeed been struggles and challenges, more often than not over changing government regulations, fee issues, community relations, visas and, perhaps most regularly, conflation with or confusion around the immigration debate. Are our borders secure? Are there 'bogus colleges' and 'bogus students'? Are international students an asset or a burden, recruited for the income they generate or the wider horizons and talents that they bring? Should

they be allowed to bring their husbands and wives with them, work part-time in term-time and full-time in vacation as so many UK students do now or must we treat them differently? Should they immediately go home after their studies or is there much advantage to both them and the UK if we allow them to gain work experience in UK companies and a better understanding of UK life and society?

All these are relevant issues as the UK introduces its new immigration 'Points Based System'. I hope that, as promised, this will prove to be more open and more transparent - leading to swifter and sounder decision making - so that well qualified applicants know that applying for a visa to study in the UK is part of the welcome rather than a barrier.

Moving beyond that, there are many other challenges for the future – many of them touched on by Dr Mary Stiasny in her thought-provoking 'end-piece'.

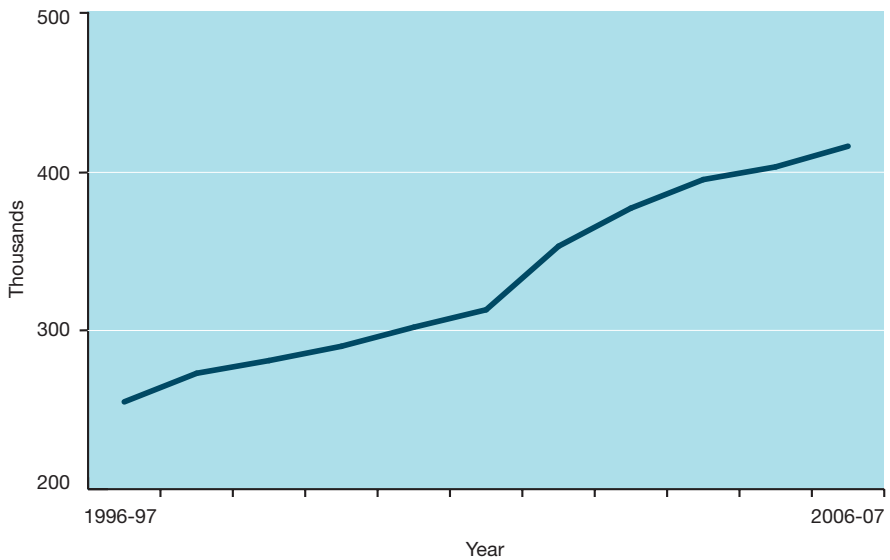
- What more can we do, as institutions, as government and as society, to improve still further the international student experience?
- How can we broaden the horizons of more UK students and ensure that far greater numbers of them benefit from study abroad – where our numbers are currently and comparatively, relatively low.
- What responsibilities do we have for ensuring adequate advice, guidance and support for foreign students, studying UK programmes in other countries – through the rapidly expanding number of franchised or other partnership arrangements?
- What more can be done to help international students gain course based or graduate work experience in UK companies – now that the Post Study Work category of the new Tier 4 scheme enables them to work (and as in practice many will come to expect).
- And perhaps most significantly, what more can we do to internationalise our campuses, curricula and our communities? So that international students feel welcome and respected for what they bring and UK students, and the wider society, benefit from the global community which the UK now attracts.

I too am delighted that UKCISA has been able to play such a major role in all these developments over the years. I am delighted to be its Chair and grateful to everyone who supports its efforts and ideals and believes, like us, that 'mobility matters'.

Professor Christine Hallett

Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Stirling

Growth in number of international students in UK



Source: courtesy British Council

International students have come to the UK for centuries. In the post war years their number increased slowly and steadily – and then very significantly – but in terms of the ‘UK experience’, each decade had very particular characteristics and features.

1960s

In the 1960s, mass immigration meant that there was little awareness of the specific needs of individual international students – though very large numbers, far larger than to-day, were supported by UK government scholarship and technical assistance programmes. There were several regional ‘Councils on Overseas Students’ and the British Council had a network of offices in major university cities but, at least until the end of the decade, no national organisation for international students.

1970s

In the 1970s, the decade was characterised by again extensive technical assistance schemes funding training in the UK, the introduction of higher fees for international students, new immigration policies, and universities and colleges beginning to develop dedicated advisory and support services.

1980s

In the 1980s, ‘full cost’ overseas fees were introduced, immigration and visa issues became a major feature, a network of international student advisers developed, the FCO Chevening Scholarship scheme was launched and universities and colleges – and the British Council – established large scale marketing operations overseas. Competition had begun.

1990s

In the 1990s, international student numbers increased significantly and competition intensified especially in South-East Asia, and amongst the UK, USA, Australia and to a limited extent Canada and New Zealand. Tony Blair's Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) was launched and gave central government support and legitimacy to the UK's global marketing campaign. International student advice, support and the overall 'UK welcome', from government and institutions, became increasingly important.

2000s

In the 2000s, international student numbers grew initially to over 200,000 with an estimated annual value approaching £4bn. The British Council published 'Vision 2020' predicting further growth in demand. The number of 'competitors' in what was now being described as an 'industry' was also increasing – the Asian Tiger economies and then, more recently, European countries offering courses in English. Visa and immigration issues caused continual controversy. Numbers from especially China and India dominated recruitment efforts and fears grew of an over-reliance on too few markets.

The quality of the student experience – rather than just good marketing and promotion – became increasingly accepted as the key to competitive success and the second stage of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI2) was launched with 'the quality of the experience' as one of four key priorities.

1960s

The 1960s: students find their voice

- 1962** The first student protest in 1962, with CND, against the Vietnam war.
- 1963** The new “redbrick” universities set up in 1963 as a result of the Robbins Report expand the student body and students are for the first time given full state support. This is seen as essential in order to change the social composition of the student body, and state (aided) fees and maintenance are introduced to help increase the percentage of working class students.
- 1965** 250 students hold anti-war protest in Edinburgh and start of protest movement outside American embassy in Grosvenor Square. The first student teach-in is held in Oxford with students debating non-violent means of protest, and protests held at the London School of Economics against the government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia.
- 1966** The Radical Student Alliance and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign are formed in 1966, both of which become centres for the protest movement.
- 1966** In 1967 the first student sit-in is held at the London School of Economics by its students’ union over the suspension of two students and this, plus a protest rally of 100 students, is considered by some to be the start of the protest movement.
- 1968** The mass anti-Vietnam War rally held at Grosvenor Square leads to the Grosvenor Square riots, and the protest movement begins in earnest, with students at its heart. Time Out magazine is launched.

1968

While the USA is experiencing the Civil Rights marches led by Martin Luther King, awareness of racism in UK society is growing; the Smethwick by-election demonstrates the use of terms like “coloured immigrants”, and many international students experience racism first hand.

The National Union of Students (NUS) sets up a research unit to investigate how overseas students fare at UK’s higher education institutions.

The UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs (UKCOSA) is established.

20,000 international students
are studying in the UK in 1963

What they said about the 1960s

“To bring about a greater understanding of overseas students and the problems of adjustment they face when they come to this country demands more than all this to combat ignorance and indifference, to increase the number of those who are well-disposed towards these visitors and who would be ready to give lodging to them whatever their colour: in short, to change and educate public opinion calls for a massive campaign through all the popular media of communication.”

Martin Kenyon, *Overseas Student Trust (OST) Fourth Annual Report, 1965*

“A differential fee for overseas students was announced by the Labour Government in December 1966, when Mr Crosland was at the Department for Education and Science (DES). The overseas student fee for 1967-68 was set at £250 in higher and advanced further education compared with £70 for home students”.

Peter Williams, *The Overseas Student Question, Heinemann/OST London, 1981*

“In short, I believe there is an important job to be done – and done now. It is an essay in community relations, in communication, work, or play, that brings us in contact with overseas students and our awareness of events in other parts of the world. And this awareness makes us all the more impatient to see an educative process at work that can combat the appalling prejudices of ignorance that we find about us every day.”

Martin Kenyon, *former General Secretary of OST, Glasgow speech, 1968*

“The Trust believes that an autonomous body with a nationwide membership, able to serve all aspects of overseas student affairs, could perform many valuable functions. It could provide a channel of communication making the experience of those in the field more widely available to others. It could play a useful part in the education of public opinion, with a view to promoting a more general interest in overseas students and a wider knowledge of the countries they come from. It could provide the machinery for closer consultation with Government and other authorities on matters affecting overseas students.

The Trust endorses the view of the British Council that such a national organisation, representative and informed, could have considerable merit and could play a most helpful role in the consideration of student welfare policy. In this belief the Trust has underwritten the expenses of the working party, and it has now agreed to make a grant towards the cost of running the organisation, when it comes into being.”

OST 6th Annual report 1968

“The organisation will be called ‘The United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs’. The Role of the Council:

1. It would be an autonomous, educational charity, servicing overseas students and those organisations and individuals whose work is concerned with them.
2. Its main task would be to co-ordinate the efforts of academic and professional bodies, voluntary organisations, students organisations, and individuals, working in the field of overseas student affairs.”

Extract from: *Proposal for the Establishment of a United Kingdom Council for Overseas Student Affairs: Report of a Working Party, 11 March 1968*

1970

The 1970s

Against the backdrop of a frequently changing political scene of the 1970s, the international students' story becomes more complex. Conservatives win the General Election in 1970; after the UK joins the EEC in 1973, the General Election in February 1974 ends with a “hung parliament”, with Harold Wilson as Prime Minister; in October 1974 Labour win the General Election with a tiny majority; 1976 Harold Wilson resigns and Jim Callaghan becomes Prime Minister; 1979 Margaret Thatcher leads the Conservatives to a victory and becomes the UK's first woman Prime Minister.

1971

In 1971 there are increases in international student fees, and Jack Straw as President of the NUS leads a delegation to Whitehall to protest against the fees increase, and to argue that this is fees-discrimination against overseas students. Conflicts in Bangladesh and elsewhere create funding problems for thousands of students and UKCOSA gives greater attention to hardship issues.

1972

UKCOSA establishes Rhodesian Students Working Party in 1972.

1974

In 1974, UKCOSA establishes Cypriot Students' Working Party.

In 1974, too, the UKCOSA Annual Report talks of the tightening up of existing immigration controls, Home Office delays, and cumbersome and impractical regulations for vacation employment.

- 1975** By 1975 UKCOSA has committees covering nursing, married students, housing and financial hardship.
- 1976** The Race Relations Act enters the statute books, and overt racism is outlawed.
- 1977** In 1977 a new type of differential fee by level of study is introduced, and as a result, fees for students in further education increase by 40%, for undergraduates by 60% and for postgraduates by 100%.
The Department of Education and Science (DES) asks universities to 'stabilise the levels of overseas intake at recent levels'.
- 1978** "Freedom to Study" survey report is published by the Overseas Students Trust (OST).
- 1979** The newly elected Conservative government announces that the planned increase in overseas student fees should be further increased by 20%, and that the existing subsidy will eventually be removed entirely. This is estimated at approximately £1 million per year, and all overseas students starting at UK institutions from 1980 will have to pay full cost fees.
At the same time the government cuts the grant to institutions by the very amount that they expects the increase in overseas student fees to yield.

34,000 international students in
UK in 1973 and 88,000 in 1979

What they said about the 1970s

“The Report concludes that the bad experiences of the student from overseas was more to do with the unsatisfactory nature of these systems, and less to do with his or her personal problems. Many educational establishments were not providing the facilities which the student felt he or she had the right to expect. Though some of these expectations were unrealistic, there were mature students who had been in the UK for several years who still felt bitter and disillusioned. The British Government’s decision to use the level of overseas students’ fees as a means of saving money was seen as discriminatory, and has been a continuing cause of dissatisfaction amongst overseas students who consequently felt unwelcome and unjustly treated. ... Because of immigration problems and racial tension, some overseas students found themselves harassed and often insulted.”

B Reed, J Hutton and J Bazalgette, *Freedom to Study*, OST London, 1978

“My first day at college was a most embarrassing one; we all had to complete some forms and, afterwards, all the overseas students were requested to remain behind for an English examination. I found it so very ridiculous to have to sit such an examination. After all I had been speaking English all my life. I obtained distinctions in my exams, but that was not to be the end of it. The problem is that through ignorance, a lot of English automatically assume superiority over anyone unfortunate enough to fall within the broad category, “foreigner”.

David A James (from Caribbean), *Suffering for Success*, UKCOSA, 1979

The 1980s

The 1980s begin with an economic recession leading to high unemployment. The NUS becomes a much more vocal force, with an advocacy role for their members, which recognises, for the first time, international students as a group.

'Full cost fees' lead to a dramatic decline in overseas student numbers.

1980-83

1982 sees the Falklands War, and the exacerbation of the foreign exchange problems for, amongst others, Ugandan, Iranian and Nigerian students – all of whom came to the UK in considerable numbers.

In response to the widespread criticism and outrage at the removal of the subsidy for overseas students, and allowing universities to charge whatever they wish, the Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym, introduces a package of proposals. This top-slices the university grants to provide funding for deserving overseas students; it provides transitional funding for institutions which might initially suffer from a reduction in recruitment when the increased fees were introduced, provides funding to support refugee students and allows refugees and EU students to pay home fees.

The reduction of the grant to universities results in a substantial net reduction in university income, leading to increased pressure to recruit full-fee paying overseas students.

The British Council organises recruitment fairs which are particularly significant in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Cyprus, and the new industry of competitive recruitment begins.

1984

Sri Lankan Tamils experience problems at home, and visa restrictions are imposed on Sri Lankans. Libyan students

experience problems after the siege at the Libyan Embassy in London.

1985

UKCOSA, in recognition of the need for a national agency, receives its first grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science (DES).

1986

Strained relations between Libya and the UK in 1986 lead to the expulsion of 22 Libyan students, and there are shifts in the policy towards Iranian applicants for asylum.

1987

As a result of work with the British Council, UKCOSA publishes a Code of Practice (1987) for international students which institutions are encouraged to sign up to, and a booklet for private colleges, and together they begin to develop an approach to Responsible Recruitment.

1988

Government bans the use of bogus degree titles, but UKCOSA comments that this falls far short of their demand that “all private colleges should be required by legislation to seek accreditation” (UKCOSA Annual report 1988) – a development which will take another 20 years to achieve.

1989

The British Council produces its own Code of Practice for responsible recruitment. First UKCOSA Manual is published and UKCOSA's government grant increases to 45% of total income.

56,000 international students in UK in 1984

What they said about the 1980s

“Because arguments about trade, aid and diplomacy are little help here, proper academic arguments for overseas students are having to be developed.

In fact, there is no shortage of such arguments. What has been lacking up to now is higher education’s confidence to deploy them. First, the presence of overseas students fosters an internationalist outlook among British students. Second, many subjects – languages, area studies, and so on – cannot profitably be taught in a monolingual, mono-ethnic, monocultural environment. Third, the presence of overseas students helps to test the quality of British higher education against world standards. Fourth, they introduce different and challenging intellectual traditions from which we have much to learn. Fifth, as research students they help with research that serves our national interests. Sixth, they enable rare subjects to be taught in economically and intellectually viable groups. This list of academic reasons for welcoming overseas students to Britain can be elaborated and extended.”

Times Higher Education supplement, 4 April 1986

“I was one of those who deplored the severity and the suddenness of the Government’s decision in 1979 to require overseas students from outside the European Community to pay the cost of their education in full. The resultant self-inflicted damage was excessive and unnecessary. But this cloud also contained

some elements of a silver lining; it caused those in responsible positions in this field to rethink the rationale of policy relating to overseas students.

The first results of this reappraisal came with the publication in May 1982 of the study by the Overseas Students Trust entitled “A Policy for Overseas Students”. That study was based on two years of intensive research and consultation, and was treated with widespread respect.... As Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary at the time, with a deep conviction about the importance of internationalism and the value of the Commonwealth, I determined to embark on a new policy initiative for overseas students that would both end the decline in student numbers and hopefully begin to increase them again, and that would endure because it was soundly based. What I in fact achieved was modest, yet it was a starting point.”

Frances Pym, *The Next Steps, OST, 1987*

“In interviews with 1,760 overseas students it has been found that the most common problem for all overseas students was loneliness and homesickness, mentioned by 49% of the sample; and 39% mentioned difficulty in getting to know British students and other British people; 35% reported financial problems; 34% wrestled with language problems. Unfortunately, though perhaps not surprisingly, 24% reported being badly treated because of race or colour.

Three-quarters of the students participating in the survey consulted staff about their problems: 46% reported that their most common source of advice or help was accommodation officers; 38% mentioned doctors or health centres; 34% course tutors; only 11% mentioned overseas advisers.

The majority of students found the staff they consulted to be very helpful. 88% expressed satisfaction with their course. 74% believed the course provided value for money.”

Robert Murray, *Responsible Recruitment, AUT/UKCOSA, 1986*

“I believe that the predicament of overseas students would be enormously relieved if the heads of institutions, the Vice Chancellors and Principals, were to take a more direct personal interest in their welfare. Institutional managers are beginning now to wake up to overseas students’ value as fee fodder; but they have a long way to go before they demonstrate a conviction that in recruiting larger numbers of overseas students from all round the world, as they hope to be doing in the next few years, they have identified their consequent responsibilities. Overseas students are often shy and undemonstrative, but they are almost never fools. They can recognise when they are being exploited and they will tell others not to come. Overseas students are a national investment. In the past Britain has had a high reputation for its treatment of them. That reputation has become tarnished in recent years. The national interest and the interest of the higher education system require that it be restored.

Alistair Niven, *Readings in Overseas Student Policy, OST, London, 1987.*
*Former Chair of UKCOSA’s Executive Committee and
 now Director of Cumberland Lodge*

“UKCOSA in the 1980s grew up as an organisation. It became professionalised, it earned its keep, it collaborated with other organisations and it hustled in the market place to ensure the overseas student voice was heard. They were increasingly important, they generated very substantial income – and institutions therefore had to take far better care of them.”

Andy Masheter, 2008, *Pro Vice-Chancellor, Roehampton University.*
Director of UKCISA 1987 to 1991

“UKCOSA started by acting responsibly, not just shouting for the sake of it. They always took the considered view of issues, and earned respect. It then gradually became recognised by government that UKCOSA was the most informed organisation about overseas students, and as international students became more central to needs (eg institutional incomes), government realised – and the block grant recognised – that it needed UKCOSA.

Dr Alastair Niven, 2008, *Chair of UKCOSA Executive Committee 1987-92*

1990s

1990

“Britain’s Unrealised Asset” is published by the Overseas Students Trust (OST) and UKCOSA.

Margaret Thatcher resigns as Prime Minister and is succeeded by John Major.

1991

UKCOSA renews its aims and structures in 1991. The FCO, for the first time, provides financial support for the production and wider distribution of the UKCOSA Manual.

1992

John Major’s government wins the General Election, and the Channel Tunnel opens, linking London and Paris by rail.

Black Wednesday forces the withdrawal of sterling from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), and the Further and Higher Education Act allows polytechnics and institutes to become universities.

UKCOSA holds Planning for Crisis seminar, and launches the Overseas Student Advisers Group (OSAG) – an important step in the recognition of the expanding cadre of specialists working with international students.

Home tuition fees are cut, as is the Department of Education’s grant to UKCOSA resulting in the creation of a new low cost subscription service being launched and moves to new offices in the present location.

1993

UKCOSA celebrates its 25th anniversary, awards the first honorary life memberships and changes its name to UKCOSA: The Council for International Education.

1994

Government sets tariffs for the numbers of international students to be recruited, and Malaysia refuses to continue to support its nationals to come to study in the UK.

1994

UKCOSA establishes its Further Education Network in recognition of the volume of student recruitment to UK colleges, and the OSAG is formally expanded into the (UKCOSA supported) Association of International Student Advisers (AISA).

1997

UKCOSA/University of Nottingham introduce the Certificate, Diploma and MA in International Education – providing the first professional qualification for those working with international students.

The Journal of International Education re-launches with support from and in association with the British Council providing access to and a commentary on relevant academic and international issues.

The Labour Party wins the General Election by a landslide, and Tony Blair becomes Prime Minister. In July Britain hands Hong Kong back to China, and at home the government announces the introduction of domestic means-tested tuition fees and the abolition of the student grant to be replaced by student loans.

The South-East Asia currency crisis creates considerable financial problems for students from the region and UKCOSA holds extensive discussions with government on ways in which they might be helped.

UKCOSA publishes Entry Clearance survey, covering visa and immigration issues and concerns, establishes a separate website and launches World Views magazine for its members providing a wider perspective on international developments.

1999

Tony Blair, following a visit to China, launches what comes to be known as the 'Prime Minister's Initiative', aimed at increasing, by 50,000, the number of international students in higher education and by 20,000, those in further education.

Of particular significance is the introduction of new rules allowing students to work part-time in term time and full time in vacations – an issue which had been championed by UKCOSA for some time and which, from then on, makes the UK a far more attractive destination for students who increasingly need work experience (and a little extra income) as well as academic study.

184,000 international students
studying in UK in 1997

Comments

“One of UKCOSA’s main contributions was in developing that sense of professionalism. The British Council focussed on developing codes of practice and professional training for marketing and recruitment, while UKCOSA developed training and codes of practice for international student advice and support services and systems ... UKCOSA was also seen to be leading the way on cross-cultural awareness and related training. There was the impression that cultural awareness across institutions was at a relatively low level – so again UKCOSA, and at a critical time, pioneered a new approach and resource for the sector.”

Clive Saville 2008, *Director of UKCOSA 1996-2004*

“Wherever I travel I meet international leaders who have studied in Britain. Dynamic, intelligent people who chose Britain because we offer high-quality education and training. This is good news for the UK. People who are educated here have a lasting tie to our country. They promote Britain in the world, helping our trade and democracy.”

Tony Blair, *launching the Prime Minister’s Initiative, 1999*

The 2000s

2000

Scotland abolishes up-front tuition fees in 2000 and the global stock markets tumble as the 'dotcom' bubble bursts. UKCOSA with the Council for Education in the Commonwealth (CEC) publishes "Student Mobility on the Map".

UKCOSA produces first annual edition of the Manual and develops and publishes the UKCOSA/AISA Code of Ethics. UKCOSA is founder member of the Association of Studies in International Education – and helps to launch the Journal of Studies in International Education.

2001

Provisions of the Immigration and Asylum Act come into force in 2001 requiring all those giving immigration advice to register with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC). UKCOSA negotiates a block exemption for all those working in public sector education institutions.

Terrorists crash aircraft on targets in New York and Washington, USA. All visa and immigration systems are tightened and especially those in the USA leading to a downturn in their numbers and, arguably, consequent increases to other countries, including the UK.

2003

For the first time and with no warning, the UK introduces charges for extending student visas causing widespread resentment amongst students and their sponsoring organisations.

Labour government proposes universities should be allowed to set their own domestic tuition fees up to a cap of £3,000 per year.

2004

The Home Secretary, David Blunkett, outlines measures to “crack down on bogus colleges and bogus students” and for a formal Register of Education Providers listing those who could receive international students.

Ten new states join the EU giving ‘home student’ fee status to those ordinarily resident there but also introducing worker authorisation scheme for nationals (including students) of eight of those countries.

In October 2004 the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme (SEGS) is introduced allowing graduates in those sectors to stay on and work in the UK for one year after graduation. UKCOSA applauds the new scheme, although regrets its limited focus and warns that employers may not find one year sufficient to justify recruitment.

In December 2004 UKCOSA, British Council and the representative bodies for higher education jointly publish “Broadening our Horizons”, the first survey of its type for a decade, looking at international students’ experiences of living and studying in the UK. These are largely positive, but the report shows there is substantial room for improvement in a number of key areas including pre-arrival information, resources for support services, better ways of encouraging and enhancing integration between international and UK students and access to post-study employment.

The report lays the foundation and makes the case for greater government and sector focus on student experience issues – an agenda which is taken up in PMI2. It also triggers a wave of subsequent research by institutions comparing and contrasting the satisfaction ratings of their students with those at other institutions.

2005

UKCOSA proposes and government funds Tsunami Assistance Scheme for International Students (TASIS)

2005

In Morecambe Bay, Lancashire, 21 cockle pickers drown by rising tides on 5 February 2005; they were all illegal immigrants with no protection. Their gang master is subsequently convicted of manslaughter. All visa systems are tightened and especially for those applying from China - with a very significant increase in rejections for student visas at a time when that 'market' is the UK's most important.

Labour wins a third consecutive term with Tony Blair as Prime Minister. The manifesto includes a commitment to abolish rights of appeal for, amongst others, any students whose visa applications are refused.

Both initial student visa charges and those for extensions are substantially increased. Following extensive complaint and lobbying, UKCOSA becomes founder member of the Home Office's new Joint Education Taskforce designed to improve communications between government and the sector.

Fresh Talent scheme is introduced in Scotland allowing all graduates from Scottish institutions to stay on and work for two years.

UKCOSA, for the first time, receives grant funding from the Scottish government.

Suicide bombers kill 52 people on London's transport system.

2006

UKCOSA successfully lobbies for the 'quality of the international student experience' to be one of the key themes within the second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI₂).

UKCOSA invited to convene and chair the PMI Student Experience Advisory Committee.

2007

Government announces introduction of the International Graduates Scheme allowing all graduates in any subject throughout the UK to stay on and work, but still only for one year.

2007

UKCOSA: The Council for International Education changes its name to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) re-emphasising its fundamental focus on the international student experience.

2008

Major consultation and debate between government and the sector (including UKCISA) on the introduction of a radical new Points Based (immigration) System. From 2009 all students coming to the UK will have to be 'sponsored' by a university or college licensed by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and all 'sponsors' required to report to the UKBA on students not arriving or not attending satisfactorily.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office announce reduction in funding for Commonwealth scholarships, with no scholarships going to students from Canada, New Zealand, Australia or Singapore in the future.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) announces abolition of funding for the Overseas Research Student Award Scheme.

Government introduces new Post Study Work category - as part of Tier 1 of the new Points Based System – allowing international graduates from any institution in the UK to stay on and work for up to two years.

The National Student Forum – chaired by a former UKCISA Chief Executive and with UKCISA advising a sub-group – produces first report with key section on international student concerns.

UKCISA, with substantial PMI funding, publishes suite of new materials for international students and advisors including

- two new open-access websites on budgeting and study skills,
- 1,000 copies of new guides to Orientation Programmes, Mentoring and Volunteering
- a cross-cultural training DVD for all those working with international students

2008

- over 30 reports on institutional pilot projects and overseas research visits
- proposals for new projects on teaching and learning, trans-national education and internationalising students' unions.

Stock markets around the world crash, leading to the international financial crisis. Fears of future financial sustainability, credit crunch and world recession which will without doubt have major impact on economies, education institutions and individual students (and their parents) globally.

Over 1,000 international delegates meet at British Council's third Going Global conference to review current concerns, future developments and opportunities in international education.

UKCISA hosts major conference workshop with UK, Australian and New Zealand colleagues on the 'international student experience – challenges for the future'

And publishes 'Mobility Matters: 40 years of international students, 40 years of UKCISA'.

417,000 international students
studying in UK in 2008

Comments

“Some have seen the flow of students abroad as a threat to domestic systems of higher education, but Commonwealth Ministers have generally taken a broader view. They have indeed been mindful of “brain drain” and the danger that the best students might go abroad with publicly funded scholarships and not return home. However, their general view has been that student mobility has strengthened higher education systems in both sending and receiving countries in a number of ways:

- It has been a powerful tool for professional development of staff for universities and higher education institutions.
- It has obviated the need for domestic higher education institutions to offer expensive specialist subjects before resources and student numbers could adequately sustain them, an especially important consideration for small countries.
- It has opened up their education systems to new knowledge and ideas.
- It has provided an essential underpinning of those studies and disciplines which are essentially comparative and international in character.
- The presence of international students has broadened the outlook of domestic students and has offset any tendencies to undue parochialism.

**Joint Working Group of Council for Education in
Commonwealth and UKCISA, *Student Mobility on the Map, 2000***

“It’s not just about getting students to choose UK universities and colleges. It’s about building sustainable partnerships between our universities and colleges and those of other countries. We want to see many more shared research projects, shared courses and joint degrees; we want to see more exchanges of students and academic staff; we want UK education to become genuinely international.”

Tony Blair, 2006, *Downing Street reception for international students and programme sponsors to launch PMI2*

“If the UK is able to respond successfully ... all students (international and domestic) will benefit significantly. They will have access to a greater range of programmes that are better resourced, offered through a wider and more flexible mix of delivery modes and at the world’s leading level of quality.”

A Böhm et al, *Vision 2020 British Council, UUK, IDP, 2004*

“The future lies not just in recruitment but in strong relationships, the quality of the actual experience and demonstrating maximum value for those who place their trust in the UK. We must take this very seriously. It means promoting real internationalisation, giving something back, ensuring closer partnerships and more outward as well as inward mobility.”

Dr John Withrington, 2008, *Dean of International Development at Exeter University and former UKCISA Board member*

“International student advisers look to UKCISA to lobby government as the national representative voice on behalf of international students. If the government brings in legislation and it’s implemented no matter what, then students – and the

UK in the long term - will suffer. UKCISA helps to ensure that their (and our) interests are taken properly into account so that the rules and regulations are, as far as possible, effective, fair and transparent.

Its publications cover virtually every aspect of work with international students. The Manual is a bible and no institution could survive without it. The UKCISA Briefing and the website give extensive updates on changes and developments and the network of members which, at the heart, is UKCISA provides professional support and encouragement to us all.”

Jim Wilson, 2008, *Senior Student Adviser at Strathclyde University and current UKCISA Board member*

“Ten years on from my time at UKCISA I feel that institutions have much more awareness of international students and there is much more professionalism and customer focus. But interestingly (and perhaps not surprisingly) individual students face many of the same challenges so an effective and extensive network of support and advice for them remains essential”.

Maeve Sherlock, 2008, *Director of UKCISA, 1991-1997 and current Chair, National Student Forum*

“UKCISA is a very small organisation, yet it has had a degree of authority and expertise which has far exceeded its size and scale. I am delighted to have been associated with it and confident that it will continue to serve the UK and international students well, for many years to come.”

Sir Peter Scott, 2008, *Vice-Chancellor, Kingston University and former Chair of UKCISA Executive*

What of the next 40 years?

Universities and colleges face changes, developments and challenges, and international students will be part of this new future.

While Vision 2020 looked forward to a major increase in international student numbers, we are aware that we need to work hard to continue to recruit students from overseas to come to the UK. International students have become much more discerning and are now, more than ever, sought after by universities world wide. International students have, simply, much more choice.

We are therefore aware that we need to get even better at making sure that the student experience, from preliminary information to enquiry, through application to the waiting period before arrival must improve. UKCISA has shown us how to do this by providing training, guidance, advice and support giving us a model for best practice. Likewise, we must make sure that the overall student experience while studying in our institutions is a first class one. Again, we have learnt from UKCISA how to provide good support, good accommodation, study support, financial and welfare advice, and careers advice for the international students in our institutions.

We will be faced with challenges arising from the diversification of the market for international student recruitment and for the increased provision of undergraduate courses at home. The financial crisis in the latter months of 2008 may well make it harder for international students to travel to the UK to study, and it is essential that we look at providing good quality distance learning and transnational education packages for international students. The lessons we have been taught by UKCISA should lead us to make sure that courses taught in the UK, at a distance or on the campuses of UK institutionsoverseas are in terms of quality and experience, the best we can provide. We need to think about the pedagogy of our courses; we need to explore whether there are innovative pedagogies (perhaps an international pedagogy) which is more appropriate to the needs of mixed groups of students including home as well as international

students. The challenge of what we might mean by an international curriculum is one which we need to tackle if international students are to feel truly included in our programmes, and we need to confront the content and methods of our teaching.

In the UK, as visa regimes become more challenging for institutions and for the students we recruit, we will need the professional support of UKCISA more and more. If students are to feel welcomed and supported, increased regulation will be a challenge we need to manage and UKCISA is the organisation to help support us with this.

Technology is key to much of this. As courses become more available online, and as students have easier or better access to learning and knowledge, the student becomes much more powerful, and we need to be ready for this. We need to be able to support the online student, we must ensure that we recognise their equal access to knowledge, and we should recognise the student's ability to share their experiences of studying with us, of being our clients and of interacting with us either in person or at a distance, through blogs, social networking sites and interactively.

The lessons we have learned over the last forty years, led by, tutored and guided by UKCISA and all who have been associated with it or support its aims, have stood us thus far in good stead; without this leadership and guidance we would not have come as far as we have. We must learn to benefit from it and the good practice lessons which have been learned. By continuing to improve we will ensure that our international students are given the best educational experience possible, with good support, guidance and advice at all times.

The students who come here deserve our best efforts, and, as financial markets weaken and visa requirements tighten, we need to concentrate on ensuring that we at all times give a quality experience to our students who come here, or to overseas campuses, or study through distance learning.

Mary Stiasny

Assistant Director, Institute of Education University of London

October 2008

Further reading

Annual Reports from UKCOSA, UKCISA, and Overseas Students Trust
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Böhm, Anthony, et al, *Vision 2020: Forecasting international student mobility, a UK Perspective*, British Council, UUK, IDP, 2004

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Joint Working Group of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth and UKCOSA, *Student Mobility on the Map, Tertiary Education Interchange in the Commonwealth on the threshold of the 21st Century*, CEC and UKCOSA, 2000

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Overseas Students Trust, *The Next Steps, Overseas Student Policy in the 1990s*, OST, London, 1987

Reed, Bruce, Hutton, Jean, and Bazalgette, John, (The Grubb Institute), *Freedom to Study: Requirements of Overseas Students in the UK*, London, 1978

Scott, Peter, (ed), *The Globalisation of Higher Education*, SRHE and Open University Press, Buckingham, 1998

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Williams, P. (ed), *The Overseas Student Question*, Heinemann/Overseas Students Trust, London, 1981

UKCOSA, *The Teaching and Tutoring of Overseas Students*, UKCOSA, 1982

Purpose, aims and activities of UKCISA

Background

The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them.

Purpose

Its purpose is to promote and facilitate international student mobility to and from the UK; to help students, and others involved in international education, develop a global perspective; and to contribute to human development, political stability, economic prosperity and greater intercultural understanding.

Aims

Its key aims are to:

- increase support for international education and raise awareness of its values and benefits
- promote opportunities for greater student mobility, identifying and working to reduce obstacles and barriers
- encourage best practice, professional development and the highest quality of institutional support for international students throughout the education sector

Activities

It achieves its aims by:

- monitoring and influencing government and education sector policy through close contact with senior officials, policy makers, MPs, partner organisations and sector bodies throughout the UK
- producing regular electronic and print publications that keep members and students up to date on current legislation, regulations and resources

- assisting with immediate areas of difficulty by delivering high quality advice line services for members, students and members of the public; and contributing to greater professional expertise by providing training to members
- supporting, sustaining and expanding a network of members committed to the ideals of international education and the highest standards of international student support
- initiating and encouraging research which helps to identify key issues for action and areas for future investigation and development
- working indirectly and in partnership with others to encourage greater mobility from, as well as to, the UK
- ensuring, through support from Trustees, specialist staff and effectively managed resources, that it delivers highly valued services for members and other stakeholders

**UK Council
for International
Student Affairs**

UKCISA 40 | 1968
2008

UKCISA in 2008

Membership

- 550 institutional members and subscribers

Training and professional development

- 50 training courses for 1,300 delegates
- 370 participants at annual conference
- 80 members studying for the UKCISA/University of Nottingham Certificate for International Education Professionals

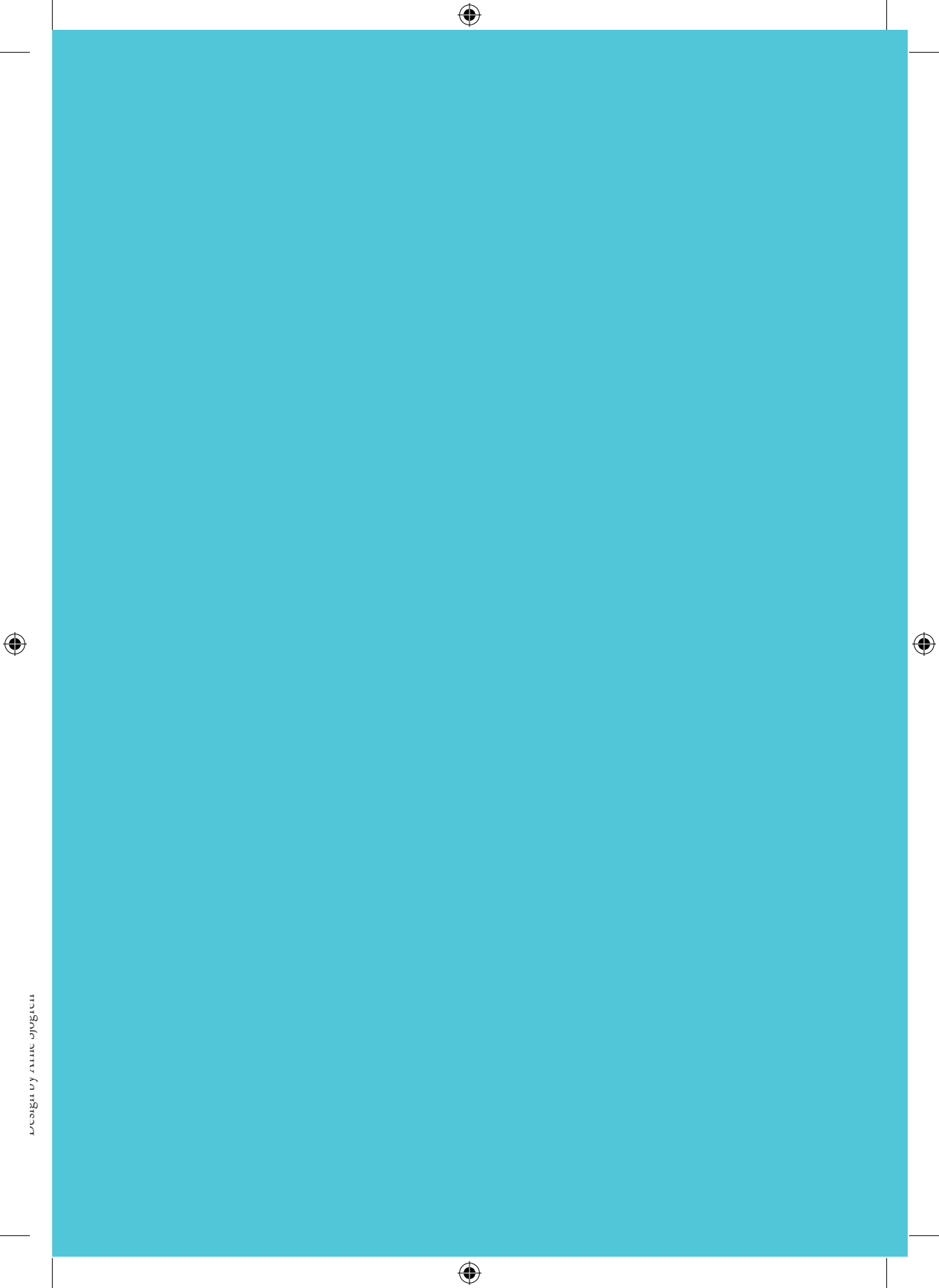
Advice and information

- 1,000 copies of the UKCISA Manual distributed to over 500 institutions
- 2,300 recipients of the bi-monthly Briefing and other mailings
- 27 Information and Advisers Notes on all aspects of entry to and student life in the UK
- 10,000 enquiries to the telephone advice line
- 1,300 subscribers to the electronic mailbase
- 45,000 visitors per month to the UKCISA website

Lobbying, liaison and research

- Founder member, Prime Minister's Initiative Strategy Group
- Founder member, UK Border Agency's Joint Education Taskforce
- Strategic collaboration with British Council, Universities UK, Association of Colleges, English UK and other sector bodies
- Extensive portfolio of research on the international student experience, university and college services and aspects of good practice.

www.ukcisa.org.uk



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