



Annual review 2020-21

UK Council
for International
Student Affairs

UKCISA



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I joined the student ambassador programme with one thing in mind: employability. Through this programme, I have met and worked with influential, passionate and inspiring individuals working to achieve this goal of better employability of international students. From being able to influence their conversations and campaigns and providing immediate feedback on various policies, I have been able to develop my voice for the enrichment of the international student experience in the UK.

Nebu George, #WeAreInternational Student Ambassador and Chair of UKCISA Student Advisory Group

Introduction from President of UKCISA

I am proud to be President of UKCISA – and over the past year I have been continually inspired by the resilience of its staff, membership, and of course international students themselves. Together we have delivered exceptional outcomes for our international education community, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

I'm sure none of us expected the world to look quite like it does today, or indeed how it has looked over the past year. With the ongoing uncertainty caused by the pandemic and Brexit, we have truly been operating in uncharted waters. Despite this, I have been both impressed and inspired by the ways in which the team at UKCISA has adapted to support our members and international students across the UK.

One thing that has been evident is that physical distance does not equate to less impact. Throughout the past year UKCISA has continued to pack a punch, influencing policy and debate at the highest levels. Back in July, the [Delivering a world-class international student experience](#) position paper was published, signalling a step-change in the organisation's approach to policy influencing. In this paper, we outline 15 key asks designed to improve outcomes for international students – from advocating for a fairer immigration system, to coordinating approaches to student support right through from application to after graduation.

The asks outlined in the paper permeated all aspects of service delivery, bringing together members, UKCISA staff and the voices of

international students themselves to present a strong case to government and the wider education sector. And we know the Government is truly listening and learning, thanks to the references of UKCISA and its work in the newly refreshed [International Education Strategy](#).

Those of you who know me will know that I am resolutely dedicated to advocating for international student employability, after all the student experience does not end the day a student graduates! When the details of the Graduate route were finally published in March 2021, it was clear that UKCISA's recommendations had been incorporated, including the removal of restrictions on self-employment. This is a fantastic achievement which will make a huge difference to international students across the UK. I would particularly like to congratulate the team, and our sector partners, on the success of our work in this space.

The impact of UKCISA's work should rightly be commended and celebrated, as delivering genuine change is no mean feat. As President of UKCISA, it has been a privilege to see the organisation adapt and evolve this past year, and I look forward with renewed optimism towards another impactful year.



**Lord Karan Bilimoria
CBE, DL**

President of UKCISA
Chancellor, University of
Birmingham
President, Confederation
of British Industry (CBI)

Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

In what has been a demanding year for us all, UKCISA and its members have worked tirelessly to innovate and pivot, meeting every challenge that has come our way. It is an immense privilege to be your Chair and taking this time to reflect on the past year demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together.

We were already prepared for it to be a monumental year, with the impending reality of Brexit and the new immigration system on the horizon. But then the pandemic hit, upending all our best laid plans and sending the whole higher education sector into crisis mode.

The impact of lockdown was huge, putting a stop to in-person teaching and closing campuses across the country. The knock-on effect on our staff and students was even greater, with welfare and mental health taking the top priority. Despite the pressure, uncertainty, and myriad obstacles, I am incredibly proud of how universities – and their international students – responded.

UKCISA also rose to the challenge, providing space for members to share their experiences and ideas through a series of virtual events, covering topics from taking orientation events online to supporting students in need.

Throughout this, the team at UKCISA continued to deliver above and beyond, growing the organisation's profile and proactively supporting and leading sector responses to these critical issues. By working with stakeholders in government and across the sector, we can say with certainty that we were successful in putting student welfare and the student experience at the forefront of decision-making.

There are many things we should be proud of over this past year. UKCISA's role in advocating for the student experience and giving a platform to the #WeAreInternational student ambassadors and staff at member institutions to share their unique experiences is certainly one of them. These conversations are crucial if we are to continue to influence policy over the coming year.

As ever, I would like to sign off by extending my gratitude to the people who make what we do possible:

- Firstly, to our **funders**, thank you for your commitment to advancing the international student experience
- We often refer to UKCISA as being a family, so a big thank you to all our **members** for being a part of it
- Next, to UKCISA's dedicated **staff** – we would not be the organisation we are today without you all!
- And finally, to the **#WeAreInternational student ambassadors** - your voices are contributing to real change and opening.



Prof Koen Lamberts
Chair of UKCISA Board of Trustees, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Sheffield

Who we are – a snapshot

Three members of our staff recount their experiences of working at UKCISA

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I have worked at UKCISA for over 11 years and feel very fortunate to work for an organisation and in a sector which values and supports international students, despite the many on-going and new challenges the work presents.

In my time at UKCISA I've had the opportunity to work with so many committed people (at UKCISA, within the membership and in related sectors) whose dedication and generosity to supporting the aims of the sector are immeasurable. It is humbling and inspiring to witness people strive to do the very best they can for the people they serve. So many of our members demonstrate a great deal

of willingness to go beyond the call of duty which, while incredibly admirable, can come at a cost.

Over a year ago, I became a wellbeing ambassador with ILPA (the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association) and I hope to be able to encourage wellbeing initiatives within our sector. Thanks to the generosity of some of our members, I have recently made progress on a long-held aim to have some form of peer support scheme in our sector, which I hope will go some way to building a structure of recognition, encouragement and support for those undertaking such difficult, but brilliant work.



Deepa Chadha
Advice and Training Officer

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I still remember attending my first UKCISA Conference in 2016 as a student union officer. It was eye opening for me as a 'newbie', and I was very glad to find my place in an inclusive community that is so passionate about international students. Subsequently, I served as a member of UKCISA Board for two years, where I had the chance to contribute my perspectives and insights as the NUS International Student Officer.

I always wanted as many international students as possible to have the opportunity that I have had, to work with UKCISA to inform policy and practice through lived experience. I realised that vision by joining UKCISA as a staff member in late 2019

and have been since working with a brilliant team – to empower international students to shape our work – through the #WeAreInternational campaign, Student Ambassador Programme and Student Forum.

Together with the student ambassadors, we set up the Student Advisory Group to provide UKCISA with a student voice and to advise UKCISA on strategic decisions, projects and policies. I am proud to work for an organisation that values its staff and members, but most importantly, that places international students at the heart of everything we do.

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I joined UKCISA in spring 2020, having worked in the membership sector for a decade. The first thing that struck me was how committed UKCISA members were to helping international students. It's something that I had not experienced, to this degree, in any other membership organisation.

I enjoy interacting with the members, especially as we have such a broad range from colleges

with only a handful of international students to large universities that enrol tens of thousands of students. This variety helps keep things interesting.

Despite the challenges of the last year, and being new to the sector, the staff and members have made me feel very welcome and provided a great work environment.



Daniel Hooper
Membership Manager

Meet our full team of 20 staff at www.ukcisa.org.uk/meet-our-team

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

UKCISA’S AIMS ARE TO

–increase support for international education and raise awareness of its values and benefits

–reduce obstacles and barriers to greater student mobility

–encourage best practice, professional development and the highest quality of institutional support for international students throughout the education sector.

UKCISA ADVICE LINE

NON-MEMBERS’ ADVICE LINE

267

SESSIONS

3,095

QUERIES

MEMBERS’ ADVICE LINE

364

SESSIONS

1,400+

QUERIES

UKCISA MEMBERSHIP

432

MEMBERS

185

HIGHER EDUCATION

83

FURTHER EDUCATION

117

STUDENTS’ UNIONS

47

CORPORATE AND EDUCATION SECTOR



This year’s annual review outlines our progress against our five strategic objectives.

This has been a year like no other – everyone has been affected in some way. The pandemic has been stressful and demanding for our staff, members and, of course, international students in the UK. Nonetheless, it has encouraged new levels of empathy for individuals who are isolated from family and friends, inspiring acts of kindness and compassion. This has been evident across the sector, with staff and students going above and beyond to look out for one another.

We launched our new strategic plan early in 2020, before the pandemic hit, but the values and objectives set out within it still hold strong. We had to rapidly adapt our delivery method and priorities activities that addressed the crisis, but these initial goals still guided us.

Of these, Developing Excellence underwent the most adaptation. We had to evaluate the needs of individuals, and reflect on how we could continue to deliver for our members and students while recognising the unique pressures and challenges that our staff were facing.

A cornerstone of our strategy was to add more online training to UKCISA’s offer, but the pandemic meant we had to fast-track this development work. We also completely rethought our carefully planned programme of activity for our [#WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors](#). Despite this, the ambassadors led the way in communicating the lived experience of international students in UK institutions during a global pandemic, providing an authentic student voice on a range of issues for current and prospective students.

As for UKCISA’s ambitions for 2021/22, we plan to continue developing our online training programme. While we look forward to a day where we will meet again in face-to-face events, online is here to stay as part of UKCISA’s member offer.

We will also be supporting the delivery of Actions 5 and 6 of the UK Government’s International Education Strategy (IES). In the year when the new Graduate Route launches, we will be working with the Office for Students and sector partners through our new formed International Student Employability Group. This work will enhance the career and employability offer for all international students.

Our inspirational [#WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors](#) are also supporting the IES, by developing an initial draft of a Student Charter. I’m looking forward to bringing members together with the ambassadors to shape an International Student Charter that demonstrates the excellence of the international student experience across the full range of the UK education sector, and outlines the sector’s commitment to providing a world-leading experience for international students.

Finally, as we roll out our new Customer Relationship Management system, Members will see the benefits across 2021, from more efficient call handling, smoother renewals and event booking processes, and targeted communications on UKCISA events and policy work.

I want to take this opportunity to recognise the incredible efforts of UKCISA staff and those at our member institutions. They continue to put the international student experience at the heart of everything, despite the significant changes in their own lives and working environments.

In time, we will recover from this experience. But it has taken a lot out of us physically and emotionally. UKCISA’s close networks and caring practitioner community will need to look out for each other in the year ahead, as we readjust and make progress together.



Anne Marie Graham
Chief Executive of UKCISA

Our advocacy work is shaped by the voice of our members and international students, providing UK governments with essential and timely insight.

Setting the agenda

In August 2020, UKCISA published our position paper: [Delivering a world-class international student experience: how Government can create the conditions for success](#)

In this paper, we called on the UK government to work with the education sector to deliver a world-class international student experience. The paper outlined 15 key steps the UK Government and international education sector should take to make the UK the world's most attractive destination for international students, under three key headings:

- Positioning the UK as an attractive destination for study.
- Delivering a world-class student experience.
- Maintaining a lifelong connection and offering a springboard for the future.

We're proud to see our principal ask, **Extend and expand Covid-related concessions and flexibility in the visa and immigration system**, achieved through a range of policy concessions that provide reassurances for international students and their sponsors.

Significantly, the importance of the international student experience has been explicitly recognised in the 2021 refresh of the [International Education Strategy](#), enshrining its importance for policy development and implementation.

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Over the past 12 months, UKCISA has been an invaluable stakeholder for Universities UK. Their support has meant that we have been able to achieve real changes for universities and their international students; whether that was in securing Covid-19 concessions from the Home Office, ensuring the Graduate route remained open to those studying abroad, or keeping students informed and aware of the latest changes to the UK's immigration system following Brexit. The work we have been able to do together has had a clear and positive impact in very challenging circumstances.

Vivienne Stern, Director, Universities UK International

Influencing policy

International Student Employability Group (ISEG)

In response to the research report [Supporting International Graduate Employability: making good on the promise](#) published in January 2020, UKCISA established the International Student Employability Group (ISEG) to co-ordinate the higher education sector's efforts to enhance the employability of international students and graduates.

The group works to identify areas that would benefit from sector-wide collaboration, share examples of good practice and plan, implement and evaluate projects to enhance the employment prospects of international graduates. It also aims to help support the development of a stronger evidence base on international student outcomes and educational pathways, as outlined in [our position paper](#).

The importance of ISEG was reinforced when it was integrated into the refreshed [International Education Strategy 2021](#) (Action 6).

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY GROUP

Members of the ISEG:

UKCISA, Confederation of British Industry, AGCAS, Association of Colleges, British Council, BUILA, Institute of Student Employers, Prospects/Jisc, Independent HE, UUKi, Universities Scotland, and student representatives.

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International students form a key part of many employers' early talent pipelines. Through the International Student Employability Group, UKCISA has successfully brought together a number of stakeholders to greatly improve the support and guidance that is offered both to international students and their potential employers.

Stephen Isherwood, Institute of Student Employers

THE STUDENT IMMIGRATION ROUTE

A Q&A SESSION with
HOME OFFICE POLICY TEAM

400+ members attended

44 questions answered

Graduate Route

In September 2020, UKCISA took a leading role in convening the sector to facilitate conversations with the Home Office to help shape the new Graduate Route.

We delivered a series of recommendations to government designed to inform the technical development and implementation of the Graduate Route, endorsed by sector bodies, including Universities UK International (UUKi), GuildHE, Independent HE, Association of Colleges, MillionPlus, British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA) and University Alliance.

We subsequently worked with Universities UK, BUILA and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) through our ISEG to outline the business case for including unrestricted self-employment in the new route, and to mitigate the impact on students affected by Covid-related travel restrictions.

The published rules of the Graduate Route included many of our key asks, including:

- Revisions to the eligibility requirements, including the inclusion of students on articulated pathways
- Removal of self-employment restrictions
- An amendment to the cut-off date of residence in the UK for eligibility from 6 April to 21 June 2021.

Influencing policy

#WeAreInternational Student Ambassador programme

International students are at the heart of everything we do at UKCISA. We are proud to work with and learn from our student ambassadors to help deliver our vision for a world-class international student experience. Early in 2020, UKCISA appointed our first cohort of #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors. From advising on core activities, to speaking at sector meetings, conferences and events, their knowledge and dedication has been integral to delivering on our ambition to put the student voice at the heart of policymaking. In November 2020, we were delighted to welcome a second cohort of ambassadors to the programme. [Read more about our ambassadors here.](#)

“
The #WeAreInternational campaign is important as it provides a valuable and informed resource for international students. Through inclusivity of international students’ views, the campaign connects diverse students from all over the world and provides a platform to address the challenges that we face.



Mary Wanjohi
#WeAreInternational Student Ambassador,
Postgraduate student,
University of Warwick



Influencing policy

Simplification of the immigration rules

UKCISA's role in the Home Office's Review Committee enabled us to provide analysis and informed recommendations to the Home Office to help simplify immigration rules for international students and their families. The unique insight from members contributed to our analysis of the draft immigration rules, and shaped recommendations that influenced the published Student Immigration Route.

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UKCISA have been invaluable in coordinating sector feedback during the drafting of immigration rules for the new points-based immigration system. Without UKCISA and team, we would have lost an invaluable opportunity to critique the final draft of immigration rules, which affect not only international students, but international researchers, scientists and other invaluable university staff. Communications have always been decisive, timely and well-communicated.

Ben Moore, Policy Manager, Russell Group

Securing and communicating policy concessions

As a member of the Home Office Education Advisory Group and the UKVI Stakeholder Communications Group, we continue to highlight issues raised by our members. Whether this is through the advice line, forum or member events, we continue to provide timely insights that inform policy decisions and have helped secure a range of concessions to relieve the pressure on international students and member institutions

UKCISA also worked closely with UK governments to provide responsive communications to international students and member institutions, working with the Department for Education's International Student Communications Group and its Student Communications Group to provide insight into the development of communication assets, including ministerial communications. Our close links with the sector and UK governments enabled us to rapidly respond to emerging issues for members and international students, and disseminate key government messaging through our website and social media channels.

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UKCISA is an important partner for BUILA. Over the last year, we have collaborated to lobby for government concessions surrounding Covid-19 and the Graduate Route. We have also carried out joint research and communications campaigns on significant issues for the international student experience, including the role of education agents, and employability. We greatly value their tireless commitment to helping the sector effect positive change and to ensuring that the student voice is always heard.

Bobby Mehta, Chair, British Universities International Liaison Association

2 Delivering world-leading advice and training

Our training is responsive and inclusive, building expertise and knowledge and supporting members to advise international students with confidence.

New online training programme

While UKCISA had committed to adding online training to its national programme, the pandemic meant that we accelerated this work, while converting existing training courses to new platforms and delivery models.

Feedback on our online events is overwhelmingly positive. Our new delivery model allows more members from across the UK to attend without incurring travel time or costs, and our competitive pricing has enabled multiple team members to attend training sessions together, facilitating knowledge sharing across teams. It has allowed UKCISA to respond to the needs of members in a timely manner, disseminating information and advice on priority areas in a year where there has been a multitude of change.

Due to Coronavirus restrictions, the UKCISA team stepped up to deliver an extensive and impactful training programme in just over six months.

ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MEMBERS



17 sessions

733 attendees

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It's an enormous amount of information and I honestly feel so much better prepared to deal with it - I'm so glad I came!

“

It was very clear and I feel very confident about the new rules now. It was nice to see all of your faces :)!

Feedback from our *Navigating the new immigration rules* training event

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The UKCISA training sessions are always at the top of the list of training for our International Officers and a great benefit of the training being delivered online was the significant saving on travel and accommodation costs and being able to have four members of staff attend one of the sessions - unheard of! We were then all able to meet to discuss the key points and ideas for changes and improvements within our own processes. This was so useful while the session was fresh in the minds of all attendees which promoted really healthy discussion and debate.

Laura Rose-Troup, Newcastle College

Delivering world-leading advice and training

Advice line

MEMBERS' ADVICE LINE

1,408 CALLS
HANDLED



STUDENT ADVICE LINE

3,935 CALLS
HANDLED

UKCISA Manual

Our unique online members' Manual is an essential guide to the rules and regulations affecting international students, covering immigration, fees and student support. It details changes to rules and guidance, providing context and analysis – and is an indispensable reference point for UKCISA members.

Our expert Advice and Training Officers have analysed six rounds of changes to the immigration rules, each change accompanied by multiple new guidance documents. They've worked tirelessly to reflect these fast-paced substantive changes, ensuring members have access to updated information and analysis.

Dedicated Coronavirus information hub

UKCISA responded to the evolving Coronavirus pandemic by developing a dedicated web resource collating support for international students, bringing together information on all aspects of the student experience across the four UK nations, updating several times a day at the height of the first wave. We also collaborated with sector partners, including Study UK and the Office for Students, to coordinate communications to current and prospective international students, contributing the voice of our #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors.

UK Exit from the European Union

UKCISA collaborated closely with DfE, British Council and organisations across the UK education sector to deliver coordinated messaging around the UK's exit from the EU, ensuring that the UKCISA website contained accurate and reliable information for EU nationals and those advising them.

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I contacted UKCISA membership advice because we needed to update our election rules. Since Brexit the landscape for our EU students to run for sabbatical posts had become confusing and it was a struggle to find clear information. I called UKCISA for the first time and received great help from your adviser which cleared up some big questions for us and will allow us to support our students moving forward.

Stewart Squire, Democracy Support and Policy Coordinator, Dundee University Students' Association

MOST POPULAR ONLINE TRAINING EVENTS

THE STUDENT IMMIGRATION ROUTE Q&A with HOME OFFICE IMMIGRATION TEAM

434 member
attendees

NAVIGATING NEW STUDENT IMMIGRATION RULES

163 attendees

EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

230 attendees

THE GRADUATE IMMIGRATION ROUTE Q&A for INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

472 attendees live
3,000 views

In our member survey, our members rated policy updates, the UKCISA manual and the members' advice line as the most valuable benefits.

Free membership seminars

In response to Covid-19, UKCISA pivoted to engage online and support members facing significant new challenges.

MEMBERSHIP SEMINARS

11 free webinars

28 presenters

682 attendees

RESPONDING TO COVID

4 SESSIONS 6 PRESENTERS 295 ATTENDEES

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

5 SESSIONS 11 PRESENTERS 247 ATTENDEES

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

2 SESSIONS 11 PRESENTERS 140 ATTENDEES

Member survey

For the first time, our member survey was open to anyone who works at a member organisation.

MEMBER SURVEY

48 questions

212 responses

75% completion rate

48% PRIMARY CONTACTS

52% OTHER STAFF

75% RATE THE VALUE OF MEMBERSHIP AS EITHER VERY GOOD OR GOOD VALUE

83% EITHER VERY SATISFIED OR SATISFIED WITH MEMBERSHIP

Empowering our membership



Last spring, I contacted UKCISA about running some sessions on topics concerning staff supporting international students during the pandemic. With their support I was able to amplify the work I was already doing on a small scale within the sector through a Covid-19 collaborative working group. Through their commitment we were able to bring together institutions from every corner of UK. By working collaboratively to share ideas and open up to one another about the challenges we were all facing, we were able to identify best practices to support international students across the United Kingdom.

I would personally like to thank UKCISA for helping to bring together this community when conversations and support were desperately needed. We've come a long way in one year!

Julie Campbell, International Student Experience and Support Coordinator, Ulster University

MEMBER SYMPOSIA

320 attendees

TOPICS

- Supporting students during self-isolation
- Meet and greet on arrival in the UK
- Online orientation
- Supporting students at Christmas
- Creating online social networks on arrival in the UK
- International student hardship

A list of members can be found at www.ukcisa.org.uk/current-members

Our connectedness and close links across the international education sector enable us to share insight and amplify the international student voice.

#WeAreInternational campaign relaunch

The #WeAreInternational campaign is the key student-facing brand at UKCISA and celebrates and champions the UK's global student community. In November 2020, we launched with a refreshed brand identity and new campaign assets.

While UKCISA and our #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors create and share content, it is an open-source campaign, designed for members and sector partners to promote their own international students and their work to support them. Visit the [campaign website](#) and follow #WeAreInternational on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Bringing international students together at UKCISA Fest

In November 2020 we hosted our first virtual student forum. [UKCISA Fest](#) was a week-long free online series of events - bringing together over 440 international students from 84 countries and studying at 91 different institutions across 4 nations in the UK - to inform policy and practice, and celebrate International Students Day and International Education Week.

International students participated in 14 student-led webinars and interactive sessions, where they explored and discussed diverse aspects of their student experience, from academic and mental health support to employability and the new graduate route.



During these unprecedented times it's mission critical we ask students to work with us through the #WeAreInternational campaign. Not only am I here to promote international education, but to remove the obstacles international students face.



Sir Steve Smith
UK Government
International Education
Champion



UKCISA Fest is not just for international students but also by international students. The sessions provided curated information and advice in an easy-to-understand way. Not only I was able to connect with a community of like-minded international students, but also we were given a platform to engage with key stakeholders and policymakers. This gave us the chance to influence policy and inform practice through sharing our first-hand experiences.

Anant Rangan, #WeAreInternational Student Ambassador, UG student at University of Birmingham

Inclusive Practice for International Students Project

UKCISA is working together with the Office for Students on a new project that aims to find 'what works' in ensuring international students integrate and receive a fulfilling academic experience in the UK. It will explore the positive impact of international students on home students, and what longer-term lessons can be learnt from their response to the coronavirus pandemic on provider-level delivery and student engagement.

This work will form the foundation of ongoing work and wider student and sector engagement to be undertaken by OfS, UKCISA and DfE to ensure that international student integration on UK campuses continues to be part of our world-leading part offer to international students.

The importance of this project was reinforced when it was integrated into Action 5 of the refreshed [International Education Strategy 2021](#).

Website, news and updates

MOST POPULAR INFORMATION AND ADVICE WEBPAGES

- Coronavirus: info for international students
- Fees status for England
- Home or overseas fees: the basics
- Government Student Support

TOP NEWS STORY

Graduate route:
what's happening?

29,746
page views



WEBSITE NUMBERS

4,260,645 PAGEVIEWS

2,423,474 SESSIONS ON UKCISA WEBSITE

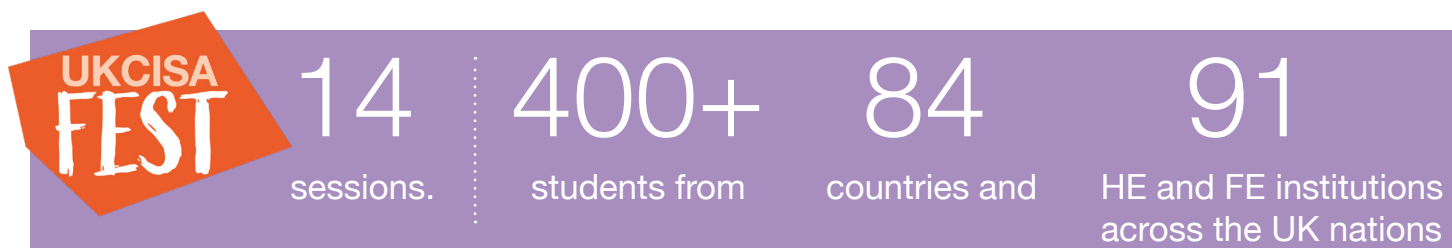
113,340 PAGEVIEWS OF UKCISA MANUAL

WEB TRAFFIC



46% FROM UK




54% OTHER COUNTRIES



Disseminating our knowledge

Social media

2020-2021 saw significant increases in social media engagement, with increased followers across all channels and sustained engagement. These increases were due to a renewed focus on using social media to support messaging to members and international students, in addition to our email updates and newswall on our website.

SOCIAL MEDIA		
FOLLOWERS		INCREASE YEAR ON YEAR
 5,981	+36%	
 3,622	+32%	
 1,829	+139%	

Engaging with the HE sector

UKCISA and its #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors have represented the UK international student experience in a wide range of international forums.

At a UK level, UKCISA formed part of Universities UK International's task group on student hardship, working to develop guidance for member institutions on how to support international students.

UKCISA supported important research by BUILA into international education agents, [A Partnership for Quality: a route to a UK quality framework with education agents](#), published in March 2021. UKCISA will work with the sector to develop and implement its principal recommendations:

- A National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agent partners
- A reorganised education agent training scheme to increase access and engagement
- A Good Practice Guide for Providers Using Education Agents

UKCISA also supported the Open University's International Student Experience in the Pandemic Project. The research highlighted the range of challenges students faced during the first phase of the pandemic from accessing institutional support, housing, financial hardship and learning online.

UKCISA staff and #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors attended many international sector events in 2020, including a British Council webinar for education agents in September, the European Association for International Education conference in October, followed by the [ISANA Conference](#) for Australia and New Zealand and the [NARIC Global Education](#) forum in December. We contributed a thought-provoking session on the international students' pandemic experience at UUKI's [International Higher Education Forum](#). We also contributed to a range of student-facing events, including StudyUK online fair for EU students, and UCAS Facebook Live Q&As for current and prospective students.



Having UKCISA's support for this project (International Student Experience in the Pandemic Project) has been most beneficial. I don't think we would have managed to get the response rate without UKCISA's support.

Gunjan Sondhi, Lecturer in Geography, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Open University

5

Developing excellence

Our commitment to our values of quality, innovation, collaboration and trust starts with us and our staff.

Like our member organisations, UKCISA had to shift rapidly to support flexible working for staff during the pandemic. As well as using technology such as Teams and Zoom to support communication and collaboration while working at home, we developed new skills in delivering online training and events. Supporting staff wellbeing is a priority, and UKCISA invested in training sessions to help staff manage time and set boundaries while working at home. We also conducted regular staff surveys, to understand staff's concerns about returning to work and other issues related to the pandemic.

UKCISA's professional membership networks also offered a range of wellbeing support and opportunities to share good practice. For Mental Health Awareness Week, we shared a range of resources from these professional networks to benefit our staff, and ran wellbeing-related sessions for staff and members.

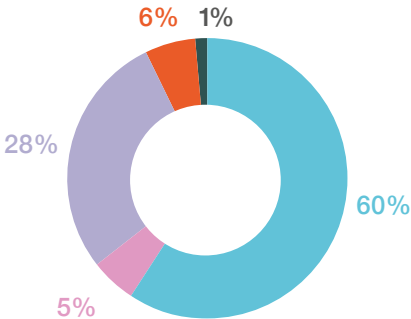
Investing in a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

In September 2020, we delivered a significant project to replace our elderly CRM system, to enable us to connect with and serve our members more efficiently. The project realised immediate benefits for UKCISA membership team, streamlining our renewal communications, and we expect members to see improvements in communications from UKCISA throughout 2021/22.

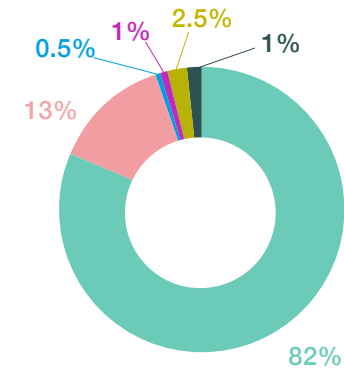
65% of UKCISA’s income comes from our members, through annual subscriptions, attendance at training events or our annual conference.

The grants from the Department for Education (DfE) and Scottish Government also help to ensure as wide a range of services as possible, including free advice and guidance to students, parents and others in the UK or from around the world.

INCOME:	£1,231,036
Membership subscriptions	£731,566
Training and conferences*	£63,330
DfE Grant	£350,000
Scottish Government Grant	£70,000
Other income	£16,139



EXPENDITURE:	£1,225,123
Staff	£998,566
Operational costs	£164,530
Training and conferences*	£5,978
Projects	£9,275
Legal, professional and financial	£29,524
Other costs	£17,250



* Note that our conference and training programme was curtailed in 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prof Koen Lamberts
Chair of the Board, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Sheffield

Alan Mackay
Deputy Vice-Principal International, Director Edinburgh Global, University of Edinburgh (*Honorary Treasurer*)

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International Director, East Sussex College Group

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NUS Vice President Welfare, National Union of Students

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Alex Proudfoot
Chief Executive, Independent Higher Education

Sally Saca
Head of International Student Advice Team, Oxford Brookes University

Laura Rose-Troup
Head of International, Newcastle College

Hamish Walker
Student Immigration Manager, Robert Gordon University

Nebu George
#WeAreInternational Student Ambassador, Bangor University

The following organisations have observer status

- Association of Colleges (AoC)
- Association of International Student Advisers (AISA)
- British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA)
- English UK
- GuildHE

- Immigration Compliance Network (ICN)
- Universities UK (UUK)
- National Union of Students (NUS)

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Lord Billimoria CBE, DL

Chief Executive of UKCISA
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