



# Annual review 2018-19

UK Council  
for International  
Student Affairs

**UKCISA**



“

Attending the UKCISA members' seminar gave a great insight into the way that universities, colleges and students' unions are working to improve international student experience in the UK. It was inspiring to see a room full of people passionate about international students and I enjoyed being able to share my experience with the room as a member of the student panel.”

Alejandro Luy, Deputy President (Education) at Imperial College Union

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## Welcome

**We are a small organisation based in London with 16 staff, but have over 470 members.**

**Our membership includes every university in the UK, many FE colleges, independent schools and students' unions.**

**Together we work to improve the experience of all international students through advice, training, lobbying and research.**

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## About UKCISA

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

It does so through research, publications, extensive online information, a national training programme, dedicated advice lines for advisers and students, good practice and liaison and advocacy with institutions, supporting agencies and government.

### Its 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.

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## Board of Trustees

### 1 April 2018 - 31 March 2019:

**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)

**Mark Allen,**  
International Director, East Sussex College Group

**Sharon Bell,**  
Group Vice Principal (Commercial and International), Warwickshire College

**Lynsey Bendon,**  
Head of Student Services, London Metropolitan University

**Tim Benford,**  
Chief Executive, University of the West of England (UWE) Students' Union

**Hannah Brian,**  
Deputy Chief Executive (Student Engagement), Leeds University Union

**Mark Collier,**  
Head of International Student Support, University of Sheffield

**Sara Dyer,**  
Head of International Students Support, University of Sussex

**Marianne Davies,**  
Head of Immigration Services, University of Warwick

**Kate Dodd,**  
Independent HE consultant

**Lizzie Huckle,**  
Head of International Student Support, Imperial College London

**Dr Sonal Minocha,**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), Bournemouth University

**Prof Nora de Leeuw,**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor, International & Europe, Cardiff University

**Alex Proudfoot,**  
Chief Executive, Independent Higher Education

**Laura Rose-Troup,**  
Head of International Recruitment, Newcastle College

**Paul Rossi,**  
Head of Student Advice and Funding, University of the Arts London

**Ruth Sweeney,**  
Head of International Student Advice, King's College London

**Yinbo Yu,**  
International Students' Officer, National Union of Students

### The following organisations have observer status:

- Association of Colleges
- Association of International Student Advisers (AISA)
- British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA)
- English UK
- GuildHE
- Immigration Compliance Network (ICN)
- Universities UK

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**President of UKCISA:**  
Lord Bilimoria CBE, DL

**Chief Executive of UKCISA:**  
Dominic Scott OBE (until 1 May 2019)  
Anne Marie Graham (from 1 May 2019)

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# I'm honoured to be President of UKCISA at such a significant time. I'm inspired by all the work that UKCISA and our members do to ensure the UK is a welcoming destination for international students.

This has been a hugely significant year for UKCISA and for all those with interests in international students and the powerful way in which they bring so many benefits to the UK.

The report by the Migration Advisory Committee in September provided comprehensive, detailed and incontrovertible evidence of this and vindicated our arguments in so many ways.

The subsequent one by the All Party Parliamentary Group for International Students, which I have the pleasure to co-chair with Paul Blomfield MP, provided firm recommendations for the future and many of these were accepted and included in the government's new International Education Strategy and some elements reflected in the Immigration White Paper.

UKCISA's voice and influence in all these forums has, therefore, been hugely influential and whilst, with Brexit still on the horizon, we may continue to face challenging times, it is both encouraging and rewarding to see that steps are now being taken to encourage many more students to come and study in the UK.

I congratulate you all on what you do in an aspect of UK life which is so fundamentally important to our future as we work together to ensure even more positive developments over the coming year.



**Lord Karan Bilimoria  
CBE, DL**

President of UKCISA

# We are determined that our universities and colleges will continue to be a magnet for international students in the future.

The year was dominated by two distinctive themes. The first, UKCISA's 50th Anniversary, was an opportunity to celebrate, reflect on lessons and achievements from the past and to renew our commitment and plans for the future. The second, the UK's plans to leave the EU, presented huge challenges to ensure that, under different scenarios, all of our colleagues and those students who will be affected were adequately advised and supported at a time of considerable anxiety and change.

The year ended, however, with the publication of the government's new International Education Strategy which we have welcomed - although we warned that if the complexity of Tier 4 is not radically reviewed (and post-study work rights not further extended), and with a likely downturn in the number of EU students post Brexit (assuming it goes ahead), the ambition to grow international HE numbers to 600,000 by 2030 (itself a relatively modest target) is unlikely to be achieved.

So there have been some positive signs but also many challenges for us all to face over the coming, in many ways, unpredictable year.

We say farewell to Dominic Scott who has been our Chief Executive and led this organisation over a quite remarkable 15 years.

We give a very warm welcome to Anne Marie Graham who succeeded him on 1 May – and with such an appropriate background, having previously pioneered work on outward mobility and then managed the FCO's global Chevening Scholarship Scheme.

And, as usual, may I thank

- The Department for Education and the Scottish Government for the essential support they give us in terms of grant funding, which enables us to provide such an extensive public service.
- The members of our Board and Committees who give so much of their time to advise on and help to direct our activities; and, of course,
- Each and every colleague in all our member institutions throughout the UK who do so much to ensure that every international student's time in the UK is so memorable and rewarding.



**Prof Koen Lamberts**  
President and  
Vice-Chancellor,  
University of Sheffield



“

**This was my first UKCISA conference. What a wonderful introduction to the UKCISA network. Everyone was incredibly friendly and passionate about supporting international students. I am new to the role of international student adviser and this conference has really inspired me. Thank you to the organisers. It was fabulous!”**

**2018 UKCISA conference delegate**

# Our anniversary year was the perfect opportunity to celebrate all that the sector does to welcome international students, while working together to find ways to improve the international student experience in the UK.

Our anniversary year celebrated achievements of the past 50 years while providing an opportunity to focus on the future, exploring ways the sector can work together to improve international student experience and how we can continue to change lives for good.

- Our annual conference was our largest to date with more than 450 delegates and 65 parallel sessions to develop skills and learn from peers. Prominent speakers included Scotland's Deputy First Minister, the Chief Executives of NAFSA (from the USA) and the British Council. Sponsors included the Scottish Government, INTO Global and Penningtons Manches LLP.

- We held a Parliamentary Reception to recognise the commitment and dedication of staff who work to support international students in the UK. 200 international students, members and external stakeholders joined us in the celebrations.
- We also ran a conference on Enhancing the International Student Experience in partnership with Universities UK, highlighting the value of international students and the ways that various projects and schemes by UKCISA and NUS support them.

**UK Council  
for International  
Student Affairs**

**UKCISA**50 1968  
2018  
**#ChangingLivesForGood**

“

*The chance to network with colleagues across the sector is always the best thing about the conference, and to come away feeling inspired that we are #ChangingLivesForGood.”*

*- UKCISA 2018  
conference delegate*

50TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

457 DELEGATES

200 INSTITUTIONS

65 SESSIONS

77 HOURS OF LEARNING

30 CHOIR MEMBERS



50TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

150+

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENTERED PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS SUMMARISING HOW THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE UK HELPED TO 'CHANGE LIVES FOR GOOD'



*First taste of hiking*  
Photograph by Siyu Zhao, China, studying Digital Media and Society at University of Sheffield.

PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION



200 ATTENDEES

25 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

65 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

47 INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATED

UUK AND UKCISA INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE CONFERENCE

69 ATTENDEES



3 BREAKOUT SESSIONS

# UKCISA has submitted evidence and worked to challenge policy processes that adversely affect international students.

### WEBSITE INFORMATION

**4,507** VIEWS OF BREXIT  
GUIDANCE NOTE  
FOR STUDENTS

**110,330** VIEWS OF EEA  
& EU STUDENTS  
INFORMATION

One of our key priorities this year has been to ensure students and colleagues are aware of probable changes to rules on immigration, fees status and student support for EU students currently in the UK and for those arriving in 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22.

As well as providing updated guidance on our website and in our Manual, we have created new training courses to equip colleagues with confidence to advise and reassure EU students.

Both colleagues and students can face difficulties keeping pace with the current immigration rules. We carefully interpret and explain any changes while raising areas of concern with the Home Office. This included the new 'Front-End Services' for visa extensions which have caused confusion and alarm at the increased costs.

We also highlighted aspects of the current immigration rules, policy and processes that adversely affect international students and create a less than welcoming image overseas by:

- Submitting evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee's Inquiry into 'Global Britain and Links with India', given the concerns about the downturn in Indian students coming to the UK over the last five years.
- Providing oral evidence to the Higher Education Commission's Inquiry into education exports.
- Supporting and helping to formulate conclusions for the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Students' report on 'A Sustainable Future for International Students in the UK'.
- Commenting extensively on the critical Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report on international students which has influenced relevant parts of the Immigration White paper and the International Education Strategy.

“

*It was extremely helpful and has given me and the team the confidence to start unpicking student situations in relation to Brexit.”*

*- Participant from our pilot EU Settlement Scheme training course*

“

I called UKCISA's student advice line to query a decision made by my daughter-in-law's prospective university about her eligibility for home fee status.

Your adviser was extremely helpful, clear and positive that my daughter-in-law was eligible for home fees. With the confidence gained from this call, we were able to contact the university, citing the advice we had received, and we have now had confirmation that 'following further review' she is indeed eligible for home fees.

As a family, we are absolutely delighted. Your existence, your clear website and the excellent advice received over the phone have made a huge difference.”

**Dr Liz Moulton, parent of prospective international student, called our students' advice line in June 2018**



ADVICE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

1,551,009

PAGEVIEWS OF OUR  
INFORMATION AND ADVICE  
WEBPAGES FOR STUDENTS

3,166

CALLS TO STUDENTS'  
ADVICE LINE

# UKCISA members include every university in the UK, many colleges, schools and students' unions. Together we are a community that shares and learns from each other to improve the international student experience.

UKCISA's institutional membership continues to include every university in the UK and an increased number of students' unions. The number of FE colleges continues to decline, from 160 in 2016-17, to 139 in 2017-18 and now 98 in 2018-19. This is in part due to mergers in the FE sector, but also reflects the challenging environment for colleges trying to recruit internationally against the obstacles created by Home Office rules. We continue to work closely with our colleagues and members in the FE sector to ensure that we offer appropriate advice and guidance and include the FE perspective when feeding in on policy areas.

- Our nationwide training programmes increased by nearly 20% in line with demand, delivering 64 courses to 1,380 delegates, giving them the skills they need in their roles. The majority of our training courses focused on Tier 4, fee status and eligibility, but there was demand for preparing for UKVI audits, EU settlement scheme, GDPR and cross-cultural communication. We also provided mental health and orientation courses to help all colleagues within institutions or students' unions.

- Colleagues used the members' area and online manual regularly for specific detailed immigration, fees and student support information, to post on the forum or to access locked resources.
- Our advisers answered 1,746 queries on our members' line.
- We surveyed 120 member institutions to gather insight about the range of provision for international students in the UK and enable colleagues to assess their own services against the national average. Our 'Benchmarking Report' featured support provided to students, case studies of successful approaches and included a focus on the degree of planning within institutions to respond to the likely increase in demand for advice for EU students.

“

*I would not hesitate to recommend engaging with UKCISA as a network to colleagues across HE, be they professional services staff or academic staff.”*

*- Christopher Little,  
Teaching Fellow/  
Learning Developer  
at University of  
Keele, UKCISA  
member*

## MEMBERSHIP

472 MEMBERS

206 HIGHER EDUCATION

98 FURTHER EDUCATION

118 STUDENTS' UNIONS

50 OTHER

## NATIONAL TRAINING

64 COURSES (inc in-house)  
1,380 ATTENDEES

## MEMBERS SEMINARS

3 SEMINARS  
240 ATTENDEES

## BENCHMARKING SURVEY

120 INSTITUTIONS

101	England	4	Wales
13	Scotland	2	Northern Ireland

## MEMBERS' ADVICE LINE

1,746

ADVICE LINE CALLS



## E-NEWS TO MEMBERS

@ 72

## WEBSITE NUMBERS FOR MEMBERS

27,215 RESOURCES DOWNLOADED

27,687 LOGINS TO MEMBERS AREA

25,607 LOGINS TO UKCISA MANUAL

## WEB TRAFFIC

46% FROM UK

54% OTHER COUNTRIES



## TRAINING VENUES



## This year we have funded nine larger, strategic projects across 15 institutions, including mental health and academic peer learning.



In 2018-19 our grants scheme funded a number of larger, strategic projects. We had nearly 50 applications, resulting in nine projects covering aspects from teaching and learning to mental health, peer learning, group work and support to families. These projects will complete later in 2019.

Our President Lord Bilimoria presented the 2017-18 'Paul Webley Award for Innovation in International Education' to the Open University and University of Dundee for their research about doctoral students and transition. The University of Strathclyde was highly commended for a pilot project using Lego® Serious Play® to engage international students with group work.

Reports with practical suggestions for all institutions and students' unions to improve international student experience are available on our website at [ukcisa.org.uk/grants](http://ukcisa.org.uk/grants).

We have paused the grants scheme in 2019-20 to enable us to evaluate its outcomes over the last few years, and ensure that we are supporting projects strategically to maximise benefit to members and international students.



*Since the pilot project in 2017-18 we've rolled out Lego® Serious Play® activities throughout the University of Strathclyde and other HE institutions, from MSc project planning to wellbeing and mental health."*

*- Suzanne Faulkner,  
Teaching Fellow,  
University of  
Strathclyde*



“

**The UKCISA grants scheme provided essential support for our research investigating the social transition experiences of international doctoral students. It provided valuable insights into how doctoral students develop and sustain social support systems within and outside universities. As a result, we have been able to facilitate critical discussions at universities and events across the country about better supporting international doctoral students. ”**

**Dr Jenna Mittelmeier, Lecturer in Education (International), Manchester University (previously at The Open University), ran a collaborative research project between The Open University and the University of Dundee: Social Transition Research into International Doctoral Experiences**

# We continue to support international students across the world through our lobbying, advice and guidance. As part of our 50th anniversary we were able to celebrate all international students and their rich contribution to the UK.

- Throughout 2018-19, our advisers answered 3,166 calls and queries. Most are from international students, their parents/guardians and relatives, but we also dealt with questions from schools, advice agencies and even lawyers. Our advisers supported them to challenge fee assessments, answered queries about fee status (often many years in advance) and helped them answer questions on institutions' fee status questionnaires.
- Our website continues to expand its global profile, with more than half of our visitors accessing the site from outside the UK.
- We worked in partnership with organisations in the sector to create timely videos for students, providing accurate and reassuring messages about Brexit and visas, ultimately reinforcing how welcome all international students are to the UK. The videos embedded in our website were played 3,310 times.
- We sent latest news to 2,565 students, 14 times throughout the year to ensure that students are informed about important developments and directed to useful information about the UK during their studies.
- We celebrated all international students and their rich contribution to the UK at our Parliamentary Reception commemorating our 50th anniversary in November, with 60 students joining us from more than 25 countries.

*Our advisers answered over 3,000 queries from students, parent/guardians and relatives to support students to study in the UK. We monitor any trends to report back to relevant government departments.*

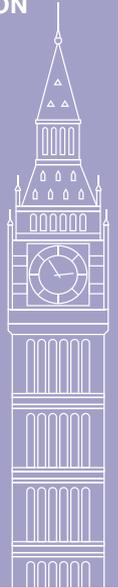


PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION

60  
STUDENTS ATTENDED

25  
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

CELEBRATING  
50 YEARS  
OF SUPPORTING  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENTS



E-NEWS TO STUDENTS

14 THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO 2,565 STUDENTS @

SOCIAL MEDIA

3,461 FOLLOWERS

2,112 LIKES

WEBSITE NUMBERS

1,463,067 SESSIONS ON MAIN UKCISA WEBSITE

2,873,091 PAGEVIEWS

WEB TRAFFIC

46% FROM UK

54% OTHER COUNTRIES

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## Meet Anne Marie Graham

**UKCISA has a vital role to play in representing international students across UK universities, schools, colleges and students' unions. We will work with the sector to advise on a clear, efficient visa process, a world-leading student experience and a competitive post-study offer.**

Regardless of the Brexit outcome, UKCISA will play a vital role in providing guidance for international students, and for those who support and advise them. Like the new International Education Strategy, UKCISA works across the education sector and diverse government departments. It is uniquely placed to represent international students in schools, colleges and universities in the strategy's implementation. We are working with government to ensure that international students, both prospective and those already studying in the UK, receive 'welcoming, clear, simple and consistent' messaging as recommended in 2018 by the APPG for International Students.

We also want to improve access to our member services. To support this, UKCISA is exploring additional methods, including new technologies, of training delivery to maximise access for staff at all levels, and continue to provide value for money for our members' budgets. We will also implement a new evaluation framework, providing qualitative

and quantitative data to help institutions and organisations better understand the benefits of UKCISA membership and how its services have had a positive impact on institutions and on individuals.

Like UK Government, UKCISA wants the UK to be the first choice destination for global students looking for a high quality international education. We will work with sector organisations across the UK to continue to advise on a clear and efficient visa process, a world-leading student experience and a competitive post-study offer, to help ensure continued growth in international students coming to the UK.



Anne Marie Graham



**Anne Marie Graham**  
Chief Executive of UKCISA

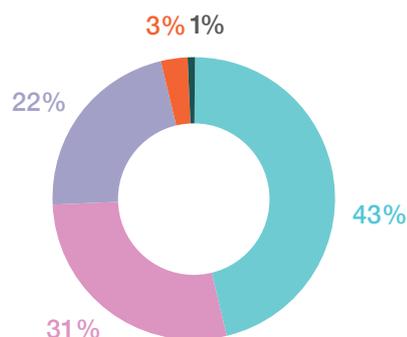
## Finance and funding

# 74% of UKCISA's income comes from our members, through annual subscriptions, attendance at training events or our annual conference.

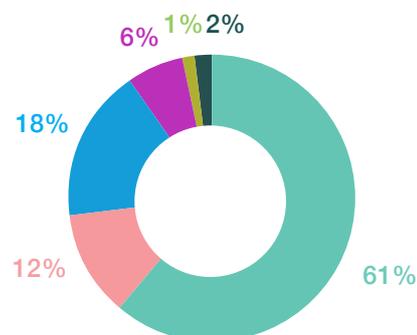
The grants from the Department for Education (DfE) and Scottish government, however, also help to ensure as wide a range of services as possible,

including free advice and guidance to students, parents and others in the UK or from around the world.

<b>INCOME:</b>	<b>£1,592,000</b>
Membership subscriptions	£686,000
Training and conferences	£493,000
DfE Grant	£343,000
Scottish Government Grant	£55,000
Other income	£15,000



<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>£1,546,000</b>
Staff	£945,000
Operational costs	£185,000
Training and conferences	£269,000
Projects	£99,000
Legal, Professional and Financial	£21,000
Other costs	£27,000



Approximate figures for 2018-2019, subject to audit

## UKCISA

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UKCISA is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (Company Number: 4507287) and a charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (Charity Number: 1095294). Its registered office is at 3-5 Islington High Street, London N1 9LQ.

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**UK Council  
for International  
Student Affairs**

**UKCISA**



Department  
for Education



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
[gov.scot](http://gov.scot)