



50th Anniversary
Annual review

Changing lives for good

UK Council
for International
Student Affairs

UKCISA 50 1968
2018



“

The UKCISA grant scheme is a wonderful idea. It has enabled us to develop a project to further support international students to learn within a UK setting. With UKCISA's support we have enriched the study experience of our international students in a direct and meaningful way. Thank you UKCISA!”

Dr Jean Ammar, Royal Northern College of Music, grant awardee 2016-17 (led project of which Yan Li, pictured, took part)

The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) has been supporting international students and all who work with them for 50 years.

Since 1968, some 5 million international students have come to study in the UK, supported by UKCISA's member institutions. They have brought academic talent, international links, global perspectives and helped to sustain the widest range of courses and research in universities and colleges throughout the UK.

Our 50th anniversary theme, *Changing Lives for Good*, reflects how the lives of all those students have been transformed – how UKCISA members have helped and supported them, the huge benefits which they bring to the UK and their value in creating links and influence around the world.

UKCISA Mission

Mission statement

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 advisors 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
- Promote opportunities for, and identify and work to 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's membership includes:

- Every university in the UK
- The majority of publicly funded further and higher education colleges which are active internationally
- A number of independent schools and private colleges and
- A range of specialist and representative bodies.

Board of Trustees

Board (as at 1 May 2018):

Prof Koen Lamberts,

Chair of the board, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of York

Alan Mackay,

Deputy Vice Principal International, Director Edinburgh Global, University of Edinburgh (Honorary Treasurer)

Mark Allen,

International Director, Sussex Downs College

Sharon Bell,

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Tim Benford,

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

Prof Nora de Leeuw,

Pro Vice-Chancellor, International & Europe, Cardiff University

Mark Collier,

Head of International Student Support, University of Sheffield

Marianne Davies,

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Kate Dodd,

Academic Registrar, University of York

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Head of International Student Support, Imperial College London

Dr Sonal Minocha,

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement), Bournemouth 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

President of UKCISA:

Lord Bilimoria CBE, DL

Chief Executive of UKCISA:

Dominic Scott OBE

Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

For any organisation not only to survive but to expand and develop so significantly over 50 years is a substantial milestone and achievement in itself. But to have had so much influence over a period of such dramatic change to international student mobility is cause for both reflection and celebration.

UKCISA (or as it was then UKCOSA – the UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs) was born amongst the lively debates (and indeed demonstrations) of 1968 when the student voice was increasingly being heard.

Since then we have seen our international student numbers rise and fall (and then rise again), full cost fees introduced, Prime Ministers taking initiatives to make the UK the most welcoming of countries in the world and then, on occasions, immigration debates and concerns surfacing with international students often finding themselves, irrelevantly, combined and confused with other issues.

But over all those years our core purpose has remained the same and I cannot believe that, given all the comprehensive and compelling evidence that so many of us have submitted to the Migration Advisory Committee's inquiry this year, that the real benefits of international students to the UK will not be universally acknowledged as one of the UK's great success stories.

And indeed one in which we can, if the will exists and with the right policies, do so much more in the future.

So let me pay a personal tribute to all those individuals over the last 50 years who have done and do so much to advise and support our international students and to make their time in the UK so successful and so memorable.

And express my thanks to the Department for Education (DfE) - who have in fact supported us financially since way back in 1985. Thanks also to the Scottish Government who now additionally support our work. And thanks to our many friends in Parliament, all parts of government and of course within the sector without whom we could not achieve and have achieved so much.



Prof Koen Lamberts
President and
Vice-Chancellor,
University of York

Since UKCISA was established in 1968, we have grown from a small group of voluntary organisations to become the national voice for all those with interests in international students in the UK, their value and their future.

Following a seminar organised by the London Conference on Overseas Students in January 1967 a working party was established to consider whether there was a need and how a new national organisation for Overseas Student Affairs might be established.

The inaugural meeting of the UK Council for Overseas Student Affairs was held in the Commonwealth Institute on 5 July 1968. There were five people present, a Col. G.C. Grimshaw took the chair and Mr Martin Kenyon was asked to act as secretary.

Throughout the 1970s it was actively involved in helping students affected by emergencies – in Bangladesh, Rhodesia and Cyprus – and by 1976 it had over 200 members with 11 sub committees covering amongst others, nurses, married students, housing and financial hardship. The 1980s saw foreign exchange difficulties for Ugandan and then Iranian students, visa requirements introduced for Sri Lankan students and problems for Libyan students following the siege at the Libyan Embassy. UKCOSA/UKCISA staff and members helped all those affected, published numbers of guides and reports including 'Containing Crisis' in 1985, the first UKCOSA Model Code of Practice in 1986 and the first UKCOSA Manual in 1989.

The 1990s saw membership grow to over 350, an FE Network established, the Malaysian boycott of the UK (widely affecting their international students), the South East Asian currency crisis, affecting many others but also, more positively in 1999, the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) to attract an additional 100,000 students to the UK (a target which was in fact achieved successfully and ahead of time - assisted by UKCISA's proposal to make part-time work entitlements automatic for all students).

In more recent years UKCISA has supported Diploma and MA programmes; issued (with AISA) Codes of Ethics; produced in 2004 the groundbreaking 'Broadening our Horizons' report, the first in a decade to survey international student experiences; influenced the creation of the Science and Engineering Graduates Programme (the first scheme enabling some students to stay on and work in the UK) and worked closely with Scotland's related Fresh Talent programme; advised on and managed the international student experience strand of PMI 2; and, of course, been central to the monitoring of, training for and advice on, all aspects of Tier 4 of the Points-Based System (PBS).

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By 1976 UKCOSA had over 200 members with 11 sub committees covering amongst others, nurses, married students, housing and financial hardship



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Studying in the UK has taught me to be completely self dependent. I've learnt a lot from studying here. I'm very grateful for the advice and support I've had from Nottingham Trent University, helping me to settle in to life in the UK.

With their help I've learnt to be a mother in a new environment. My son Kinan is taking in everything new, the language, the people and his new situation.”

Kinana, a student parent from Syria studying pharmaceutical analysis at Nottingham Trent University

Review of the year 2017–2018

515 Members:



211

Higher education



139

Further education



113

Students' unions



52

Others

Participants



1,225

on training courses (national and in house)

225

at members' meetings

394

at 2017 conference

Social media numbers



2,736

followers

395,600 impressions over the year



53k

reach this year

Average of 4,420 reach per month

Advice line queries

2,037

Members line

3,095

Students line



5,132 total

E-news numbers

52 e-news

to members

12 e-news

to students

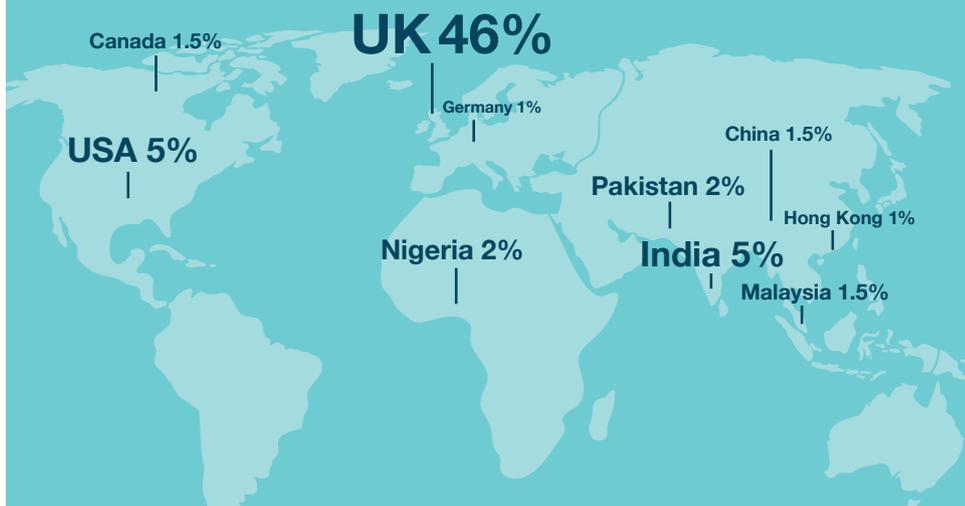


Website numbers

1.4m sessions

900k users

Top countries accessing our website (% of traffic)



UKCISA and many others in the sector, felt vindicated when the Office for National Statistics announced in June 2017 that at least 97% of international students left the UK when their visas expired.

- Government appeared to accept therefore that there was, in contrast to policies suggested in the Conservative Manifesto, no longer any case to 'toughen the visa requirements for students still further' but the Home Office instead undertook a review of the Short-Term Student (STS) visa route. UKCISA gathered comments and suggestions from over 50 member institutions to help to inform its detailed response. The resulting changes to the rules and guidance have seen some of our recommendations accepted and improvements introduced - but sadly in other areas unnecessary restrictions, ambiguity and confusion which many of us are still working to resolve.
- The extension of the so-called 'Tier 4 Pilot' - giving additional privileges to just some students at certain institutions - has been welcomed by some but concern expressed by others both on the criteria used for selection and the possible inequity and confusion of what could now be seen as a two-tier system.
- We have continued to monitor visa processing times - which are generally good as compared with our competitors - but we did have to alert UK Visas and Immigration on an increasingly urgent basis in September (and October) of last year when very significant delays occurred resulting in substantial numbers of students not being able to arrive in time for course start dates.
- We, like others, have encouraged government (and in this context, governments) to clarify fee status and loan issues for EU students in the future. We were pleased to hear in 2017 an early re-assurance for all those arriving in 2018-19 but a decision now on 2019 and beyond (and on which Scotland has already announced its position) is now very urgently required.
- Keeping members informed of any of these developments and every change, however small, to any of the hugely complex immigration or fee status rules is perhaps one of our most important tasks, much assisted now by UKCISA's universally welcomed 'online manual' which has had 14,504 logins from 1,521 individual members across the UK.

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UKCISA has over 500 institutional members. We are an extraordinary community, working in universities, colleges and students' unions right across the country, committed to giving support and advice to those who need it.

- At a policy level the most important exercise has been to submit detailed evidence on behalf of members to the Migration Advisory Committee's review of International Students and to the Higher Education Commission's related inquiry into Education Exports.
- The 2017 Annual Conference had, as usual, nearly 400 delegates and over 60 parallel sessions but will be remembered, in particular, for inspiring words from our President, Lord Karan Bilimoria and by Prof Sir Steve Smith, Exeter's Vice-Chancellor and a former President of Universities UK who said in his remarks:
"I'd also like to say how much I admire UKCISA as an organisation and what it has achieved. It has worked tirelessly to lobby government on all the key issues, representing the sector in the widest sense. And in particular it has consistently lobbied the Home Office and UKVI on the potential impact of proposed policy changes on visas, and has of course worked closely with member organisations to raise awareness of all the key debates."
- We ran a third series of (now free of charge) members' seminars featuring presentations from colleagues who recently ran UKCISA-funded projects or research. 87% of our attendees said they were inspired to run similar kinds of projects in their own institutions.
- The advice lines continued to answer many of the more complex queries taking just over 2,000 calls from members during the year with 52 editions of the members e-news sent to over 2,000 contacts on a weekly basis.
- There has been huge demand for training with 997 delegates attending 42 courses plus an additional 228 on 12 in-house courses.
- Finally, much preparatory work was done to ensure that the 50th Anniversary Conference in Edinburgh at the end of June – with key speakers including Scottish ministers, the Chief Executives of both our (though much larger) US analogue NAFSA and of British Council – as memorable as it should be, marking 50 years of service to individual students and the sector.



The sessions were all great, and it was a fantastic opportunity to share information and advice with colleagues in the informal discussions held outside of the sessions.

- UKCISA 2017 conference delegate



“

Through membership of UKCISA I've had the opportunity to learn and share knowledge with a great network of colleagues, throughout the UK. The network and team have been incredibly supportive to me in all of my roles working with international students over the last 12 years.”

**Matt Daley, International Advice Manager at Reading University
and member of UKCISA's advisory committee**



“

Studying in the UK for the past three years has been an empowering experience; it has equipped me with life skills and encouraged my love of learning to greater heights.”

**Sharifah Hani Yasmin syed Abdullah,
studying Law at University of Essex**

Over the past year we have reached even greater numbers of international students with our advice services and *Changing Lives for Good* campaign.

- Our website (which we combined during the year into one central resource for students and advisors) is now probably the most comprehensive source of information anywhere for international students coming to the UK.
- It had nearly 1.4million visits over the year and a survey of the website found that 79% of students said they found what they were looking for easily, 89% said it was easy to understand and 97% of those who responded said they would recommend the website to a friend or colleague. Students said:

“This website has provided me with the best information regarding visas and everything. It has helped me throughout the process of being able to track what I needed.”

“I had gone to a number of government websites to find what I was looking for until I found UKCISA. I just wish I could have known about it sooner!”
- Over 150 international students entered photos and captions summarising how their experiences in the UK were indeed helping to ‘change their lives for good’, with the best dozen used in our anniversary calendar, others submitted blogs and stories for our website around this theme or with advice for other students.
- Over 3,000 students or their parents phoned our advice line during the year with a range of queries on issues relating to visa issues, fee status, work rights either during or after studies or for general advice on technical rules or where to go for additional advice and support.
- Students continue to engage with us directly through social media with regular messages, comments and tweets. Our combined social media reach is 448,650. This year, we ran our first live Facebook chat and answered a range of students’ queries.
- We also continued to work very closely with the National Union of Students (NUS), helped to judge and in fact presented their International Student Awards and liaised very closely with them over evidence to the Migration Advisory Committee.
- We were delighted to be able offer free membership for students’ unions this year resulting in nearly 50 new SU members and a range of students’ unions received UKCISA grants during the year so that they could manage pilot projects in their institutions.

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Over 150 international students entered photos and captions summarising how their experiences in the UK were indeed helping to ‘change their lives for good’

Grants

A total of over 50 projects have now been completed in our 50th anniversary year, representing an incredibly rich bank of resources for staff throughout the sector.

Once again we supported a wide range of research and pilot projects in HE and FE institutions throughout the UK, with additional financial assistance from the

Scottish Government to enable a wide range of Scottish institutions to be supported. 1,000 copies of comprehensive reports on those projects accomplished in 2017 were

distributed to all member institutions and are also now featured on UKCISA's website. Reports on 2017-18 projects and research will be disseminated later in the year.

2017–18 Pilot Projects:

Mindfulness for international students

Bangor University

Culturally Informed Assessments Toolkit (CIAT)

University of Bedfordshire

This is me

Bridgend College

Career Start Canterbury: preparing international students for the global workplace through sustainable 'job ready' activities, civic service and professional networking

Canterbury Christ Church University

Enriching international students' understanding of critical thinking and problem solving skills through gamification

Greenwich University

Generating international student internship opportunities with local SMEs

University of Portsmouth

The international student food project

University of Reading

Preparing for placement: developing a cultural toolkit to improve the experience of both international students and placement providers

The University of Sheffield

Lego Serious Play: Supporting the engagement and experience of international students in group-work activities

University of Strathclyde

Supporting International Doctoral Student Writing

University of Sussex

Healthy body, healthy mind. Hands on nutrition for international students.

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

2017–18 Research Projects:

Mental health and wellbeing of global access students

The University of Edinburgh

Pathways to success - critical resources and approaches for academic success, as identified by the experiences of international pathways students, their educators and counsellors

University of Kent

Social support through transitions: a student-led and cross-institutional investigation of international postgraduate student experiences

The Open University and Dundee University

International students' perceptions of personal tutoring – are we hitting the mark?

University of Plymouth

The impact of Brexit on the International Student Experience at Stirling

University of Stirling Students' Union

An ethnographic examination with research of the experience of international students living in the private rented sector to guide further practice

University of Sussex

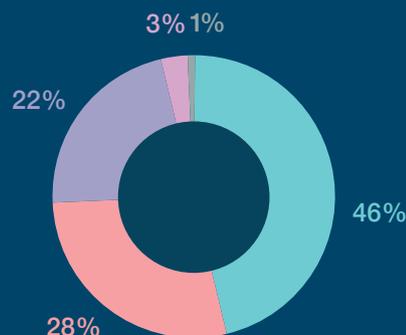
Finance and funding

The vast majority of UKCISA's income (74%) comes from our members, either through annual subscriptions, attendance at training sessions or the annual conference.

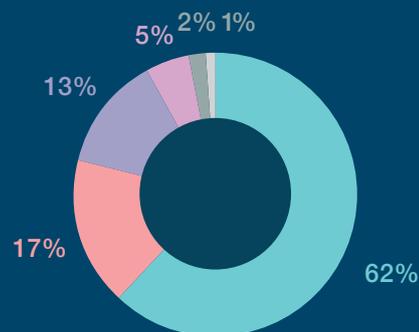
The grants from the Department for Education (DfE) and Scottish government, however, also help to ensure as wide a range of services as possible,

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

Income:	£1,519,000
Membership subscriptions	£694,000
Training and conferences	£428,000
DfE Grant	£330,000
Scottish Government Grant	£55,000
Other income	£12,000



Expenditure:	£1,408,000
Staff	£917,000
Operational costs	£191,000
Training and conferences	£187,000
Projects	£70,000
Legal, Professional and Financial	£33,000
Other costs	£10,000



Approximate figures for 2017/2018, subject to audit

**There are over
of the UKCIS,
across the UK, h
succeed and ch**

500 members
A community
helping students
change their lives

I have been delighted and indeed honoured to serve as UKCISA's President since 2015 and have taken the opportunity on any and every occasion to champion the cause of international students and the work which UKCISA does to support them.

It is an extraordinary organisation, right across the country, full of hugely committed staff who dedicate their working lives to help those international students who come to these shores (as I did myself many years ago) with so many hopes and expectations – but also of course, often needing special help to make new friends, understand and overcome complex rules and new environments.

And every time I speak – in Parliament, elsewhere in the UK or around the world – I encourage all to recognise the true value of international students to the UK and the way in which our wonderful universities and colleges and all the staff who work within them, do so much to 'change these lives for good'.

It is, however, no secret that I have, therefore, been one of the most prominent critics of some elements of the UK's recent policy towards international students – the abolition of Post-Study Work, the inclusion of students within the target to cut net migration, the impact of many recent reforms on the numbers of students coming from India and elsewhere.

But I see that as merely a passing phase as there is now so much published and incontrovertible evidence of the huge benefits which international students bring to our nation, our universities and colleges, our local communities and of the international links and influence they create.

With UKCISA's help, therefore, in ensuring each and every one is well advised and supported and as we approach a re-positioning of the UK in the world, I have absolutely no doubt that the next 50 years will see this mission of ours as central to the UK's success and critical to our future in an increasingly challenging but inter-dependant world.

With congratulations on the past and the warmest of best wishes for the future.



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



“

Studying in the UK has changed my life for good. It has allowed me to experience a truly international education.

I've been able to compete and communicate with brilliant students from all over the world. The life I have experienced here has made me understand the world more widely and understand people more deeply. My university and students' union supported me throughout every step, I give them a thumbs up!”

Chuxi Yang, studying Computer Science at University of Sheffield

The UKCISA community has achieved so much together for international students in the past 50 years.

1968

5 July 1968 inaugural meeting of UKCOSA

1973

UK joins EEC



34,000 students

1971

Jack Straw as President of NUS heads delegation to protest fee-discrimination

1979

"Full-cost" fees announced for all overseas students starting their courses in 1980

1985

UKCOSA first receives grant-in-aid from Department for Education and Science

1986

UKCOSA Model Code of Practice published



1984

Visa problems for Sri Lankan Tamils and Libyan students

1982

Exacerbation of foreign exchange problems and restrictions faced by Ugandan and Iranian students.

1989

British Council Code of Practice and UKCOSA Manual first published

1992

UKCOSA seminar on Planning for Crisis

184,000 students



2002

Parts of the education sector benefit from a UKCOSA-proposed block exemption order

2005

UKCOSA proposes and government funds £50,000 Tsunami Assistance Scheme for International Students (TASIS)

2004

Home Secretary David Blunkett announces measures "to crack down on bogus colleges and bogus students"

1999

Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) to attract more international students to the UK launched

1998

South East Asia currency crisis affects, amongst others, large numbers of overseas students

2007

UKCOSA: The Council for International Education' changes name to 'UK Council for International Student Affairs' (UKCISA)

417,000 students



2016

UKCISA publish key principles for Brexit

2018

UKCISA's 50th Anniversary

2012

Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) scheme abolished

2011

Work prohibited for international students at private institutions. Multiple college closures and 80% downturn in private students

2010

Coalition government announces policy to 'cut net migration from hundreds of thousands to tens of thousands'

438,000 students...

Latest estimates suggest that total earnings from international students to institutions and local communities are in excess of £15 billion annually and support over 250,000 jobs.

2015

Five Parliamentary committees recommend students should be removed from net migration target

2013

Credibility interviews introduced

2009

Tier 4 goes live at end of March

What part will we all play in shaping the next 50 years for international students in the UK?



#ChangingLivesForGood

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