

International Students Studying in the UK: Guidance for HE Providers

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QAA

QAA's remit

- To safeguard the public interest in sound standards of UK HE qualifications
- To inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of UK HE

The context: International students in the UK

- 2° most popular country of destination after the US (10% & 18% respectively – OECD 2011)
- 2° highest % of international students in HE after Australia (15.3% & 21.5% - OECD 2011)
- 428,230 non-UK domiciled students in UK HEIs (+ 5.5% in 1yr, + > 50% in a decade – HESA 2012)
 - 298,110 non-EU domiciled students (+6% in 1yr)
- 503,795 'off shore' students (more than 100% increase in 3 yrs – HESA 2012)

Successes

- ~80% satisfied with overall experience (ISB & NSS)
 - 81% would recommend UK HE v. 75% international index (ISB 2010)
- *Outcomes from institutional audit (QAA 2008):*
 - 'the audit reports show that institutions are aware of the substantial learning and cultural issues involved in recruiting large numbers of international students', and
 - 'have been keeping support services under review in order to enhance the experience of international students'

Challenges

- ~20% still not satisfied:
- Intensifying global competition for talents + increasingly discerning prospective students
- Increasingly varied range of expectations and needs
- *Thematic enquiries* (QAA 2009):
 - Concerns about inadequate English language and academic skills and support , IGA on UK HE culture

International students studying in the UK – Guidance for UK HEIs

- Developed by QAA in collaboration with the sector
- It aims to provide a UK-wide set of shared principles
 - consolidating existing practice, while assisting HEIs in meeting the challenges of an internationalised student body
- The guidance is supportive, not prescriptive
 - recognises the diversity/autonomy of HEIs
 - not currently part of the UK Quality Code
 - point of reference for reviewing/enhancing HEIs own practice

The Guidance (continued)

- It is structured around the ‘typical’ international student journey
- Not premised on a clear-cut definition setting aside international students as an homogenous group
 - It acknowledges the diversity amongst international students
 - It acknowledges communalities between all students
 - It defines international students simply as non-UK students
 - It focuses on ‘on-shore’ international students only
 - (‘off-shore’ students are covered by *Quality Code Part B Chapter 10: Management of Collaborative Arrangements*)

Overarching principles

- **An inclusive environment**
 - Institutions should seek to provide an inclusive environment where the needs of international students are considered and met alongside those of other students in an integrated and embedded way
- **Continuous improvement**
 - Institutions should continuously reflect on and review their policies and practices, actively seeking and using feedback from students, to make improvements
- **Student engagement**
 - Institutions should ensure that international students are represented in student engagement activities and that their feedback is taken into account in making enhancements to existing policies and practice.

Overarching principles

- **Clear and accessible information**

- Institutions should ensure that the information they provide at all stages of the student lifecycle is clear, accessible, accurate, and consistent across the institution

- **Shared responsibility**

- Responsibility for meeting the needs of a diverse student body should rest with all staff within an institution, not just those with a specific remit for managing international students' experiences.

- **Staff development**

- All staff working with international students should have access to appropriate training and development opportunities, which support them in recognising and addressing the particular needs of international students.

What's in the guidance?

- **Marketing and recruitment**
- **Admissions**
- **Pre-arrival**
- **Enrolment, orientation and student services**
- **Academic induction and learning and teaching**
- **Employability and careers information**
- **Graduation and departure**

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