
4.3 United Kingdom

The British Council promotes British culture, language, and education and training services overseas. The Council is represented in more than 90 countries, where it runs 162 offices, 118 libraries and 56 English teaching centres.

The Education Counselling Service (ECS), an arm of the British Council, actively promotes British post-secondary education, as well as providing students with counselling and referral services. It is funded in part by subscriptions from British universities, polytechnics and other institutions.

The ECS has 162 subscribers, including almost all universities and polytechnics in the United Kingdom as well as many colleges of art, technology, higher and further education and independent institutions. The service operates in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Brunei, South Korea and Cyprus.

The British Council has outlined a "Code of Practice," consisting of 82 points pertaining to international student recruitment policy, issues and practices. Polytechnics and private language schools must undergo accreditation by the British Council.

The United Kingdom introduced full-cost fees for international students in the mid-1980s. While this initially had a negative impact on the number of international students studying in the United Kingdom, this number quickly recovered. (It should be noted that European Community (EC) countries have made an agreement by which all member states charge "home student" fees to students from EC countries.)

Student Visas

Nationals from Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore do not require visas to enter the United Kingdom for temporary purposes such as studying. They can make their case for entry directly to the immigration officer on arrival in Britain.

To qualify as a student, the person must be on a full-time course of study, normally involving at least 15 hours of daytime study a week, and must demonstrate the capability to support and accommodate him or herself and dependants without working. International students may, however, undertake part-time employment (of no more than 20 hours a week) with the approval of the Department of Employment.

If the individual intends to remain in the United Kingdom for more than six months, a medical certificate may be required.