



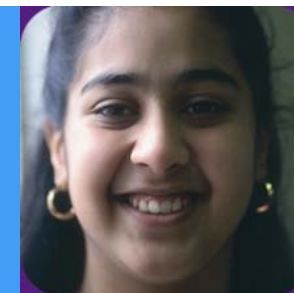
# International Postgraduates

## Supporting International Students



**UKCOSA**  
The Council for International Students

# About UKCOSA



- The national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them
- Provides training, information & advice
- Lobbies on behalf of I/S
- A national charity founded in 1968
- Supported by the Department for Education & Skills
- All UK universities, most internationally active FE and HE colleges and many SUs are members, giving their staff access to UKCOSA services



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# Overview



- About international students in the UK - demographics
- Research about international students' concerns
- Issues for international postgraduates
- How do we support international postgraduates?
- Support from UKCOSA



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# Quiz



1. What is an international student?
2. What proportion of postgraduate students in UK HE are international?
3. From which five countries do most international postgraduate students come?
4. How are most international postgraduates funded?



# Where international PGs are from



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN  
UK UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES  
**BROADENING  
OUR HORIZONS**   
REPORT OF THE UKCOSA SURVEY



[www.ukcosa.org.uk/survey](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/survey)



# Students' concerns

Before arrival students worried about

- accommodation,
- finance (PGR)
- adjusting to UK study methods (PGT)
- language (social & academic)

During their stay students worried about

- language (esp academic, esp E Asians) & assessments (PGT)
- homesickness/isolation (those with UK friends were happier with their stay)
- finance (esp PGR)
- finding work, balancing work & study
- immigration issues (esp PGT)



# UNITE International Student Experience Report 2006



- Students want electronic info about accommodation
- International students are less in debt and less worried about debt than UK students
- Home & international students have similar levels of concern about academic adjustment
- 10% of I/S said their English was “basic”
- Home students find it even harder mixing with international students than vice versa
- Both home and I/S value meeting students from other countries & cultures







## Practical issues

- Finance: high fees, currency fluctuations, money transfer & banking problems, budgeting, lack of safety net
- Accommodation: location, cost, quality, integration, 12 month lets, institution-managed v. private sector
- Visas (esp length of visa for PhD)
- Working: during and after study
- Accompanying dependants





# Social integration issues

- Who makes the first move?
- Where and who do students meet? In seminars, labs, accommodation?
- Integration v. support from co-nationals
- Alienation from pub/drinking culture
- Supporting accompanying family members
- Integration with local communities





# Academic issues

- Adjusting to a new academic culture, e.g. “critical thinking”
- Academic writing - discourse styles, structures, referencing
- Study skills e.g. reading lists, independent study
- Libraries
- Assessment issues





# Current policy issues

- Prime Minister's Initiative Phase 2
- Home Office's Points Based System
- Opportunities to work after studying (NB employer awareness)





## What UK institutions, unions, students and staff can do

- Are international students involved and represented?
- Inclusive events in dept, union, etc
- Feedback: what do IS think of...?
- Monitoring: pass and completion rates
- Orientation and on-going support, guides to UK student life, peer pairing/buddying schemes
- Cultural awareness training



# Resources from UKCOSA



If your Union is a member of UKCOSA, you have access to:

- The UKCOSA Manual & regular updates
- The UKCOSA advice line
- UKCOSA training & conference
- A network of colleagues at other institutions

Free access for all to:

- the UKCOSA website including 20 Guidance Notes and FAQs
- UKCOSA also operates an advice line for students (but direct to ISA or website first) - NB not a substitute for UKCOSA membership



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