



Study UK and the UK Agent Quality Framework

British Council Agent and School Counsellor Conference

Bangkok, January 2025

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Session

- The British Universities International Liaison Association
- Study UK: current sector challenges and our key messages for you
- The Agent Quality Framework

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Introducing BUILA

The British Universities International Liaison Association (BUILA)

- Providing a strong and unifying international practitioner voice, representing a broad and diverse sector.
- Helping to shape and influence future policy at a national, regional and local government level, through lobbying and work with government departments.
- Helping to unify the sector by supporting, enabling and encouraging collaborations with partners at key stages of the student journey.
- Strengthening the sector by enabling the sharing of best practice and enhancing the knowledge and skills of our members.

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Study UK – Sector Updates

Many UK Universities saw a challenging year:

- Recent change of UK Government
- Visa policy changes, i.e. removal of dependent visas
- Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) review of Graduate Route Visa
- Global competition

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Study UK – Sector Updates

Our messages:

- The UK offers the chance to be a part of an international student community close to home.
- Future employability opportunities.
- Studying in the UK offers students the chance to live and work in the UK for a time afterwards
- The UK offers outstanding higher education at a fraction of the price of other world-class destinations
- There are many funding options available for international students who want to study in the UK.
- Student Well-being and Safety: Highlighting affordable accommodation, mental health support, and campus safety given some unrests in some UK campuses.

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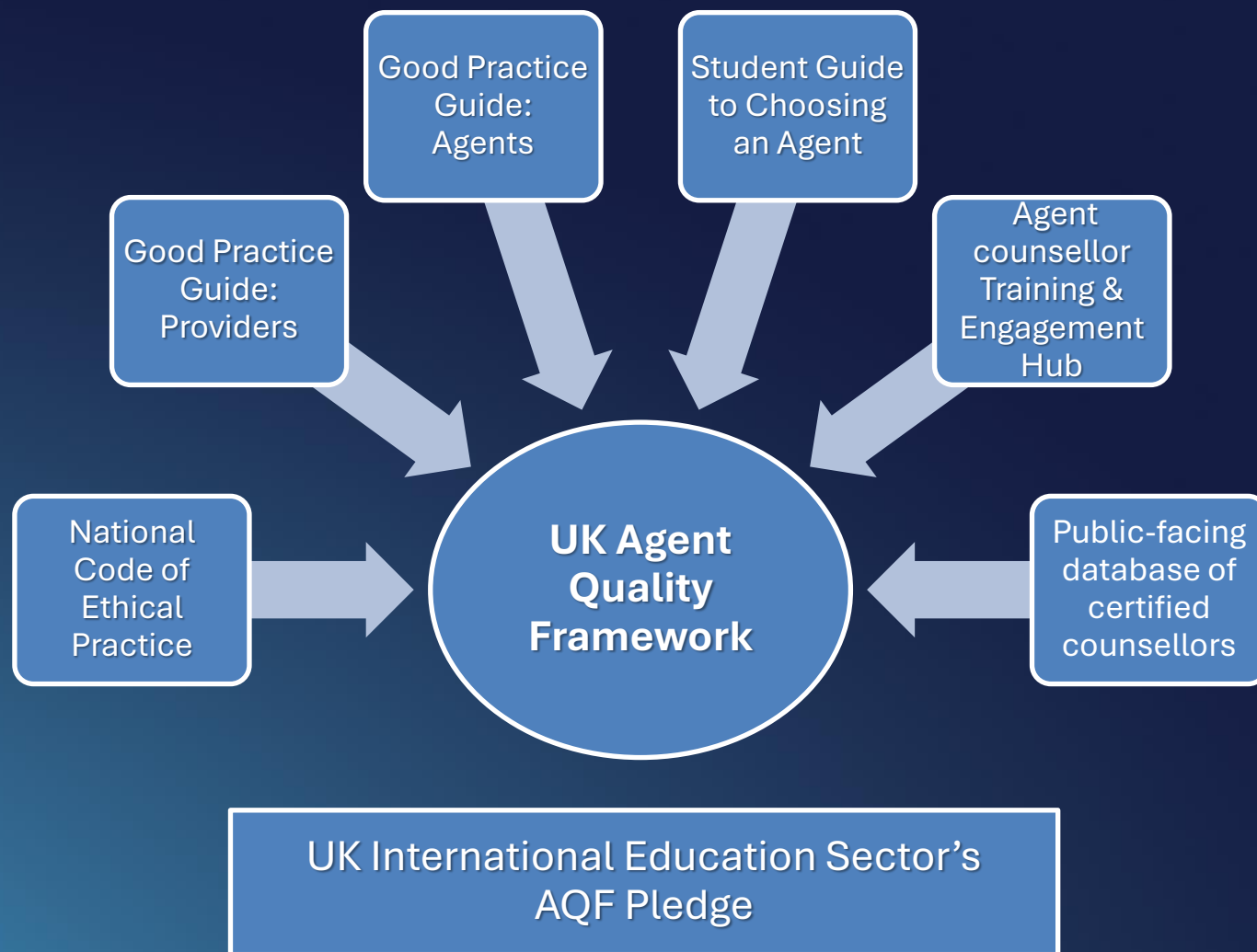


What is the UK Agent Quality Framework (AQF)?

- The UK Agent Quality Framework (AQF) is a framework to ensure greater transparency and accountability between education providers and contracted education agents.
- The AQF applies to education providers and student visa sponsors who use student-facing agents in their international recruitment processes and the agents.
- September 2024, in response to the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendation, the new UK Government announced its intention to **mandate** the AQF.

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What is the New Government Saying About the AQF

- **Government to include the AQF within the sponsor guidance/requirements**
- **Increased Transparency through:**
 - List of education agents contracted with the HE sector
 - All providers are required to publish the lists of their agents on their websites
 - Working on adding the Agent name to the CAS
- **Mechanisms to Ensure Agent & Education Provider AQF Compliance**
 - UKVI will seek assurance that the university has signed up to the AQF and is applying it to their agents
 - Checklist for Education providers to demonstrate how they are progressing against the pledge
 - Regular reporting to DFE & Home Office on key metrics to demonstrate that the AQF is working

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UK International Education Sector's Pledge

Pledge shows UK unity for Agent Framework

Posted on Dec 5, 2023 by Nick Cuthbert

Posted in Immigration, News, Recruitment & Agents, under Europe.

Tagged with BUILA, UK.

Bookmark the permalink.

The UK higher education sector's commitment to the UK Agent Quality Framework and the National Code of Ethical Practice has been demonstrated at the BUILA winter conference.



More than 28 British universities have signed a pledge to follow the national Agent Quality Framework.

- Education providers commit to:
 - Empower student choice and enable informed decision-making
 - Ensure good agent governance and professionalism
 - Promote ethical agent practices, professional knowledge and competency
 - Increase transparency and accountability

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A Student Guide to Choosing an Education Agent

Study UK

A student guide to choosing an education agent
study-uk.britishcouncil.org

A good education agent will help you to:

Step 1
Decide if the UK is the best study destination for you

Step 2
Understand what course options are available

Step 3
Identify institutions that meet your academic and lifestyle preferences

Step 4
Apply to your chosen institutions

Step 5
Gather and submit the documents you need for your visa

Step 6
Prepare to come and study in the UK

They will have:

Completed the British Council Education Agent Training Programme
Agents that have completed the training are listed on the British Council website: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/agents-counsellors/database>

Committed to the National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents
The National Code sets out the behaviours and values that are expected of education agents that represent the UK.

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BUILA **UKCISA** **UK Council for International Student Affairs** **Universities UK International** **GREAT** **BRITISH COUNCIL**

GREAT **BRITISH COUNCIL**

Here are some questions to ask that will help you select a good education agent

Questions and expected answers from education agents

Can you tell me about the education opportunities offered in the UK?
A well trained agent will explain the UK education system, the different regions of the UK and the schools/colleges/universities they represent. They should give you a good understanding of the many options open to you in the UK.

Do you comply with the UK's national Code of Ethical Practice for UK Agents?
They should know what the National Code is and show you a copy. Familiarise yourself with the National Code to see how your education agent is doing.

Are you paid a commission by the schools/colleges/universities that you promote?
Most schools/colleges/universities pay a commission for the agent to represent them, and this covers the agent's operating costs, so the answer will usually be 'yes'. Regardless of whether the agent is paid a commission or not, they should give you high-quality and unbiased advice.

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A Student Guide to Choosing an Education Agent

Encourages students who are thinking of studying in the UK and using an agent to:

- Check whether their counsellor has **completed the UK agent and counsellor training and committed to the National Code of Ethical Practice**
- Check if their **counsellor is listed on the British Council's Certified Counsellor Database** and the agency is listed as an official partner of the institution.
- **Expect transparency over the fees paid by the institution and any additional costs.**

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A Student Guide to Choosing an Education Agent

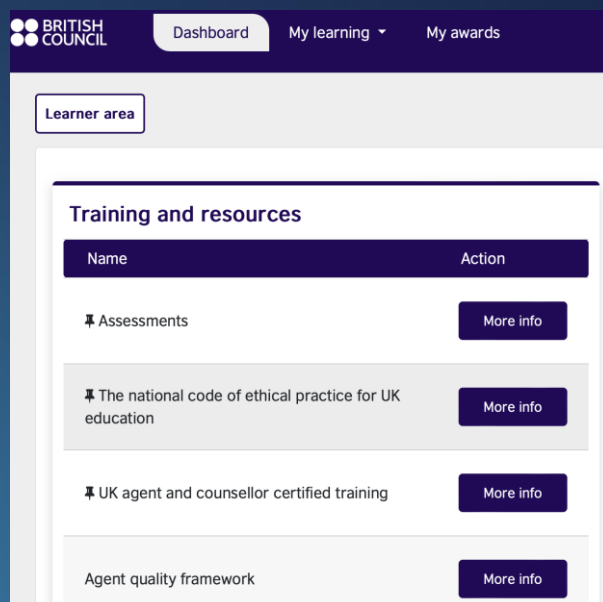
- **Expect to be 'guided' but not 'pushed'** to a specific institution.
- **Understand how to register a complaint against an agent** if their service falls short of expected standards. Contact your institution if you cannot resolve an issue directly with the agent you are using.

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UK Agent and Counsellor Training

British Council agent and counsellor training provides individuals with in-depth knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination, so they can help and support UK-bound students effectively.



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UK Agent and Counsellor Training

Modules include:

- why choose the UK
- the UK education systems
- preparing students for a UK education
- student experience, accommodation & cost of living
- values and ethics
- visas and immigration
- employability, career services and post-study options
- tuition fees, finances and the payment landscape.

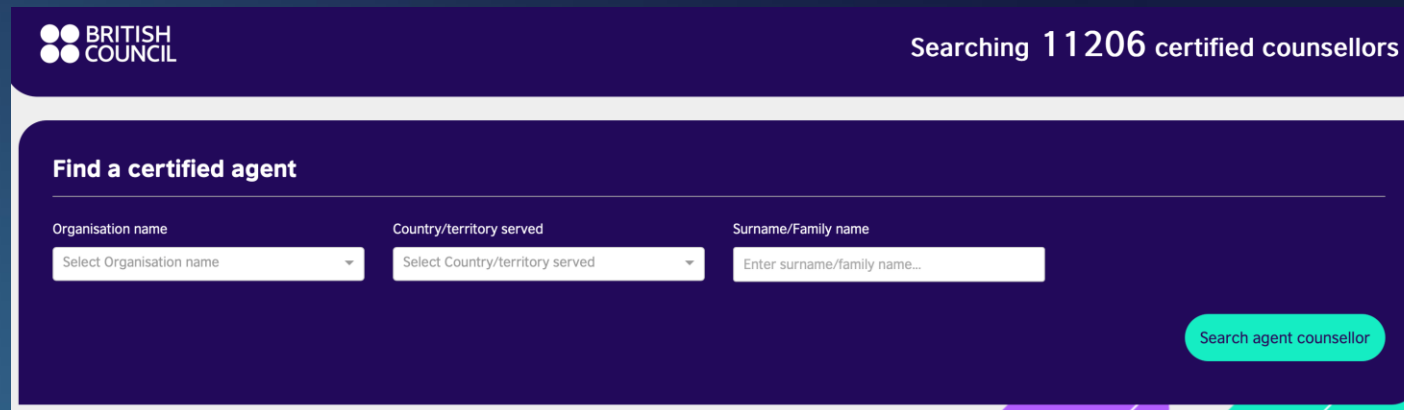


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UK Agent and Counsellor Engagement Hub

- The UK certified agents and counsellor's database lists all counsellors who have successfully passed the assessments and agreed to the National Code of Conduct.
- Both education providers and students can check their chosen agent is certified.
- Note the British Council only certifies agents for their knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination, and does not regulate, accredit or endorse agents.



The screenshot shows the search interface of the UK Agent and Counsellor Engagement Hub. At the top, the British Council logo is on the left, and the text "Searching 11206 certified counsellors" is on the right. Below this is a section titled "Find a certified agent". It contains three input fields: "Organisation name" with a dropdown menu showing "Select Organisation name", "Country/territory served" with a dropdown menu showing "Select Country/territory served", and "Surname/Family name" with a text input field showing "Enter surname/family name...". A green "Search agent counsellor" button is located at the bottom right of the search area.

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UK Agent and Counsellor Engagement Hub

- At the beginning of 2025, the hub had over 33,500 users. 15,594 of these users were certified, meaning they had completed the course, confirmed an individual understanding of the National Code of Ethical Practice for Education Agents, and agreed to be listed on the **global database of UK-certified counsellors**.
- The hub also provides access to resources and the latest news and developments from the UK education sector.
- The British Council shares regular news and updates with counsellors via the hub's announcement function. This includes the latest policy updates as well as news from the UK education sector.
- There's also a [global calendar of events](#) so counsellors can see which events (in-person and virtual) are happening in their region.

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Communicating and demonstrating your commitment to the AQF

- Demonstrate your commitment by following the principles of the AQF, in particular the National Code, through your agent provider contracts.
- Use the Good Practice Guide for Agents to adopt sector-wide best practices.
- Ensure your counsellors serving UK-bound students complete the British Council's UK agent and counsellor training and are certified
 - The training certifies individual counsellors for their knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination. It does not certify/validate an agency.
 - Certified counsellors can use the 'I am a UK Certified Counsellor' badge to demonstrate their knowledge of UK education and commitment to the AQF.
- Share the AQF Student Student Guide with your students
- Follow the British Council's LinkedIn page for education agents and counsellors: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/britishcouncil-agents-counsellors/>

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UK Agent Quality Framework – Useful links

- [The National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents](#)
- [Good Practice Guide for UK Education Agents Partnering for Quality](#)
- [Student Guide to Choosing an Education Agent](#)
- [UK agent and counsellor Training and Engagement Hub](#)
- [Study UK Education Agents Guidance Page](#)

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How to get involved with BUILA

BUILA is open to UK Higher Education Institution members only, but there are other ways to get involved.

- There are 12 interest groups where members meet to foster knowledge exchange, provide expert updates and share expertise.
- Engage with BUILA Interest Group Chair and wider members to offer market intelligence and volunteer as a speaker during online meetings.
- BUILA run regular training programmes, such as “Working with International Schools” and “Working with Agents”.
- Continue to engage with, feedback and share the Agent Quality Framework, embedding into your practices and advertising guides to students.

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Thank you

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