

In partnership with the British Council

# UK's education agent quality assurance framework

East Asia

March 2023

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# Introductions

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# What will we cover today

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## Plan for the session:

- Latest news from the UK
- Education agent partner quality assurance framework
- Agent good practice guide
- Student guide to selecting the right agent
- Agent engagement hub and training
- Q&A

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# BUILA

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- Represents 142 UK universities
- Lobby's the UK government on policy
- Creates Networking & Information Exchanging Groups
  - For Regions all around the world – staff who work in them
  - For Marketing staff
  - For Partnerships & TNE
- Professional development of international staff
- Conducts research to help advise universities on international issues
- Part of this research Quality Framework to ensure quality of student experience

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# Latest News

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## UK sector update:

- UK is open and welcomes your students
- Students need to plan and apply early - courses closing earlier.
- Make students aware of the full process: English testing, CAS processing, visa application, accommodation.
- Graduate Route and Skilled Worker route offers the opportunity to work in the UK after studies
- Improve employability early - volunteer, part-time work, network
- Make use of university careers service - careers fairs, CV and interview guidance

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# Latest News

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## Bringing dependents to the UK:

If your students are coming with dependents, it is important they consider and prepare the following **BEFORE** arrival:

- Accommodation that is suitable for their family
- Schooling or creche arrangements for children under 18
- Inform the university who they are bringing as dependents
- Students need to demonstrate required funds - money cannot be recycled

Your role as their agent is vital in ensuring they have all the relevant paperwork prepared. The UKVI can provide further guidance.

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# Quality Assurance Framework



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# Quality Assurance Framework

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## What has been done already:

- Good practice guide for providers (2021)
- National code of ethical practice (2021)
- Good practice guide for education agents (Dec 2022)
- Student guide to choosing an education agent (Dec 2022)
- Online training for education agents (Dec 2022)
- Education agent online hub (Dec 2022)

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# Agent Guide: Overview



'Without agents it would be very difficult to convert and get students to the UK. There are so many steps in applying to a university overseas and the agents can help answer questions saving reps a lot of time.'

**UK HEI INTERNATIONAL STAFF**

'I may only make an investment in my education of this kind once in my life so I want to receive the very best possible counselling for my future education and for studying in the UK.'

**International student**

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# Agent Guide: Content

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## STUDENT PERSPECTIVE:

Students want (and expect) that the agent who is representing the provider has been vetted by experts and formally approved to act on the provider's behalf. They expect the agent to have been adequately trained by the provider and have the skills and support in place to deliver an excellent service on their behalf.

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# Agent Guide: Content



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# Agent Guide: Key Takeaways

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## Partnering:



### EXPERT TIP

Institutions are likely to direct you to a prospective education agent questionnaire when you approach them. Make sure you have researched the institution and the responses you give are relevant and describe how a partnership with your company will enhance quality of services their prospective students receive.

What can you do to add value to the institutions apart from applications? Data, intelligence, diversity, streamlined processes, digital presence?

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# Agent Guide: Key Takeaways

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## EXPERT TIP

Working with a new institution involves a two-way partnership and you need to have confidence you're partnering with the right institution for your business. During the selecting phase do not be afraid to ask questions and discuss marketing plans, resource requirements, training needs, institutional support, expectations, use of sub-agent frameworks and expected service levels on their side etc.

The relationship between agent and institution works best as a **partnership**. Make sure you set jointly-agreed goals that work for both of you and you are clear on the support provided by the institution.

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# Agent Guide: Student Feedback

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We asked students how education agents could improve their services?  
Here's what they said:



## INSIGHT:

Be more transparent about the overall process and fees.

**IMPLICATION:** Note the earlier comments about having a student-education agent contract, or signed declaration, which list the services provided and any fees that you may charge the student. You do not have to say how much you receive from the partner institution, but it is important that you tell them that you have an agreement with the partner institution, and you will receive a payment if the student enrolls with them.

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# Agent Guide: Student Feedback

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We asked students how education agents could improve their services?  
Here's what they said:



## INSIGHT:

Provide expertise and advice but allow students to make the decision.

**IMPLICATION:** This insight influenced some of the content of the National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Providers. We do understand that you are a commercial entity, so this is not always an easy one to navigate, but note it is something students are aware of. As word-of-mouth is your number one marketing tool, it is in your interest to 'guide' rather than 'place' students.

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# Student Guide

The student guide encourages students who are thinking of studying in the UK to:

- Check whether the agent has completed the British Council **training** and committed to the National Code of Ethical Practice
- Check if agents are listed as **official partners** of the institution
- Expect **transparency** over the fees paid by the institution and any additional costs
- **Question** any offers to hold money or pay fees on their behalf
- Expect to be **'guided'** but not **'pushed'** to a specific institution.

**Study UK**

**A student guide to choosing an education agent**

[study-uk.britishcouncil.org](http://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** UK Council for International Student Affairs  
**UKCISA** Universities UK International  
**GREAT** BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND  
**BRITISH COUNCIL**

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# Agent Engagement Hub

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One stop shop for education agents:

- Online training programme
- Resources – Code of Ethics, guides, marketing materials
- Event calendar (and sign up)
- Announcements
- Database of certified agents

Future: Two-way communications, forums, etc.



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# Agent Engagement Hub: Training

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## Listening to your feedback:

You told us...	So now...
The online training was too expensive	It is now free for everyone (including assessment and certification)
The content was outdated	All content has been refreshed and new content added
The training took too long	Total learning time has been reduced by 25%
It was not fit for purpose for senior / experienced counsellors	You can skip content and directly access the assessment if you feel you already have the necessary knowledge in certain areas
The certified training still had value in your markets	You will receive an official British Council certificate and be listed on the new public-facing database of certified agents

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# Agent Engagement Hub:

The screenshot displays the Agent Engagement Hub dashboard. The top navigation bar includes the British Council logo, a 'Dashboard' button, and dropdown menus for 'My learning' and 'My awards'. On the right, there are icons for notifications, a user profile, and a help icon.

The main content area is divided into two columns:

- Training and resources:** A list of resources with 'Details' buttons:
  - The national code of ethical practice for UK education
  - UK agent and counsellor certified training and assessment
  - Agent quality framework
  - Marketing the UK: Study UK marketing resources
  - UK education organisations that support agents and counsellors
  - UK government organisationsA 'View all' button is located at the bottom of this section.
- Events:** A list of events with 'View more' and 'More info' buttons:
  - The EDUGATE Winter 2023 fair - Cairo - Egypt (Event starts on 7 March 2023 12:00 AM GMT)A 'View all events' button is located at the bottom of this section.

A 'Help' button is located in the bottom right corner of the dashboard.

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<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents/training-agents>

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# Why is this important?

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- The UK is developing a world-leading framework to deliver a fantastic experience for international students using education agents to support their choice to study in the UK.
- The framework is rigorous without being overly regulated.
- It is inexpensive and not too time-consuming.
- We need everyone – agents, institutions, students, government and sector bodies - to work together to ensure we remain ‘world-leading’.

## What next?

Register on the British Council agent hub:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents/training-agents>

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# Q&A

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Thank you so much for your time.  
Any questions?

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