
Code of practice for members and subscribers

Preamble

The primary objective of UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) is to promote the welfare and interests of international students in UK institutions. It does so in part by offering services to members and subscribers organisations, which may be educational institutions or other organisations and individuals with an interest in international students. UKCISA seeks to promote best practice amongst its members and the education sector as a whole.

Membership of UKCISA does not imply any form of endorsement or accreditation of the standard of provision of an institution. However, member institutions are expected to behave ethically and responsibly towards their students and towards other educational institutions. Organisations which do not act in accordance with the principles set out below may be refused access to UKCISA as members, subscribers or other users of its services, and membership or subscription status may be terminated where an organisation or individual is found to be in serious breach of them. The Code below principally addresses the behaviour of educational institutions, and therefore not all parts will be relevant to all members. Members which are not educational institutions will be expected to act ethically within the context of their own activities, for example, by giving ethical and accurate advice, providing inclusive and accessible services for international students, respecting cultural differences and acting in such a way as to enhance the experience international students have while in the UK.

Code of Practice

Members of and subscribers to UKCISA are expected to

1. Familiarise themselves with any relevant codes of practice, such as those listed in the appendix to this code.
2. Behave ethically and responsibly towards prospective, current and past students and towards other educational institutions.
3. Offer an educational experience which is fit for purpose, clearly and accurately described to students and, where appropriate, certificated by recognised qualifications. Institutions offering “degrees” which are not accredited by a nationally recognised authority will automatically be excluded from being UKCISA members or subscribers.
4. Ensure that admissions requirements are such as to maintain appropriate academic standards, and to ensure that international students admitted to courses have a reasonable expectation of successful completion of the course.
5. Offer sufficient levels of information, advice and support services to international students to enable them to make an appropriate choice of course and institution; to prepare for their time abroad; to complete the course successfully; and to progress onwards to the next stage of education or employment.
6. Ensure that students are given appropriate opportunities to experience the wider social and cultural benefits of an international education, through meaningful contact with UK students and local communities.

7. Acknowledge that the conduct of any person acting as an agent of the institution is the responsibility of that institution and must be properly trained, managed and monitored. Ensure that advisers and consultants engaged by the institution provide students with accurate, adequate and timely information and advice. They should also ensure that any charges levied are proportional and clearly stated in advance.
8. Ensure students receive clear and detailed information about fees and other costs relating to their course of study, with reasonable advance notice given of any increases. Where deposits are charged, refund policies should be explicit and refund payments should not be subject to undue delays.
9. Be committed to the provision of staff development and resources sufficient to ensure the delivery of adequate levels of academic and other services to international students
10. Inform students of the channels for raising complaints both informally and formally within the institution, and of any avenues of complaint open to them outside it, should their complaints not be satisfactorily resolved internally.
11. Adhere to legislation, including but not limited to the UK Border Agency's requirements for sponsors under Tier 4 of the Points Based System and the requirements of the Immigration Services Commissioner for those offering immigration advice and services.

Appendix

In the UK the following codes specifically address international student issues; UKCISA members will be expected to comply with any which are relevant to them:

- British Council's Essential guide for education agents: Guide to good practice (July 2005)
- The Association of Colleges' Charter for Excellence in International Education and Training (November 2004)
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. In particular, section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning) (2004) and Section 10: Recruitment and admissions (2001)
- The UKCISA/AISA code of ethics for those advising international students (2000)
- British Council/ECS Code of professional standards and ethics (1999)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) Circular W98/100HE on overseas activities
- The CVCP (now UUK) Code of practice on recruitment & support of international students in UK higher education (1995)
- British Council/ECS Code of practice for educational institutions and overseas students (1995)
originating from UKCOSA Code of practice for responsible recruitment (1988)
- Scottish Executive Good Practice Guidelines for Scottish Tertiary Education Institutions on International Student Recruitment and Support (forthcoming)

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