

**UK Council
for International
Student Affairs**



**The University of
Nottingham**

Certificate for International Education Professionals

Student Handbook 2009-10

UKCISA

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Introduction to the Certificate

UKCISA in association with the University of Nottingham School of Education offers this programme based on UKCISA's training courses and leading to a Certificate of the University of Nottingham School of Education. The Certificate is designed to ensure that those who successfully complete it have the core competencies required by International Education Professionals to meet the needs of international students at all stages of their involvement with the institution, namely cross-cultural awareness, basic advisory skills, familiarity with the immigration and fee status regulations, an understanding of finance and funding issues for international students and of international student marketing and recruitment issues.

If you register for the Certificate, you will normally be expected to be working in the field of international education so that you can reflect on your own workplace experience in assignments.

To qualify for the award of the Certificate, you must attend seven courses and pass the six core assessments associated with them within a period of three years from your initial enrolment date. You may be granted attendance credit for courses attended up to three years before enrolment if you apply for it at the time of enrolment.

The core courses are:

1. Basic advisory skills for those working with international students
2. Basic immigration or (for 2009 only) Tier 4 (Stop Press)
3. Framework for fees (HE or FE or Scotland) *
4. Residence requirements (for fees)*
5. Funding, hardship and managing money
6. Introduction to cultural awareness and sensitivity
7. Introduction to international recruitment and marketing

* Framework for fees (HE or FE or Scotland) and residence requirements (for fees) require separate attendance but are assessed as one. The assessment will be handed out upon completion of both courses.

Course attendance

Details of the Certificate courses, including their aims and objectives, are contained in the UKCISA Training Programme, issued annually and on the UKCISA website. Early application is recommended as many courses are oversubscribed. Certificate students will not be given priority over other applicants for places on courses. When applying to attend courses, you should bear in mind the 12 week deadline period for submission of assessments, and ensure that you will be able to submit assessments for all the courses attended within the given time. We strongly recommend that you also seek an extra day study leave from your line manager immediately following the course to enable you to consolidate the learning. If you are applying for attendance credit for

courses attended up to three years before enrolment, you will need to complete the assessment within 12 weeks of enrolment and ensure that you are fully up to date using the Briefings, e-news, Manual and the website.

Exemption from course attendance on the basis of qualifications and experience

There is no provision for accreditation of prior learning within the Certificate programme as this would be excessively costly to administer. All participants must therefore submit the six assessments for the core courses. In exceptional circumstances UKCISA will allow exemption from attending a core course. If you wish to make a case for special consideration, you should contact the Director of Advice and Training at UKCISA to discuss this.

Required Reading Lists and Assessment Tasks

You will be given assessment tasks for each of the core topics. If you are receiving attendance credit for any courses you will receive assessments at the time of being enrolled on the Certificate. If you are attending the course, you will usually receive the assessment on the day of the course. The assessment you are given will include:

- details of required and optional reading
- the assessment tasks to be undertaken, with the weighting given to each question and any word limits

You should note for all modules and for the fees and immigration modules in particular, that you will be expected to base your answers on the relevant regulations as they stand at the time when you submit your assessment, not as they were at the time of the course, so it is up to you to keep up to date with any changes, using resources such as the UKCISA Briefings, e-news, the website, and the Manual.

Tutorial Support, Mentoring and Peer Support

We regret that in order to keep the costs of the Certificate down, UKCISA is not able to offer tutorial support to students on the Certificate. You will be expected to prepare your assessments on the basis of your participation in the training course and reading and reflection on associated materials. However, we encourage you to network with other Certificate students for support by getting together at training courses (ask the trainer to help identify other Certificate students).

Students are also encouraged to find a more experienced colleague, either at their own institution or elsewhere, who is willing to act as a mentor.

Study Skills and Essay Writing

The teaching for the Certificate programme does not include any study skills element. It is expected that students will have a sufficient standard of education to deal with the course material and additional reading and to submit a satisfactory standard of written work. Nevertheless, we recognise that if you have been out of education for a number of years, you may feel the need for support in this area. There are many good books available on study skills and essay writing which may be helpful, for instance:

Fabb N and Durant A (1993) *How to Write Essays, Dissertations and Theses in Literary Studies*, London: Longman

The University of Nottingham School of Education Study Skills Guide – available at: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/education/information-for-students/learning-resources/study-skills.pdf>

Marking Scales and Criteria

Since January 2005 Certificate assessments can be marked as a fail, a pass or a pass with distinction (prior to that date they were only marked as pass or fail). If you obtain a distinction in four or more papers you will be awarded a pass with distinction on the Certificate programme.

Certificate programme courses fall into two categories for the purposes of assessment:

- a) those where answers are either right or wrong.
- b) those requiring more discursive responses.

For the former, you must get more than 70% of responses right in order to pass and at least 90% in papers for a distinction.

For the latter, you must demonstrate a high standard of academic ability and reflectivity, as well as a “safe practitioner” element. Distinction, pass or fail will be determined on the basis of your performance against the criteria given below. No alphanumeric mark will be given, but feedback will indicate strengths and weaknesses. If you fail an assessment, the feedback sheet will indicate which questions need to be resubmitted.

Criteria for award of a distinction, pass and fail in discursive assessments

Fail

A student will fail an assessment if their work shows:

1. Weak organisational structures lacking in discussion and commentary.
2. A failure to demonstrate understanding of the material and an integration of theory and practice.

3. Limited interpretation lacking breadth of viewpoint or depth of perception.
4. Little or no application of present knowledge/experience to future practice.
5. An extremely limited use of sources, materials and/or reference to professional experience.
6. Unsupported statements with little use of evidence or justification to underpin them.
7. Variable presentation with errors, gaps and inconsistencies.
8. Inadequate referencing.
9. Limited understanding of how to structure advice.
10. Lack of knowledge raising doubt about competence as a safe practitioner, eg advice which is too general to be of assistance, reckless or inaccurate advice, or failure to take into account ethical issues.
11. Failure to answer all the questions.

Pass

In order to pass, a student's work must:

1. Be appropriately organised and develop an argument, showing understanding of the issues.
2. Offer a clear analysis revealing knowledge and understanding of the issues being considered, including an integration of theory and practice.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of the relevance of their present knowledge/experience to future practice.
4. Show knowledge of a reasonable range of sources, materials and/or professional experience.
5. Take an analytical rather than a purely descriptive approach to their institution's practice, where applicable, giving a critique of its strengths and weaknesses and the author's own role as a change agent within the institution.
6. Be carefully and appropriately presented, including correct and appropriate use of referencing where required.
7. Demonstrate sufficient knowledge, understanding and awareness to be considered a safe practitioner.

Distinction

A distinction will be awarded where a candidate's work meets the following additional criteria:

1. Work is well planned and has been carried out with skill.
2. Pertinent issues are identified and discussed in some depth.
3. The work includes reference to a substantial range of sources, materials and professional experience, and this material is used critically.
4. It is coherent, realistic and well-grounded in relevant literature, research/survey findings or experience.
5. Where appropriate it considers carefully the relevance of their present knowledge/experience for future practice.
6. There is a good standard of presentation, the text is fluent and easy to follow and there is appropriate referencing of sources.
7. Overall the work is of a high quality, revealing perceptive and critical insights.
8. It demonstrates knowledge and understanding of what constitutes exemplary practice.

Guidelines on the presentation of assessments

Please:

1. Use our standard template for each assignment (template at <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/training/certificate.php>) clearly showing the following information: your student number, the title of the course, the course code (e.g. P445, P470, etc.), and date attended. Please do not add your name to any of the sheets for reasons of anonymity. Include your student number on each page of the assessment.
2. Assessments must be sent electronically (preferably by email) to UKCISA's training administrator.
3. Include a word count for any questions which specify a word limit. If your answers exceed the word limit by more than 10% your paper may be returned to you unmarked. You should be able to provide a suitably detailed answer within the given limit; if you find you are exceeding it, look at your answer to see whether you have included irrelevant information which might detract from the clarity of your work.
4. Aim for your answers to be well expressed, concise, structured – and, of course, accurate. The number of marks for each question will give you an idea of the relative attention you should give to each. In non-discursive answers where no word limit is given, the marker will be assessing how clearly you would be able to advise students on these issues.
5. Choose a writing style appropriate to each question - bullet points may only be appropriate for some answers, eg to give a short list of factual points, but for others continuous text may be required - especially to provide the kind of fluent argument which would attract a distinction.
6. Include details of references and/or a bibliography with all assessments. Make your sources clear whether you are making a direct quote or summarising another author's ideas; failing to do so could be construed as plagiarism. The examiner needs to see which resources you have used and any research you have undertaken. Bibliographies should be presented in a standard format, eg the Harvard system (see page 8).
7. Do not include any appendices. Any information should be within the main body of your answer.
8. Check spelling and grammar before submitting any work. Scripts with extensive spelling and grammatical mistakes will be returned unmarked for amendment and resubmission. Scripts returned second times, which remain below the minimum standard, will be returned unmarked with no further opportunity for resubmission.
9. When quoting examples from you workplace, please do not name your institution where possible. This is to ensure that you cannot be identified from the information given.

10. Ensure that you answer **all questions** as requested.

In order to ensure you do answer all the questions, it is worth trying to create a time plan for completing your assessment and to allocate your time proportionately to questions depending on their relative weighting.

Bibliographies and references

References should be collected at the end of the essay and arranged alphabetically as follows:

For an article in a journal:

Jones K (1996) 'Counselling International Students' in *Journal of International Education* Vol 8, No 2

Or for an article in a book of essays:

Smith J (1997) Counselling International Students' in Jones K (ed) *International Education*, London: Bloggs & Co

Or for a book:

Smith J (1997) *International Education*, London: Bloggs & Co

Teams of authors should be punctuated as follows.

Smith J, Brown R, Robinson P and Another AN

If an author has two or more cited works in a year, differentiate by lower case suffixes - eg (Author, 1997a) and (Author, 1997b)

Material quoted from the internet should be quoted as above, but including details of the URL and the date on which you accessed the material, eg:

Holland M (2004 *Guide to citing Internet sources* [online]. Poole, Bournemouth University. Available from: http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/library/using/guide_to_citing_internet_sources.html [Accessed 11 September 2009].

Sources

Identify sources in the text by name (plus initials if needed to avoid confusion) and date in the form of either:

' ... quotation ... ' (Brown et al, 1996)

or As Jones (1997) observed - or similar.

Deadlines for submission of work

You will be given twelve weeks to complete the assessment from the date of receiving paper (normally on the day of the course). The submission deadline will be confirmed in the covering letter which will accompany the assessment.

It is your responsibility to make sure you are able to both attend the course and complete the assessment before the set deadlines.

Completed assignments should be emailed to: training@ukcisa.org.uk

Return of marks and feedback

You should keep a copy of any assessment you send to UKCISA as scripts will not be returned. However, after they have been assessed, you will be sent a feedback sheet with the marks given, or whether you have passed or failed questions, and some feedback. The amount of feedback will depend on the nature of the task and the subject area.

Failures and resubmissions

If you fail an assessment you will be given details of which questions need to be resubmitted and the deadline for doing so. Feedback will, where possible, indicate areas for improvement, but in cases where the subject matter allows for only a right or wrong answer, as for example with fee status or immigration regulations, only very limited feedback may be possible.

If you are asked to resubmit a question where there was a choice of questions on the original question paper, you will have the choice of resubmitting an answer for the same question or answering a different question if you prefer.

If you resubmit an assessment and fail again, you will normally be expected to re-attend the course before your final resubmission. However, in exceptional cases where re-attending the course would not address the reason for failure; you may ask to be exempted from the re-attendance requirement. However, please note that doing so will be at your own risk, and no further opportunities for resubmission will be provided after the third and final attempt.

Students with special needs

If you require any special arrangements to be made to accommodate a disability, e.g. to have assessments or course material electronically, on tape or in large print, please indicate this on your Certificate enrolment form or contact the Training Administrator to discuss your needs. If you wish to request any special arrangements affecting your assessments, please discuss them with us before completing your first assessment.

Please note that if you notify us of a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, markers will be asked to make allowances for errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

However, your work will still have to reach a threshold standard for the clear expression of information and ideas to demonstrate that you would be able to write material clearly for, or on behalf of, students. If markers consider your work does not communicate your meaning sufficiently clearly, they may ask UKCISA to return your script unmarked for you to amend and resubmit.

We will normally assume that you have access in your workplace to any necessary software such as spell checkers and speech synthesisers to help you produce your written work.

Maximum registration period and temporary withdrawal

In order to obtain the Certificate, all assessments must normally have been passed within three years of registering. However, a period of temporary withdrawal may be requested where a change in personal or professional circumstances temporarily prevent you from continuing to work towards the Certificate. Temporary withdrawal will usually be for a maximum of one year.

Regulations and Procedures

1. Application and Admission

Application for admission to the Certificate should be made to UKCISA on the Certificate enrolment form published in the Training Brochure and available in the Certificate pages of the UKCISA website. Admission to the certificate is at the discretion of UKCISA. Students will normally be expected to be able to have a sufficient standard of education to be able to produce the required written assessments, and should have recent experience of working in the field of international education.

2. Length of Registration

The Certificate must be completed within three years of the date of enrolment. The date of enrolment will be counted as the date given on the application form or, if UKCISA places the applicant on a waiting list, the date when the candidate is notified that a place has become available.

3. Credits and Levels

The certificate programme is equivalent to 30 (CATS) credits in workload. The Certificate is a Continuing Professional Development award. Since it does not test competencies it cannot be compared to an NVQ, as it is a test of knowledge rather than an academic qualification. It cannot be assigned to a level within the national qualifications framework for higher education. Its purpose is to demonstrate that those who hold it have not only attended courses, but also understood the seven core topics covering the main areas of knowledge relevant to staff working with international students.

4. Attendance

Students must attend seven courses. Exemption from the attendance requirement will normally only be available to students who have attended an equivalent UKCISA course within the last three years, and who apply for attendance credit at the time of enrolment.

5. Assessment

Students will be required to undertake additional reading for each course and to submit written assignments within twelve weeks of receiving them. The nature of the assessment method used will be determined by the course content.

6. Submission of work

Students must submit the required assessments by the deadlines and in the format prescribed in the Certificate Handbook.

Scripts will be marked and returned to students within 10-12 weeks after submission.

It is recognised that students on the course are working professionals with other demands on their time, and the submission deadlines are intended to ensure students are able to complete their assignments whilst the courses are still fresh and give reasonable flexibility, whilst ensuring an acceptable turnaround of scripts bearing in mind the constraints on markers and administrators. There is no provision for extensions of deadlines.

7. Presentation, Spelling and Grammar

Written assessments must meet a threshold standard for spelling, punctuation, grammar and presentation of work. Unsatisfactory scripts will be returned to students unmarked for amendment and resubmission. Resubmitted scripts which remain below the required standard will be returned unmarked with no further opportunity for resubmission. Although some allowances will be made for students with specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia, a threshold standard of clarity of expression will still be required. Recommended reading on study skills and essay writing is given on page 5 in the Certificate handbook.

8. Marking

For modules where answers are either right or wrong the pass mark is 70% and for a distinction it is 90%.

Modules requiring discursive responses are assessed on a distinction/pass/fail basis. The marking criteria are given in the handbook. Each question on the question paper will give an indication of the relative amount of attention that should be given to each question by indicating either the number of marks, the word limit or the weightings per question. Note that where weightings are specified these are not the marks per question, as candidates must meet the criteria for a pass across the paper as a whole.

A marking schedule is produced for each assignment covering a range of possible answers and the marks that should be awarded in each case. Markers will meet annually for general feedback, benchmarking and discussion of student feedback and the student learning experience.

9. Feedback and return of scripts

Students will be informed of their results within the timescale specified, and will normally receive written feedback. The amount and nature of feedback will depend on the subject matter and the assessment.

UKCISA reserves the right to withhold results from students who owe outstanding course or assessment fees.

10. Examiners

Courses will be assessed by UKCISA staff or external tutors and trainers employed by UKCISA. Assessments will be moderated by the University of Nottingham.

11. Criteria for award

To be eligible for the award of the Certificate, within the three year period from the initial date of enrolment students must

- a) Attend the required seven courses, or have been granted attendance credit for any previously attended.
- b) Pass all six assessments.

12. Failures and re-sits

Students who fail the assessment for a module at the first attempt will be given one opportunity to re-sit any questions which have been failed. A student who fails at the second attempt will have the option of repeat attendance at the appropriate course and a third attempt.

Failure at the third attempt will constitute final failure and will prevent completion of the requirements for the Certificate.

13. Deadlines for re-sits

First re-sits (i.e. second attempt)

Students who have submitted an assessment within the set deadline after their attendance at a course and have to resubmit all or part of this assessment will have 12 weeks after the date on which their assessed work is returned, to resubmit the appropriate work.

Second re-sits (i.e. third attempt)

Students who are taking a third re-sit and therefore have to re-attend a course and resubmit the assessment must resubmit within 12 weeks of attending the course.

All assessments, including any re-sits, must have been passed by no later than the deadline immediately following the third anniversary of the student's enrolment date. Failure to do so will constitute automatic failure to complete the Certificate.

14. Misconduct

Work submitted by a student should be his/her own work. Material from other sources must be clearly referenced as such. Collusion or plagiarism may be penalised. UKCISA reserves the right to undertake reasonable enquiries to establish whether such misconduct has taken place, including calling students to undertake a *viva voce* examination.

15. Appeals

Students have the right of appeal against the outcome of an assessment where they can show evidence of having been adversely affected by maladministration or inadequate course delivery. In cases where marks are disputed, the course moderator may be asked to mark the assessment. Appeals should be addressed

to the Chief Executive of UKCISA. In cases where a student is not satisfied with the response from UKCISA, s/he may address further complaints to the School Manager of the School of Education at the University of Nottingham.

16. Special needs

Candidates will normally be expected to conform to the deadlines and presentational requirements given, including use of a good standard of written English.

In case of special needs including specific learning disorders such as dyslexia, candidates should discuss their particular circumstances in advance with the Training Administrator at UKCISA. The decision whether to make special allowances of any sort rests with UKCISA.