

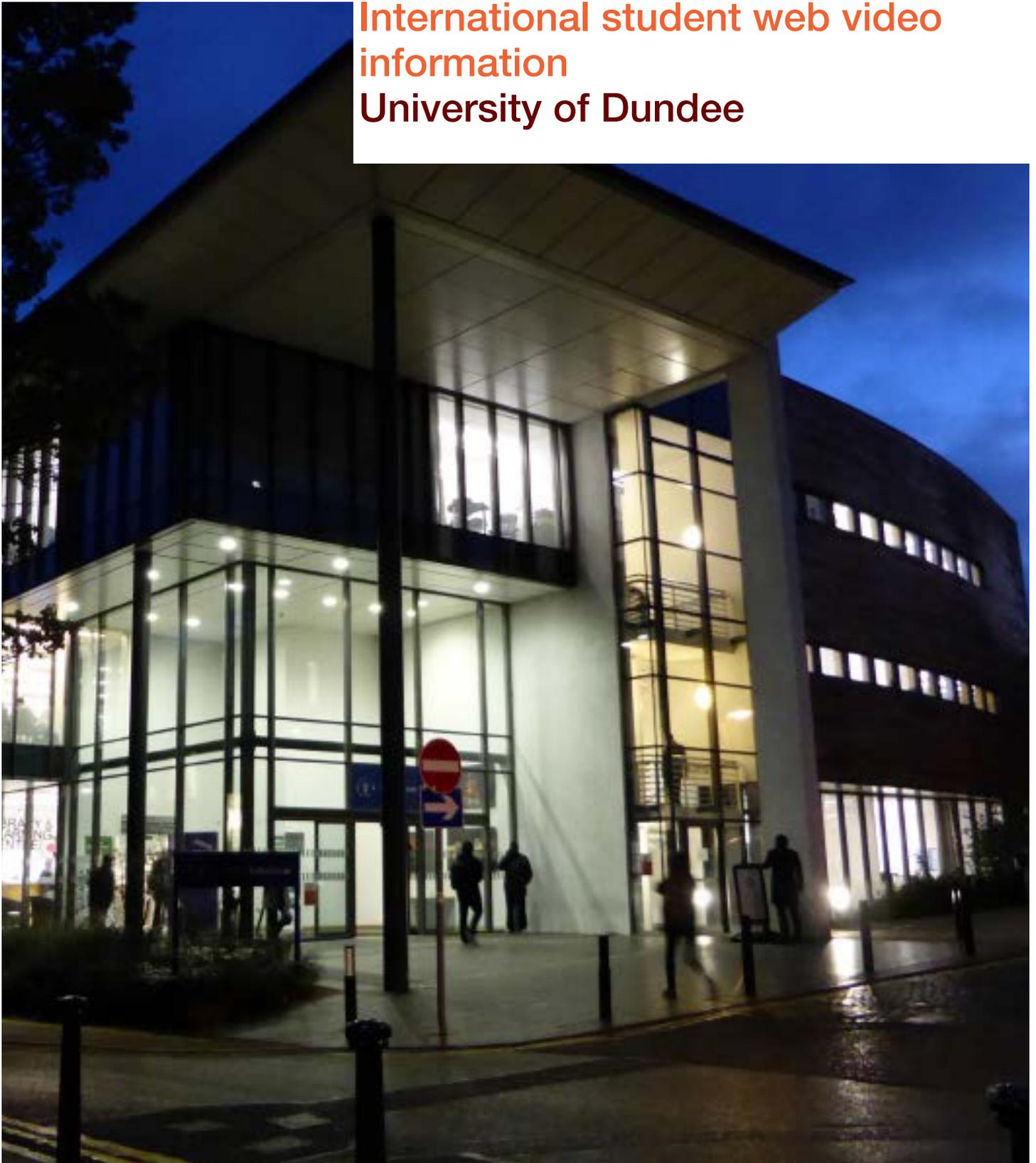
**UK Council
for International
Student Affairs**

UKCISA

**UKCISA GRANTS SCHEME
FOR INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION**

2016-17 Pilot project
supporting the international
student experience in the UK

**International student web video
information
University of Dundee**



International student web video information University of Dundee

Project aims

The overall aim of this collaborative project between Student Support Advisors, the International Advice Service and current international students was to create a series of short accessible videos. These online resources for international students will enable new international students to better prepare themselves to come to university in the UK (particularly Scotland) and help them adjust to living and studying in a new country, culture and climate.

Rationale for the project

Feedback from international students told us they would like more information and knowledge on a range of subjects with regard to living and studying in the UK/ Scotland, for instance, weather/climate, time (daylight hours in winter/summer), academic differences, language, food, and culture. These are some of the most common aspects of changing country that had the most impact on students personally and they needed some time to acclimatise to these and adapt. By using the personal commentary of actual international students on the videos we believed it would help to address the needs of incoming internationals making that transition. We also thought that if student expectations can be realistically managed by providing information and support, in this way, to new international students this could enhance the overall student

experience and therefore be of importance to institutions and the sector as a whole.

Outcomes

Six videos have been produced featuring international students talking about their personal experiences. The videos can be found on the university website on the International Advice Service pages and have links from other places on the university website, eg Welcome pages and online student toolkits. They will be utilised at welcome events for new international students and on flat screens in our new “Global Lounge” when it opens in mid-October 2018. (See the end of this report for a link to the videos).

Background

University of Dundee sits within the city of Dundee (with a population of 148, 270 in 2016) in Scotland. The university has 18,000 students from 145 countries and 3,000 staff from 72 countries. It has around 15,000 students on campus of whom 3,000 are international (this includes EU students). There are nine academic schools and a range of directorates, including Professional Services, one of which is Student Services. Internationalisation is key to the university's strategic aims: see www.dundee.ac.uk/international/internationalisationattheuniversity.



Project set-up and evaluation

The project team invited international students from different countries to help us make videos by speaking about their experience of different aspects of living in the UK/ Scotland. We were successful in finding students to represent Asia (Pakistan and China), Africa and Southern Europe. We were unable to get someone from either North or South America. We invited the students to meet with the staff organising the project and the professional videographer who would be filming and editing the project. After consultation and a discussion with this group of international students, six topics were chosen for the videos. These were:

- Accent
- Asking for help
- Culture
- Environment
- Food
- Social life

Initially we thought we would use scripts for the videos when we were planning the project, but it was decided after our discussion with the

students and the videographer that it was better that they were unscripted, as it was more natural. The students involved then decided what they would say about the different topic areas they had chosen to cover.

Our original plan was to gather the students together to film the videos at one time and provide lunch for them collectively on the day of filming. This plan had to be re-thought as it became clear that the students would have to be filmed individually on different days to fit with their schedules and other commitments. The videographer liaised directly with the students around their commitments and also his own schedule. This meant that he could spend a bit of time with the students ensuring they were relaxed and not looking anxious or nervous whilst they were being filmed. As we had chosen to film outdoors around campus we could also ensure that the weather was suitable for filming.

After filming, a rough edit was prepared by the videographer. This was then viewed by the staff involved in the project and some of the senior managers within Student Services. Some further minor edits were required and some additional filming. This was carried out over the following month, again taking into account the commitments of both the students and the videographer. The final footage was then shown to the students involved. The two students who could not attend the screening were sent the videos. Once the videos were completed they were shown to one of the university's External Relations managers for final approval for use on the website. This took longer than anticipated and delayed the evaluation process until October 2017.

Timeline

September 2016. There were two initial meetings held in September

2016 to plan the project with the members of staff involved.

October 2016. Initially we asked international students to come to a meeting in early October if they wished to participate in the video project. After this initial discussion, it became clear that our original planned timelines were unlikely to happen, particularly as all the filming could not happen on one day as originally anticipated.

November 2016. The filming was not completed until the end of November.

January 2017. The first edit was available.

February 2017. First viewing of the rough edited version was available. The team suggested further edits and additional filming. The videographer had to make arrangements with some of the students and one of the International Advice Team to do the extra filming which took a few weeks to organise and complete.

April 2017. We invited the students involved to come and view the videos in April – those unable to attend were sent the videos to view. As the videos had not yet been seen by our External Relations team we could not get them uploaded in April as planned. The feedback from the team meant some further captioning was required.

August 2017. Videos were in place on our International Advice pages for August 2017 to use during our welcome activities for new international students in September 2017. We planned to evaluate the videos (see Appendix) in October 2017 with our incoming students using an online survey, which is considerably later than originally planned. We aim to share this with UKCISA in January 2018 and it will be available on the UKCISA website.

Challenges

- Working with many different students with different time commitments proved to be challenging as our plan to have everyone together doing the filming was not feasible.
- We had to fit in with the other work that the professional videographer had planned.
- The weather had to be taken into account as we had chosen external locations on campus. This was quieter and there was less likelihood of interruptions than inside buildings during the semester although we did have to factor in occasional sirens and aircraft noise.
- We also had to take into account the views of our External Relations team within the university as they manage the website content and this led to delays in getting students to see the videos and give us their feedback.
- The extra edits and filming required meant using the budget allocated originally for catering.
- Staff availability due to sickness and leave also impacted on our estimated timescales.

Sustainability

The videos should be useable for several years as the topics the students are talking about on the videos are not going to change. The project should be able to be replicated in other universities using their own international students.

Learning points

We would allow more time for the project and also devote a larger budget to the videography to cover further editing or filming required. It may have been better to involve our External Relations team earlier.

Recommendations for other UK institutions

- Ensure that you have a professional videographer with the ability to do editing as this makes the process easier for both the students and staff involved. The end result is much better – more professional and watchable.
- Budget for any extra editing and filming that may be required.
- Having a small project team and not too many students involved helps to make the project more manageable.
- Involve students: they like to be asked and to get involved.
- It is important to get a balance of viewpoints from different perspectives and cultural backgrounds.
- Get your web team involved at an early stage.

Further information

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Link to the videos:

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/international/support/>

Appendix

Proposed evaluation for international student web video information project, University of Dundee.

1. Have you viewed the International Student Videos about living in the UK/Dundee on the International Advice website page?
 - Yes
 - No

- 1a. If yes, are these videos helpful to you as a new international student?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
2. When do you think these have been most helpful to you as a new international student?
 - Before applying for a place at university
 - On arrival at the university
 - Some time after arrival at the university
 - Unsure
3. When would you suggest that new international students should be able to see these videos?
4. Are there any other topics you would like to see available for new international students on video?
5. Where would you suggest that these videos be best placed for new international students to view?
 - University International Advice website pages
 - Admissions pages for international student applicants
 - University's Welcome pages
 - University Facebook page
 - YouTube
 - Other (if other please state)
6. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the videos?



Above and on page 7: stills from six videos featuring international students talking about their personal experiences about living and studying in Scotland.