

**Benchmarking the provision of
services for international students
in further education institutions**

FOREWORD



I am delighted to welcome this important new analysis of the services which UK colleges typically offer to international students for a number of reasons.

Firstly because the results, in the main, are extremely positive and confirm that in the vast majority of colleges our provision is both extensive and consistent.

Secondly because, as is increasingly accepted, these support services are essential if the process of learning is to be effective for our students from a remarkably wide range of countries and backgrounds.

Thirdly, because, in this second phase of the Prime Minister's Initiative, the quality of the international student experience has become a fundamental priority and key to our future success and it is therefore essential for us to benchmark our provision.

The report is therefore timely. As I say, many of the findings are extremely positive. There are, however, areas where clearly further improvements can be made either in the range or reach of services and where colleges can learn from each other.

That is why I would encourage you to consider the results carefully, to use the self assessment tool at the end of the report to measure relative performance and to see where and how services and standards might be improved still further. By doing so I believe UK colleges can ensure that the provision we promise and provide for international students from throughout the world can be trusted, admired and set standards, globally.

Geoff Pine

Principal, Greenwich Community College and Further Education representative
on the Prime Minister's Initiative Programme Board
June 2008

INTRODUCTION

This analysis of the range and extent of services specifically designed for international students in the UK's Further Education (FE) colleges was commissioned as part of the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) 'Student Experience' strand.

Its purpose was, therefore, to enable the sector as a whole to consider the level of services currently provided and individual institutions to compare their performance against others to see whether and where improvements might be made.

It is one of a number of reports produced by UKCISA in recent years starting with 'Broadening our Horizons' in 2004, which looked at satisfaction ratings largely in Higher Education (HE), 'New Horizons' in 2006 which considered similar issues in FE, and a 'Benchmarking Survey of International Student Services' in HE produced in 2007.

Together they represent a very considerable analysis of the international student experience in the UK, both in HE and FE, and from the perspective of both the student and the provider.

As will be seen, many of the results within this survey of FE are, in fact, very similar to those previously shown for HE. There are, however, significant differences in some areas, in the nature of courses and cohort and in some modes of operation. FE in the UK caters, of course, for a very wide range of age groups and offers a quite extraordinary range of courses – some long, some short, some academic and an increasing number, vocational. Some colleges are very major players with over one thousand international students and very extensive International Offices. Others may have fewer than 50 supported by one member of staff (who might cover EFL or marketing in addition to welfare and support.)

In general terms, these colleges will, as a percentage, have more students who are under 18 than would be typical in HE – a factor of both pastoral and indeed legal importance. And the quality of the support and overall experience for those students – and indeed those of any age – will have a fundamental impact on their academic success, on their choices for further study (in the UK or elsewhere) and on their future careers.

The findings are therefore more than a theoretical exercise. They describe and define the nature and extent of services which are typically found in the UK. They represent, together with the academic quality, the features of most influence and importance if the UK wishes to 'deliver on its mission' for FE and increase its competitive advantage in terms of global recruitment.

It is hoped, therefore, that relevant sector and funding bodies will consider the findings and what implications they might have for future strategy. And that individual colleges will, with the help of the self-assessment tool at the end of this report, take a careful look at whether their own services are as extensive as others and consider ways in which they might be improved.

UK Council for International Student Affairs

KEY FINDINGS

The results of this survey show that there is generally a good level of what might be termed 'basic' or 'core' services for international students in most further education colleges in the UK and, in some, evidence of 'enhanced', more extensive, innovative or wide-ranging provision.

While there is clearly variation between what is provided for non-UK EU students and non-EU students, areas where non-EU students (the focus of this report) were generally **well provided for** included:

- advice/assistance on visas/entry clearance applications (83%)
- "meet and greet" services (68%)
- induction/orientation programmes (86%)
- free in-session language or study skills classes (68% for a defined amount and an additional 16% on an unlimited basis)
- assistance with accommodation (94%)
- social and cultural activities (76% organise short tourist visits; 52% hold cultural events)
- fees fixed for future years in advance (66%)
- fees payable in instalments (34% for all ISs plus 47% for certain categories).

The survey does, however, highlight a number of areas for consideration and improvement where **provision is, in some institutions, less extensive**:

- Half of the respondents reported that all non-UK students have access to international student services and a further quarter reported that EU students share some services with non-EU students. At 20% of institutions, however, EU students have no access to international student services. As non-UK EU students are likely to have additional needs to home students, this raises the question of how their needs are met in these institutions.

- While orientation programmes are widely available at the start of the academic year and participation rates are generally high, there is clearly scope for increasing the availability of "on-demand" sessions, particularly via the web or multi-media-based materials and for those who arrive after the start of the academic year. In addition, only a small number of institutions offer follow-up sessions throughout the year to supplement the start-of-year orientation for students on longer courses.
- Reported practice in relation to international students under 18 was mixed, with high numbers of institutions providing some services, eg furnishing homestay hosts accepting under 18s with specific guidance/information, and low numbers providing others, eg arranging special inductions/tutorials for under 18s or requiring parents to appoint a UK-based guardian. As this is a particularly sensitive area, a higher all-round level of provision would be desirable.
- Whilst practice on some financial services (see above) is reasonably good, the fact that 58% of respondents do not have hardship funding available for international students is a cause for concern – though 31% would assist in occasional extreme cases, and 3% through access to a fund available for all students.
- A variety of feedback systems are in use, although 14% of colleges said there was no separate analysis of international student satisfaction. These, and the others who merely obtain feedback generically, may wish to consider how without this they can monitor satisfaction with their levels of service and measure the effect amongst this particular group with particular needs.
- 14% of institutions offered no induction or orientation programme specifically for international students and a slightly lower, though still significant, number claimed to offer no immigration or visa advice whatsoever.

Finally, it is important to make two points. Firstly, in some areas where not all respondents replied to each question, sample sizes were more modest and what might appear to be a generally positive (or negative) impression of the sector on average might well obscure weaknesses (or strengths) in individual institutions. There is, therefore, as ever, no room for complacency. Secondly, the survey enquired into the *nature and extent* of provision, perhaps a proxy for but certainly not an assessment of *quality*. There was evidence of a *very good range of provision* in most institutions, but it is for those institutions themselves to continue to monitor and assure themselves of the quality and standards of what is provided.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

UKCISA defines “international students” as any students not normally resident in the UK, and this survey included some specific questions about provision for both EU students from outside the UK and overseas fee-paying (ie non-EU) students. Due to wide variation in institutional practice as to whether the same services are offered to EU and non-EU students, however, for the purpose of this report, unless stated otherwise, “international students” refers to non-EU students.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool. It was publicised to UKCISA's Primary Contacts who were asked to complete it, or pass it to a more appropriate person in their institution to complete. Where more than one response was received from an institution, answers were compiled or the most complete response selected so that only one response per institution was used in this report.

Responses were received from 68 institutions. Note that not all respondents answered all questions. Where the report refers to respondents or respondent institutions, this means the number of responses received for that particular question. Please note also that small sample sizes for some questions may affect the significance of the results.

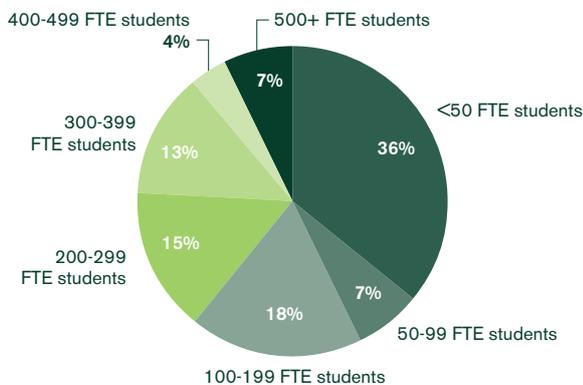
RESPONDENTS' INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Student numbers and types of course offered

The following figures show the number of EU students from outside the UK and the number of overseas fee-paying students in institutions which responded to this survey. Groupings have been designed to differentiate between institutions with small and very small numbers of international students.

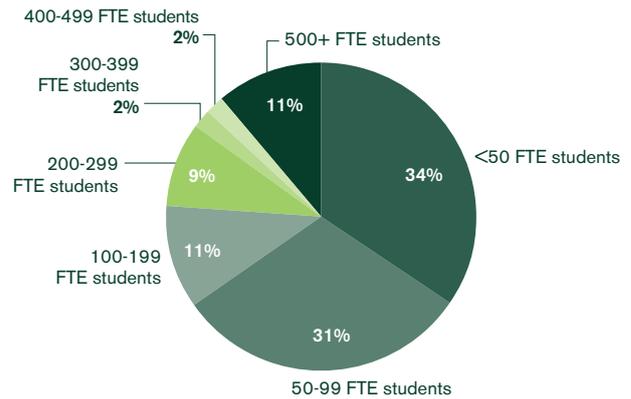
As Figure 1 shows, just over one third (36%) of responses were from institutions with fewer than 50 full-time equivalent (FTE) EU students from outside the UK. 7% were from institutions with 50-99 FTE EU students from outside the UK, 18% from institutions with 100-199, 15% with 200-299, 13% with 300-399, 4% with 400-499, and 7% from institutions with 500 or more FTE EU students from outside the UK.

Figure 1
Number of FTE EU students from outside the UK in respondent institutions (n=55)¹



As Figure 2 shows, similarly, just over one third (34%) of respondent institutions had fewer than 50 FTE overseas fee-paying students. Almost another third (31%) had between 50 and 99. 11% of respondent institutions had 100-199 overseas fee-paying students, 9% had 200-299, 2% had 300-399, 2% had 400-499, and 11% had 500 or more overseas fee-paying students.

Figure 2
Number of FTE overseas fee-paying students in respondent institutions (n=65)



The percentage of the total full-time student body made up by non-EU students varied considerably from institution to institution. While percentages ranged from less than 1% to 86%, the mean percentage of non-EU students at respondent institutions was 7%, the median was 3% and the mode was 1%. (It is difficult to assess the degree to which this is representative of the FE sector as a whole, given its diversity, but clearly reflects a range of the larger and smaller providers.)

85% of respondent institutions offered in-fill courses (eg vocational or A level courses) and 78% offered programmes for international students only, such as EFL/English Plus and foundation programmes. 40% offered bespoke short courses for closed groups. A number of respondent institutions also offered degree courses.

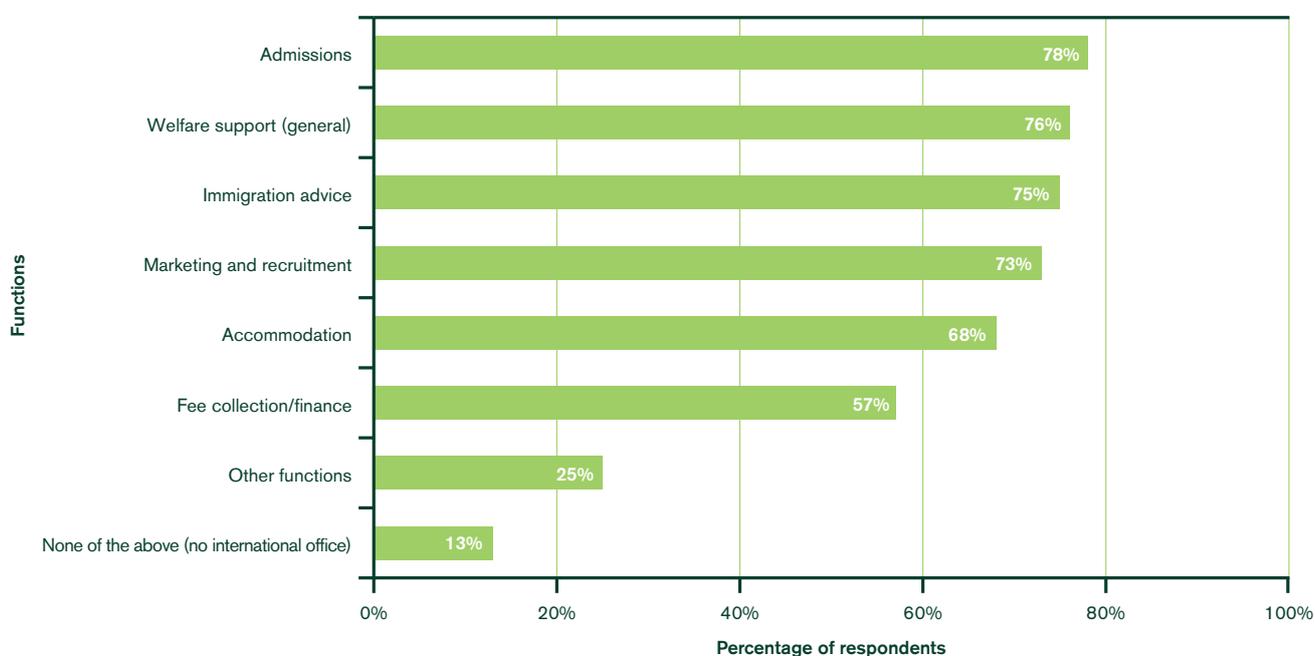
1. This refers to the number of respondents to this particular question

International office and provision of services – roles and responsibilities

As Figure 3 shows, where respondent institutions had an international office, 78% of international offices included an admissions function, 76% a welfare support function, 76% provided immigration advice and 73% conducted marketing and recruitment. 68% were involved in

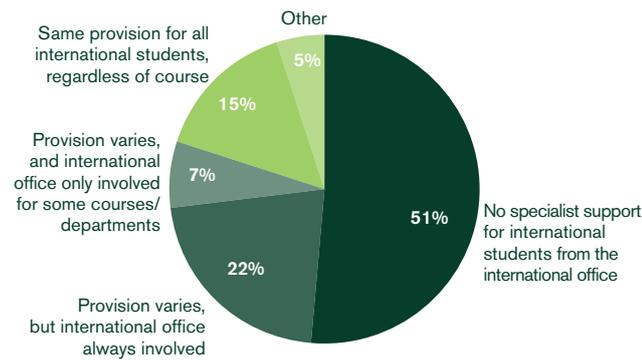
accommodation assistance and 57% in fees collection/finance. Other functions of respondents' international offices included academic and career guidance, development of overseas partnerships, hosting international visitors, promotion of the international agenda in the college, and staff development. 13% of respondents had no international office.

Figure 3 International Office functions (n=63)



The international office at 51% of respondent institutions provided the same support for all international students, regardless of course. Provision of support varied but the international office was always involved at 22% of respondent institutions, and at 7% of institutions provision varied and the international office was only involved for some courses/departments. No specialist support was provided to international students from the international office in 15% of respondents. This is shown in Figure 4.

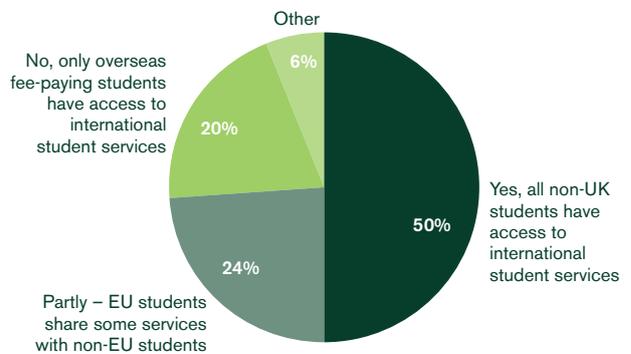
Figure 4
Provision of support by the international office (n=60)



Other ways of providing support included the student services department, the admissions department, the accommodation office and course tutors/mentors.

As Figure 5 shows, 50% of respondents offered the same services to all non-UK students. At 24% of respondent institutions EU students shared some services with non-EU students, and 20% of respondents offered international student services to overseas fee-paying students only.

Figure 5
Provision of services to EU and non-EU students (n=66)



Differences in the services that EU and non-EU students could access included:

- only non-EU students can get help from the emergency fund
- EU students have to pay for social activities while the cost of these is covered in tuition fees paid by non-EU students
- International-only events and trips.

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION

Table 1 shows the approximate number (mean, median and mode) of international students that international offices receive enquiries from, make offers to, receive acceptances from and enrol annually, by number of international students at the institution.

Table 1

Approximate number of international students the international office receives enquiries from, makes offers to, receives acceptance from and enrolls annually (n=53)

Number of international students at institution	Number of annual enquiries from international students			Number of offers made annually to international students			Number of offers accepted annually by international students			Number of international students who enrol annually		
	Mean	Median	Mode	Mean	Median	Mode	Mean	Median	Mode	Mean	Median	Mode
<50 (n=16)	251	90	30	42	30	30	28	20	20	19	14	10
50-99 (n=18)	709	400	300	171	150	100	97	71	150	70	60	50
100-199 (n=5)	373	265	–	244	180	–	105	100	–	108	120	–
200-299 (n=6)	669	700	700	456	494	–	235	290	300	177	200	200
300-499 (n=2)	2000	2000	–	900	900	–	500	500	–	475	475	–
500-999 (n=4)	1875	1750	1000	1213	1200	–	900	1000	–	550	575	–
1000-1500 (n=2)	3000	3000	3000	1965	1965	–	1575	1575	–	1180	1180	–

Please note that the groupings used for this table differ from those earlier in the report as a result of sample sizes, and that where there are very small sample sizes it may affect the significance of the findings. The findings may not, therefore, be entirely representative and are included as illustrative only – and especially as they may well be of interest in the context of the new Points Based System.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE

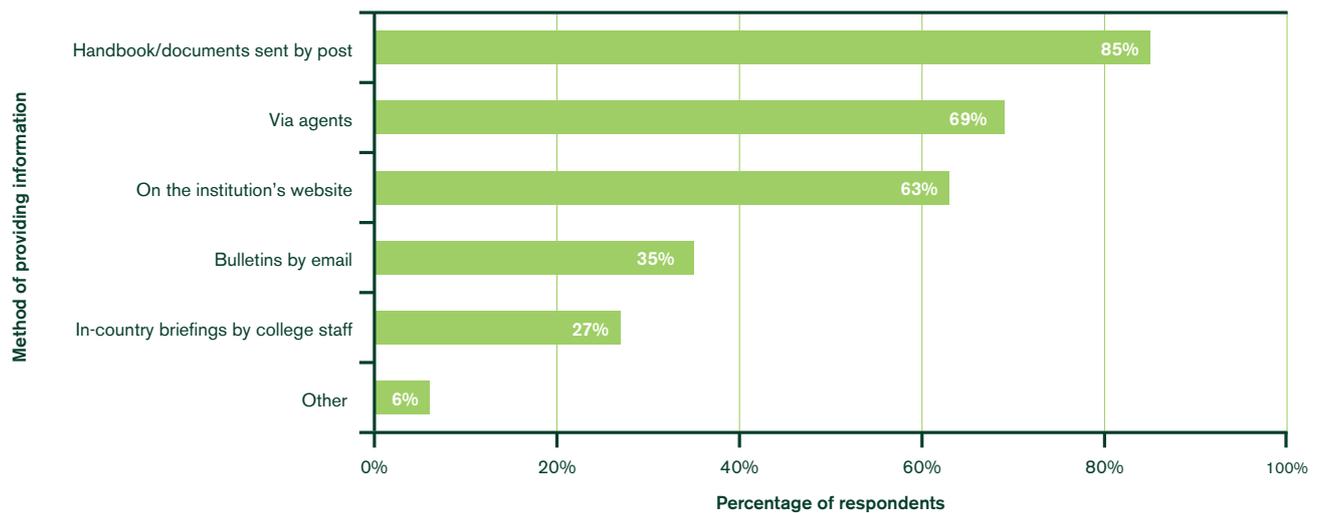
As Figure 6 shows, the most common way of providing pre-departure information was, perhaps not surprisingly, by handbooks/documents sent by post (85% of respondents). 69% of respondents provided pre-departure information via agents, and 63% provided information on the institution’s website. 35% provided bulletins by email, and 27% provided in-country briefings by college staff.

22% of respondent institutions facilitated contact pre-departure for new students with current students and/or

alumni, eg by email or via messageboards. 69% did not do this, and 9% of respondents didn’t know/couldn’t say.

83% of respondent institutions provided advice/assistance on visas/entry clearance applications for the students, and 28% provided this for accompanying dependants. 43% provided advice/assistance on appeals against visa/entry clearance refusals. 14% of respondents provided none of this – again, a figure which may well need to change as the Points Based System is introduced.

Figure 6 Ways of providing pre-departure information to students (n=62)



“MEET AND GREET” SERVICES

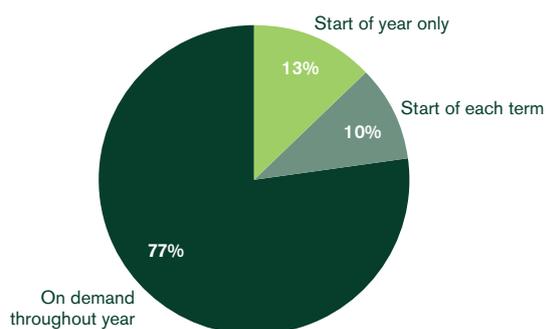
One third of respondent institutions offered a “meet and greet” service staffed by college personnel, and slightly more than this (35%) offered a “meet and greet” service contracted out to an external firm, eg a local taxi company. Some respondent institutions offered a combination of these services or students were met by their homestay families. 23% of respondents did not offer a “meet and greet” service.

60% of respondent institutions who offered a “meet and greet” service offered this to all non-EU students, and 36% offered it to all non-UK students. At the other institutions a “meet and greet” service was available to groups or to non-EU students studying for more than a certain length of time.

As Figure 7 shows, 77% of respondents operated this “meet and greet” service on demand throughout the year. 13% offered it at the start of the year only, and 10% offered it at the start of each term.

Figure 7

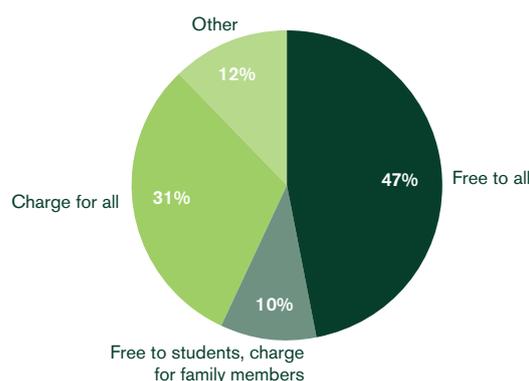
When the “meet and greet” service was offered (n=52)



As Figure 8 shows, the “meet and greet” service was free to all at 47% of respondent institutions, while 10% of respondents reported that it was free to students but there was a charge for family members. 31% reported a charge for all. Practices in other respondent institutions included the service being free on appointed arrival days with a nominal charge on other days, and the service being free to students paying more than a certain amount in tuition fees or studying for more than a certain length of time.

Figure 8

Charge for “meet and greet” service (n=51)



Where respondents gave an indication of approximate charges for the “meet and greet” service, these ranged from £25 – £65. Several respondents stated that charges were the actual cost of the taxi fare.

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION

As Figure 9 shows, the international office helped provide orientation or induction programmes specifically for international students at 68% of respondent institutions. Departments were involved at 45% of respondent institutions, other central offices such as Student Services at 37%, and students' unions/associations at 18%. Course leaders and individual tutors helped provide orientation/induction programmes at some respondent institutions, as did community groups and external international organisations. 14% of respondent institutions had no induction/orientation programme specifically for international students.

As Figure 10 shows, induction/orientation programmes were available at the start of the academic year at 70% of respondent institutions, and at the start of later terms/semesters at 33%. "On-demand" sessions in person were available all year round at 43% of respondent institutions, and "on-demand" sessions via the web or multi-media-based materials were available at 5%. Other respondents held induction/orientation several times a year as programmes started, or held sessions for groups only. Note that respondents could provide multiple answers to this question.

Figure 9 Parts of the college which helped provide orientation/induction programmes for international students (n=65)

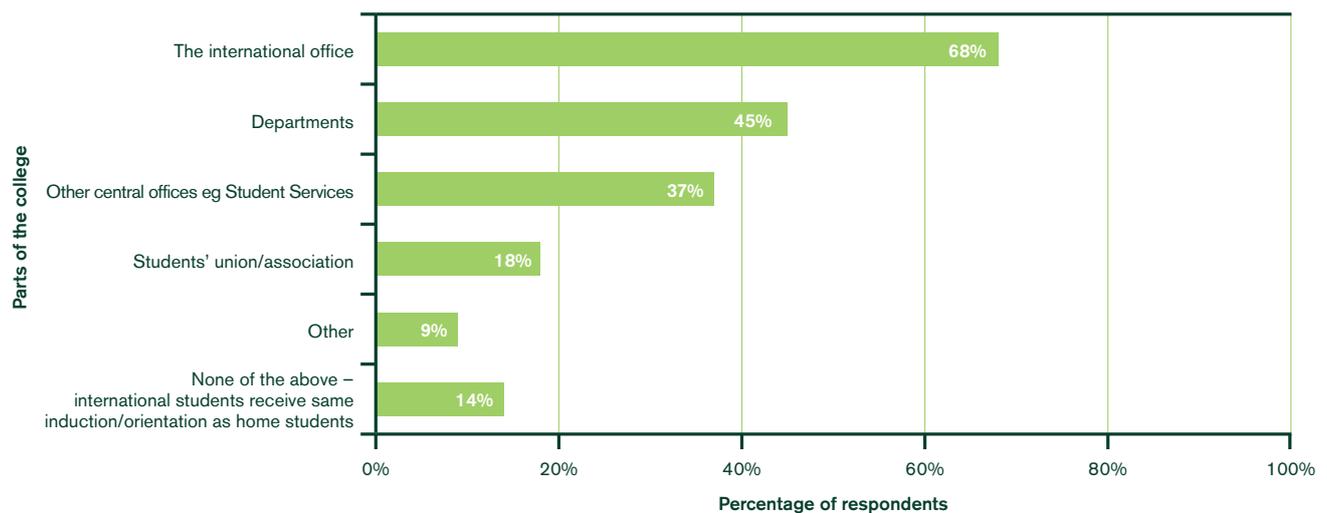
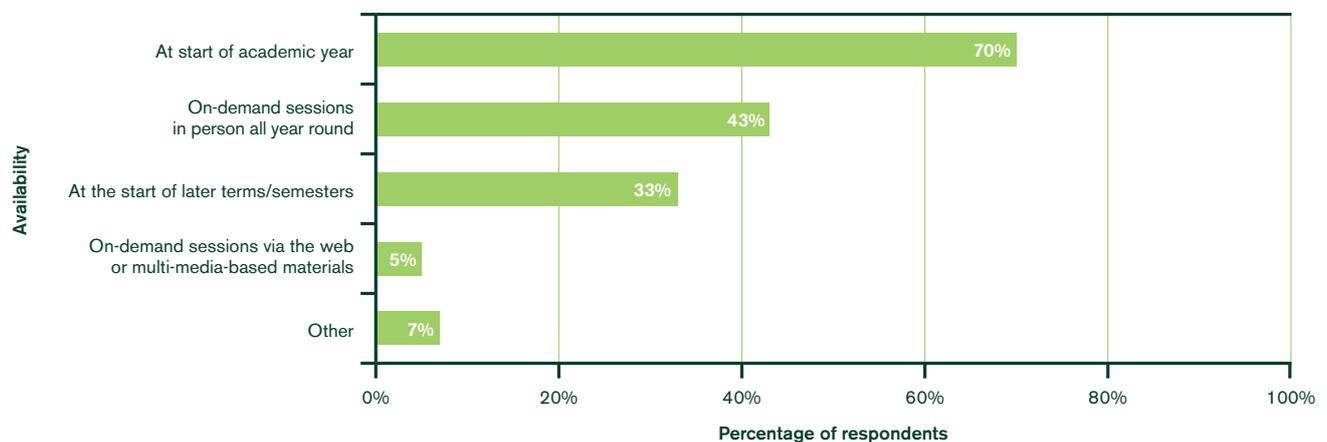
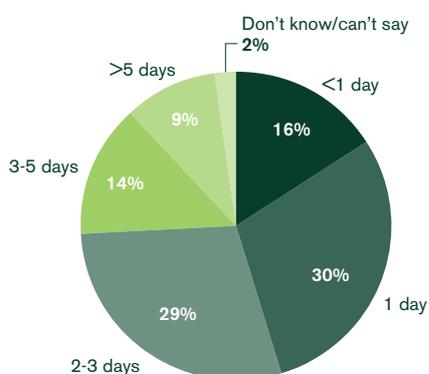


Figure 10 Availability of induction/orientation programmes for international students (n=60)



Orientation programmes lasted, on average, less than a day at 16% of respondent institutions, one day at 30%, and two to three days at 29%. 14% of respondents reported that orientation programmes at their institution lasted three to five days, and 9% reported that programmes were more than five days. This is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11
Length of orientation/induction programmes (n=63)



Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondent institutions did not charge students for the orientation programme (costs being included in their tuition fees). In cases where there was a charge, 20% of respondents charged students for accommodation, 18% charged students for meals, and 10% charged students for leisure activities/trips. No respondent institutions charged students for the orientation programme itself.

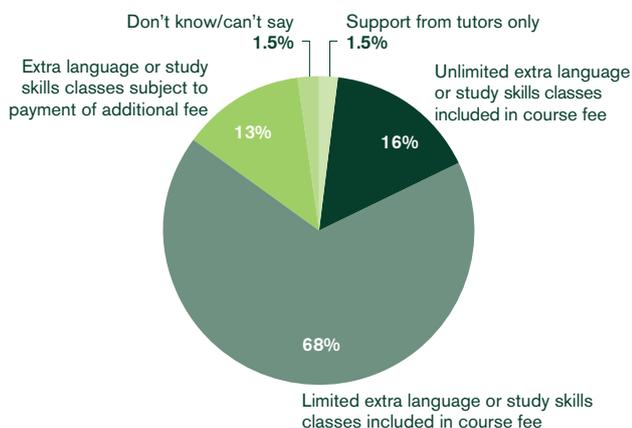
In terms of participation, estimates of the percentage of new international students participating in institutions' orientation programmes ranged from 6% to 100%. The mean participation rate was 74%, the median was 80% and the mode was 100%. There is no clear correlation between the number of international students at the institution and the percentage that participated in the orientation programme.

Just 18% of respondent institutions offered follow-up sessions throughout the year to supplement the start-of-year orientation for students on longer courses. These sessions included forums, health and safety sessions, and briefing sessions on various topics such as employment rights, career advice and visa renewal.

STUDY ISSUES

As Figure 12 shows, 16% of respondent institutions offered unlimited extra in-session language or study skills classes included in the course fee to international students who needed them, and 68% offered these included in the course fee on a limited basis. 13% of respondent institutions offered extra classes subject to payment of an additional fee.

Figure 12
Options for international students who needed additional in-session English or study skills classes (n=62)



Examples of provision in this area included:

- an English language team of two who offer English study support to full-time students
- a language support programme for all vocational students: a language clinic, free to students, staffed by ELT tutors on an appointment basis
- a self-access language centre with ELT programmes available for self-study
- support provided through the learning centre

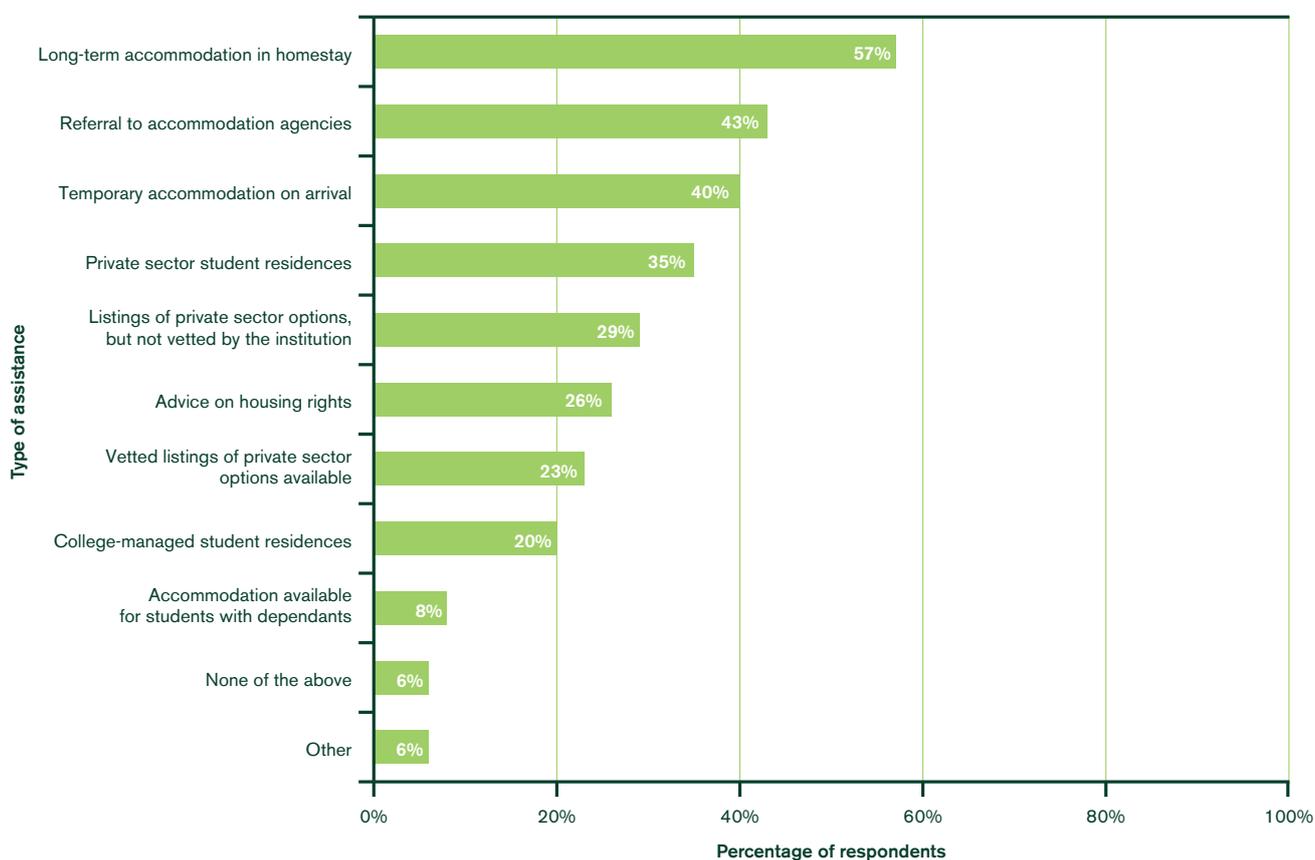
21% of respondents reported that students at their institution could access one to two hours per week of English language or study skills for free, 29% said two to four hours, and 31% said more than four hours. 10% of respondents reported that there was no free provision available, and 10% didn't know/couldn't say.

ACCOMMODATION

As Figure 13 shows, 57% of respondent institutions provided international students with assistance with accommodation through long-term homestay options. 43% referred students to accommodation agencies, 35% offered assistance with private sector student residences, and 20% offered college-managed student residences. 29% provided listings of private sector options not vetted

by the institution, and 23% provided vetted private sector options. 8% of respondents had accommodation available for students with dependants. 40% of respondents assisted with temporary accommodation on arrival, eg in hotels or homestays, and 26% provided advice on housing rights. 6% of respondents provided none of the above.

Figure 13 Assistance with accommodation provided by institutions to international students (n=65)



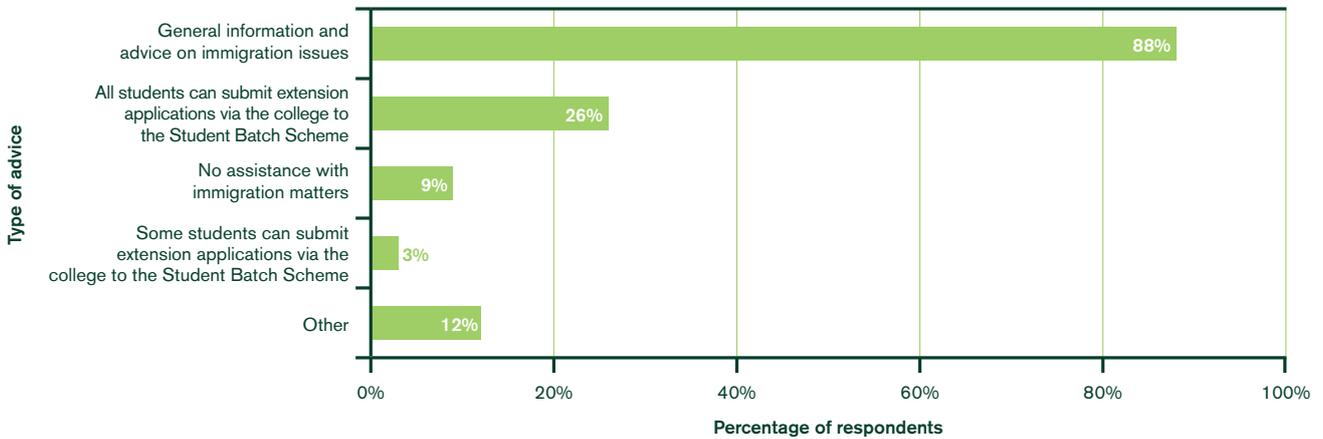
STUDENT SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Immigration

Figure 14 below shows the type of immigration advice provided to international students. 88% of respondent institutions provided international students with general information and advice on immigration issues. 26% of respondent institutions allowed all students to submit

extension applications via the college to the Student Batch Scheme, and 3% allowed some students (eg complex cases) to do this. Several respondents reported that they provided one-to-one assistance with visa applications. 9% of respondents provided no assistance with immigration matters.

Figure 14 Provision of immigration advice (n=65)

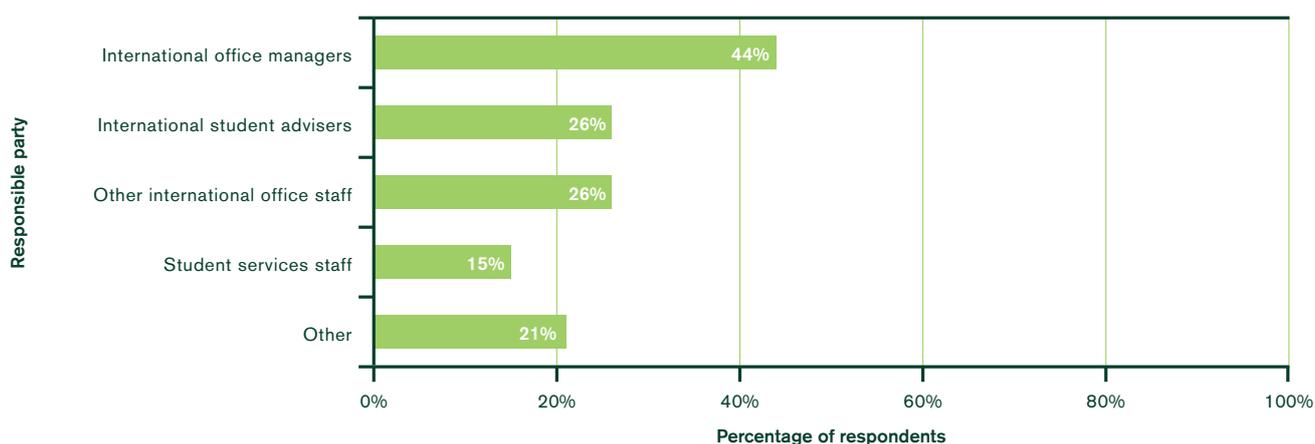


Emergency contact

34% of respondent institutions provided a 24-hour emergency telephone number for international students all year, and a further 18% provided one at specific times, eg for new arrivals. 48% of respondent institutions did not provide a 24-hour emergency telephone number.

Amongst respondents which did provide a 24-hour emergency telephone number, international office managers were responsible for staffing the phone at 44% of institutions, international student advisers at 26%, other international office staff at 26%, and student services staff at 15%. Responsibility at other respondent institutions lay with accommodation staff, eg hall of residence staff, accommodation services. This is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15 Responsibility for staffing the 24 hour emergency phone (n=34)



International students under 18 years of age

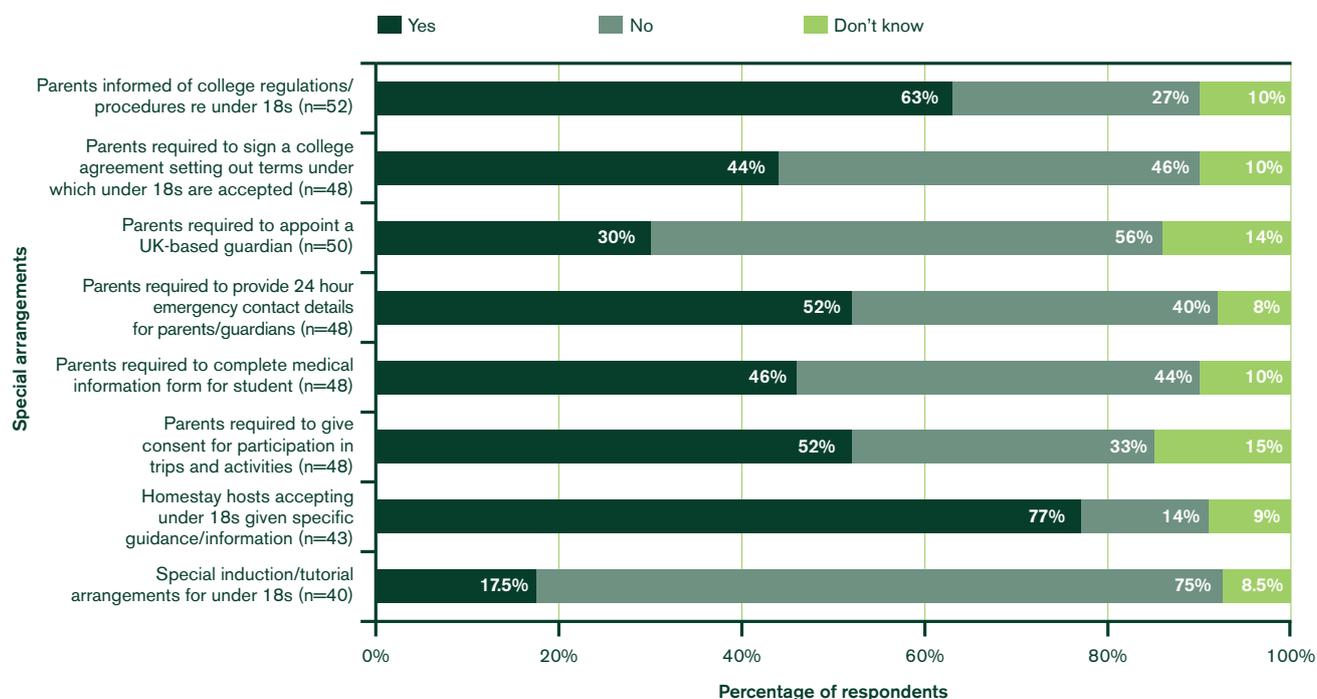
Figure 16 shows special arrangements in place for international students under 18 in respondent institutions for whom it is relevant (not, therefore, including Scottish institutions¹). **The following refers only to institutions who considered the questions relevant:**

- 63% of respondents informed parents of college regulations/procedure with regard to under 18s. 27% did not inform parents, and 10% of respondents didn't know.
- 44% of respondents required parents to sign an agreement provided by the college setting out terms on which under 18s were accepted. 46% did not require this and 10% of respondents didn't know.
- 30% of respondents required parents to appoint a UK-based guardian. 56% did not require this, and 14% of respondents didn't know.
- Just over half (52%) of respondents required parents to provide 24-hour emergency contact details for parents/"guardians". 40% did not require this and 8% of respondents didn't know.
- 46% of respondents required parents to complete a medical information form for students. 44% did not require this and 10% of respondents didn't know.
- Just over half (52%) of respondents required parents to give consent for participation in trips and activities. 33% did not require this and 15% of respondents didn't know.
- Around three quarters (77%) of respondents gave specific guidance/information to homestay hosts accepting under 18s. 14% did not do this, and 9% of respondents didn't know.
- 17.5% of respondents arranged special inductions/tutorials for under 18s. 75% did not do this, and 8.5% of respondents didn't know.

Several institutions reported that all homestays are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked.

1. Scottish institutions are not included here as the age of majority in Scotland is 16, not 18, and we have assumed that international students under 16 would be exceptional cases, for whom it would not be reasonable to expect provision to have been made in advance.

Figure 16 Special arrangements in place for international students under 18 (n=40-52)

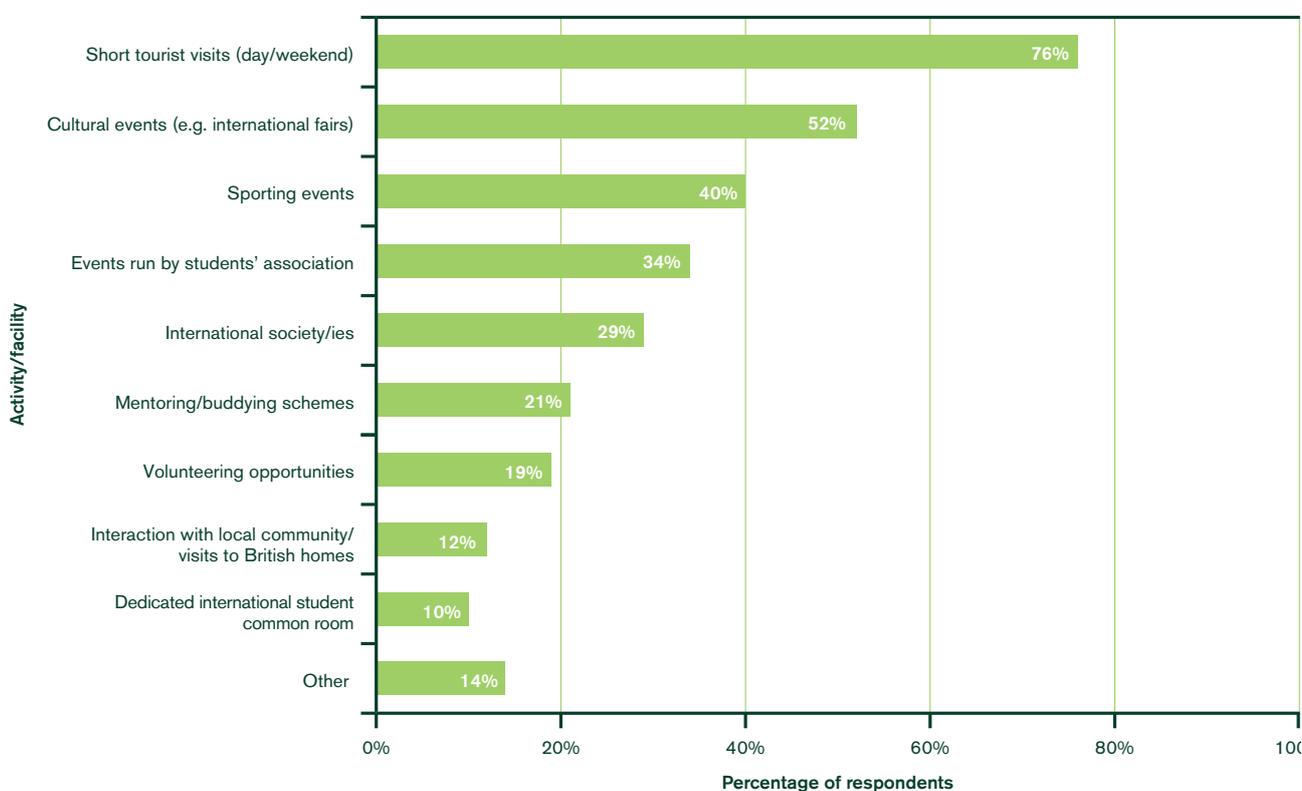


SOCIAL PROVISION

Around three quarters (76%) of respondent institutions arranged short (day/weekend) tourist visits specifically for international students, around half (52%) organised cultural events, eg international fairs, and 40% organised sporting events. 34% of respondent institutions had events run by students' associations, and 29% had

international societies. 21% of respondents arranged mentoring/buddying schemes, 19% organised volunteering opportunities, 12% arranged interaction with the local community/visits to British homes, and 10% of respondents had a dedicated student common room. This is shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17 Social activities and facilities arranged specifically for international students (n=58)



Other responses from institutions included:

- a welcome evening (organised by the college and local people)
- Christmas-related activities
- coffee mornings and meals at local restaurants

39% of respondents organised college-run activities specifically to encourage home and international students to mix, 36% had activities run by the students' union/association, and 8% had activities run by students. 26% of respondent institutions did not have any activities run specifically to encourage home and international students to mix.

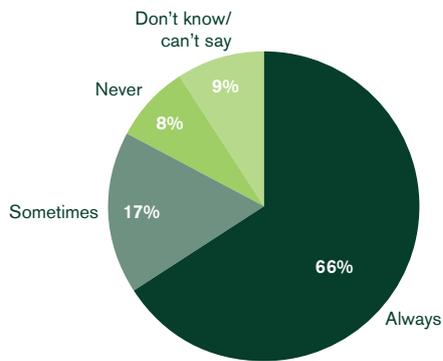
Examples of activities run to encourage home and international students to mix included:

- encouraging international students to invite home student friends to events and activities, eg Chinese New Year celebrations
- a "Cultural Diversity Week"
- international student days/fairs
- development of a fund where students can apply for money for events where they can demonstrate a mixed home/international student group
- day trips
- a football tournament with teams from different countries including the UK
- local groups, eg ramblers and tourist guides, offering free activities to international students
- including organisation of events to encourage home and international students to mix as part of students' courses, eg event management
- a summer leaving lunch with multicultural food
- student mentoring

FINANCE

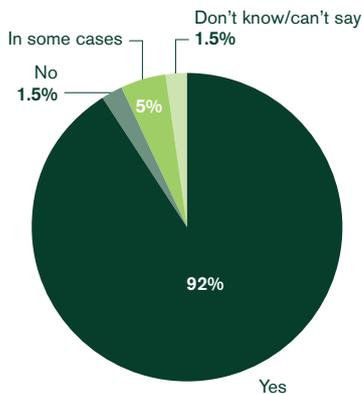
As Figure 18 shows, 66% of respondent institutions reported that they always fixed fees for future years in advance, i.e. students were informed prior to registration what fees would be for the duration of their course of study. 17% reported that they sometimes fixed fees in advance, and 8% said they never did. 9% of respondents didn't know/couldn't say.

Figure 18
Respondent institutions that fixed fees for future years in advance (n=64)



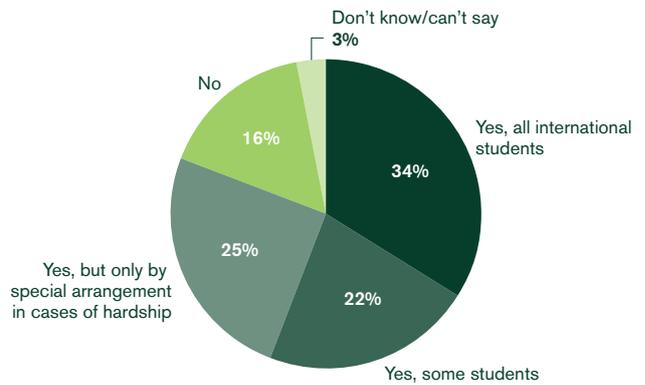
A finding which is likely to be in stark contrast to patterns in HE was that 92% of respondent institutions required international students to pay a deposit on acceptance of offer. 5% of respondents required it in some cases, and 1.5% didn't require it. This is shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19
Requirement for payment of deposit on acceptance of offer (n=64)



34% of respondent institutions allowed all international students to pay fees by instalments, 22% allowed some students to (eg depending on length of course), and 25% allowed international students to pay fees by instalments by special arrangement in cases of hardship. 16% did not allow payment of fees by instalments. This is shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20
Respondent institutions that allowed international students to pay fees by instalments (n=64)

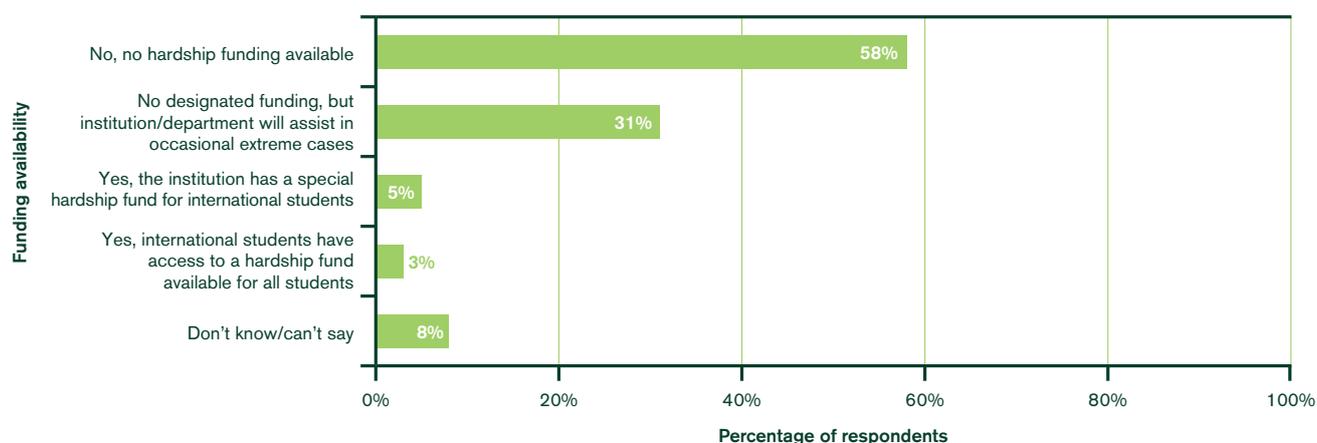


As Figure 21 shows, just 5% of respondent institutions had a special hardship fund for international students, while 3% reported that international students had access to a hardship fund available for all students. 31% of respondents had no designated funding but the institution or individual departments would assist in occasional extreme cases, and 58% of respondent institutions had no hardship funding available.

There were a variety of responses to the question asking what support and funding was available from the college to international students with a disability. Some respondents reported that they provided the same support

and funding to international students with a disability as that provided to home students with a disability. Others provided access to the same support as home students but international students were required to pay for a service, eg a signer for a deaf student. One respondent noted that funds were available through income from international student tuition fees for accepting students with disabilities, and one reported that scholarships were available. Another noted that they looked at each case on an individual basis. Some respondents reported that they did not provide any support or funding for international students with a disability and a number didn't know.

Figure 21 Availability of hardship funding for international students (n=64)



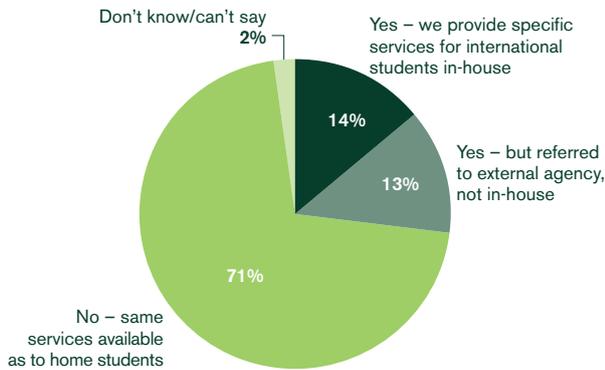
EMPLOYMENT

27% of respondent institutions provided specific help to international students seeking part-time work while studying: 14% through in-house services, and 13% through referral to an external agency. 71% of respondents offered the same services as to home students. This is shown in Figure 22.

Specific help offered to international students seeking part-time work while studying included:

- help with National Insurance appointments
- development of an employer database
- employability workshops
- development of a special service which links up international students with local employers interested in developing business in their countries, eg China (under consideration).

Figure 22
Provision of specific help to international students seeking part-time work while studying (n=63)

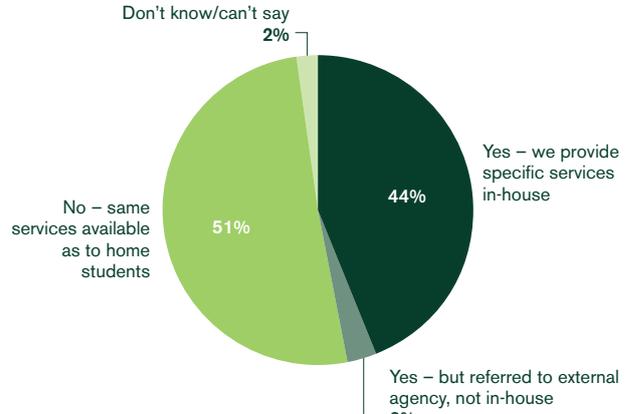


47% of respondent institutions offered specific help to international students with careers or further study: 44% through in-house services, and 3% through referral to an external agency. 51% of respondents offered the same services as to home students. This is shown in Figure 23.

Specific help offered to international students with careers or further study included:

- a specific team conducting “European” interviews and CV clinics
- provision of advice on Fresh Talent (Scotland)
- EFL tutors assisting with university choices and UCAS applications.

Figure 23
Provision of specific help to international students with careers or further study (n=63)



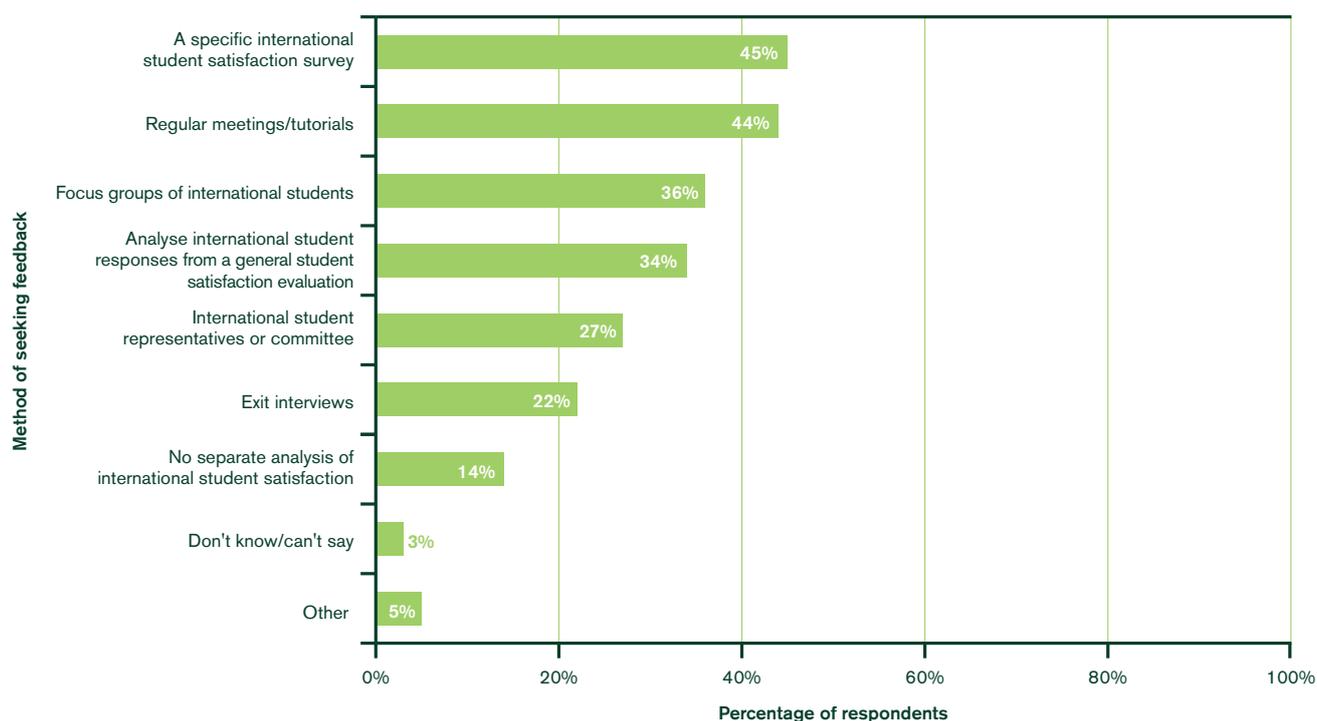
FEEDBACK

Figure 24 shows ways in which institutions sought feedback from international students. 45% of respondent institutions sought feedback through a specific international student satisfaction survey, 44% through regular meetings/tutorials, and 36% through focus groups of international students. 34% analysed international student responses from a general student satisfaction survey, 27% used international student representatives or committees, and 22% sought feedback through exit interviews. 14% of respondent institutions conducted no separate analysis of international student satisfaction.

Other methods of seeking feedback from international students included:

- via the institution's website
- interviews and questionnaires conducted for students in homestays

Figure 24 Ways in which institutions sought international student feedback (n=64)



CONCLUSION

While there was clearly a wide range in the number of international students and the percentage of the student body they constitute at respondent institutions, the findings of this survey suggest a reasonable level of consistency between institutions in offering core services to international students.

As is to be expected, however, there are areas in which some institutions are offering a more advanced level of, or wider-reaching, service than others. Institutions may therefore wish to assure themselves – by benchmarking their performance against others with the assistance of the self-assessment tool in the appendix – that they are, at the very least, offering the full range of ‘core’ services. A number may also wish to investigate ways of increasing both satisfaction levels and competitive advantage (both domestically and internationally) by expanding still further the range and reach of their services to meet and even exceed increasing expectations and the standards of the best.

The self-assessment tool can also be downloaded from UKCISA’s website at www.ukcisa.org.uk/pmi

LIST OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

American InterContinental University	Henley College Coventry
Anniesland College	Hopwood Hall College
Banff & Buchan College	Huddersfield College
Basingstoke College of Technology	Itchen College
Bedford College	John Leggott College
Boston College	Langside College
Bournemouth & Poole College	Leeds College of Technology
Bracknell & Wokingham College	Leicester College
Bradford College	Lewisham College
Bridgwater College	Lincoln College
Brighton Hove & Sussex 6th Form College	London School of Management
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School	Manchester College of Arts & Technology
Brooklands College	North Glasgow College
Cardiff College	North Warwickshire & Hinckley College
Castle College Nottingham	Oxford & Cherwell Valley College
Central Sussex College	Park Lane College
City College	Peterborough College of Adult Education
City College Manchester	South Leicestershire College
City College Plymouth	South Thames College
City of Wolverhampton College	Southport College
Clydebank College	Stevenson College Edinburgh
Colchester Institute	Stockport College
Coleg Sir Gar (Carmarthenshire College)	Stratford-upon-Avon College
Cornwall College	Thames Valley University
Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College	The College of Richard Collyer in Horsham
Edinburgh’s Telford College	The Oldham College
Elmwood College	The University of Buckingham
Glasgow College of Nautical Studies	Truro College
Glasgow Metropolitan College	Uxbridge College
Gloucestershire College	Wakefield College
Greenwich Community College	West Kent College
Guildford College of Further & Higher Education	West Thames College
Hartpury College	Westminster Kingsway College
	Wirral Metropolitan College
	Worthing College

APPENDIX 1

SELF-ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKING TOOL

The UKCISA report “Benchmarking the provision of services for international students in further education institutions” gives a detailed breakdown of provision across the sector. This self-assessment tool was developed using key questions from the survey and is intended to enable institutions to benchmark their provision of services for international students against the results obtained by the survey.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers; rather this tool is designed to get institutions thinking about their provision of support services, to see what other institutions offer, and to help institutions reflect on how to target resources, set priorities etc.

Unless specified, percentages shown under **survey results** are the percentage of respondent institutions.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

Course types

Which types of courses can international students take at your college?

Survey results

(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-fill courses (eg vocational or A level) | 85% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programmes for international students only
(eg EFL/English Plus, Foundation programmes) | 78% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bespoke short courses for closed groups | 40% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | 34% |

International office and provision of services

If your college has an international office, which of the following functions does it include?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing and recruitment | 73% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admissions | 78% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fee collection/finance | 57% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare support (general) | 76% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation | 68% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigration advice | 75% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above (no international office) | 13% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other functions | 25% |

To what extent is the international office involved in providing support for international students across the college?

Survey results

(Tick one)

- | | |
|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same provision for all international students, regardless of course | 51% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provision varies, but international office always involved | 22% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provision varies, and international office only involved for some courses/departments | 7% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No specialist support for international students from the international office – offered by departments and/or student services only | 15% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | 5% |

Do you offer the same services to EU and non-EU students?

(Tick one)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all non-UK students have access to international student services | 50% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Partly – EU students share some services with non-EU students | 24% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, only overseas fee-paying students have access to international student services | 20% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | 6% |

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION

If known, approximately how many international students each year does the international office...

- ...receive enquiries from: _____
- ...make offers to: _____
- ...receive acceptances from: _____
- ...enrol at the college: _____

Due to complex nature of results, please refer to body of report.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION/ASSISTANCE

In which ways does your institution provide pre-departure information to students?

(Tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> On the institution's website | 63% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletins by email | 35% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handbook/documents sent by post | 85% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-country briefings by college staff | 27% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Via agents | 69% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | 6% |

Does your institution provide advice/assistance on any of the following? **Survey results**

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Visas/entry clearance applications for the student	83%
<input type="checkbox"/> Visas/entry clearance applications for accompanying dependants	28%
<input type="checkbox"/> Appeals against visa/entry clearance refusals	43%
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

Does your institution facilitate contact pre-departure for new students with current students and/or alumni, eg by email or via messageboards?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	22%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	69%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	9%

“MEET AND GREET” SERVICES

Do you offer a “meet and greet” service for newly arriving international students (eg arranging for them to be met at local train stations or airports by a coach or taxi service organised by the college)?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – staffed by college personnel	33%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – contracted out to external firm (eg local taxi company)	35%
<input type="checkbox"/> No meet and greet service offered	23%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	9%

To which international students is the “meet and greet” service available?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> All non-UK students	36%
<input type="checkbox"/> All non-EU students	60%
<input type="checkbox"/> Under 18s only	0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	4%

When does the service operate?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Start of year only	13%
<input type="checkbox"/> Start of each term	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> On demand throughout year	77%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	0%

What is the cost of the service?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Free to all	47%
<input type="checkbox"/> Free to students, charge for family members	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Charge for all	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	12%

Survey results

If there is a charge, please indicate the approximate level of charge for the “meet and greet” service.

£ _____

Ranged from £25-£65.

INDUCTION/ORIENTATION

Which parts of the college help provide orientation or induction programmes specifically for international students?

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> The international office	66%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other central offices eg Student Services	37%
<input type="checkbox"/> Departments	45%
<input type="checkbox"/> Students' union/association	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above – international students receive same induction/orientation as home students	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	9%

How frequently are induction/orientation programmes available for international students?

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> At start of academic year	70%
<input type="checkbox"/> At the start of later terms/semesters	33%
<input type="checkbox"/> “On-demand” sessions in person all year round	43%
<input type="checkbox"/> “On-demand” sessions via the web or multi-media-based materials (eg for those arriving when no regular orientation is scheduled)	5%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	7%

How long does the orientation programme last? (If this varies according to the programme or time of year, please give an average.)

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> <1 day	16%
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 day	30%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 days	29%
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 days	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> >5 days	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

What parts of the orientation programme do students pay for?

Survey results

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Orientation programme itself	0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities/trips	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Meals	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> None of these – all costs included in tuition fees	74%

Roughly what percentage of new international students participate in your institution’s orientation programme?

_____%

Number of students participating ranged from 6%-100%. Mean 74%, median 80%, mode 100%.

For students on longer courses, do you offer follow-up sessions through the year to supplement the start of year orientation?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> No	82%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	18%

STUDY ISSUES

What options are available to international students who need additional in-session English or study skills classes?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Support from tutors only	2%
<input type="checkbox"/> Unlimited extra language or study skills classes included in course fee	16%
<input type="checkbox"/> Limited extra language or study skills classes included in course fee	68%
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra language or study skills classes subject to payment of additional fee	13%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

How many free hours per week of English language or study skills are typically available to a student?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> 0	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> 1-2	21%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4	29%
<input type="checkbox"/> >4	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	10%

ACCOMMODATION

What assistance with accommodation does your college provide to international students?

Survey results

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> College-managed student residences	20%
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector student residences	35%
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term accommodation in homestay	57%
<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary accommodation on arrival (eg in hotels or homestays)	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> Vetted listings of private sector options available	23%
<input type="checkbox"/> Listings of private sector options, but not vetted by the institution	29%
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to accommodation agencies	43%
<input type="checkbox"/> Advice on housing rights	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation available for students with dependants	8%
<input type="checkbox"/> None of the above	6%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	6%

STUDENT SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Immigration

What immigration advice do you provide to international students, if any?

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> General information and advice on immigration issues	88%
<input type="checkbox"/> All students can submit extension applications via the college to the Student Batch Scheme	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> Some students can submit extension applications via the college to the Student Batch Scheme (eg complex cases)	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> No assistance with immigration matters	9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	12%

Emergency contact

Do you provide a 24-hour emergency telephone number for international students?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – all year	34%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – at specific times eg for new arrivals	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	48%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	0%

If you answered yes to the previous question, who is responsible for staffing the 24-hour emergency phone **Survey results**

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> International office managers	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> International student adviser(s)	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other international office staff	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> Student services staff	15%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	21%

International students under 18 years of age

For institutions for whom this question is relevant (ie not Scottish institutions), what special arrangements do you have in place for international students under 18?

Parents informed of college regulations/procedures re under 18s

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	63%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	27%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	10%

Parents required to sign an agreement provided by the college setting out terms under which under 18s are accepted

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	46%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	10%

Parents required to appoint a UK-based guardian

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	30%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	56%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	14%

Parents required to provide 24-hour emergency contact details for parents/"guardians"

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	52%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	33%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	15%

Parents required to complete medical information form for student (Tick one)	Survey results
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	46%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	10%

Parents required to give consent for participation in trips and activities (Tick one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	52%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	33%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	15%

Homestay hosts accepting under 18s given specific guidance/information (Tick one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	77%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	9%

Special induction/tutorial arrangements for under 18s (Tick one)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	18%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	75%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	8%

SOCIAL PROVISION

What social activities and facilities does your college arrange specifically for international students? (Tick all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring/buddying schemes	21%
<input type="checkbox"/> International society/ies	29%
<input type="checkbox"/> Short tourist visits (day/weekend)	76%
<input type="checkbox"/> Sporting events	40%
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural events (eg international fairs)	52%
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering opportunities	19%
<input type="checkbox"/> Interaction with local community/visits to British homes	12%
<input type="checkbox"/> Events run by students' association	34%
<input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated international student common room	10%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	14%

Are any activities run specifically to encourage home and international students to mix?

Survey results

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – run by college	39%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – run by students' union/association	36%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – run by students	8%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	26%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	8%

FINANCE

Are fees for future years fixed in advance, ie is a student informed prior to registration what fees will be for the duration of their course of study?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Always	66%
<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	17%
<input type="checkbox"/> Never	8%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	9%

Are international students required to pay a deposit on acceptance of offer?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	92%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	2%
<input type="checkbox"/> In some cases	5%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

Does your institution allow international students to pay fees by instalments?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, all international students	34%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, some students (eg depending on length of course)	22%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, but only by special arrangement in cases of hardship	25%
<input type="checkbox"/> No	16%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	0%

Does your institution have hardship funding available to international students?

Survey results

(Please tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, the institution has a special hardship fund for international students	5%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, international students have access to a hardship fund available for all students	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> No designated funding, but institution/department will assist in occasional extreme cases	31%
<input type="checkbox"/> No, no hardship funding available	58%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	8%

What support and funding is available from the college to international students with a disability?

Ranged from same as for home students to none. Please refer to body of report for details.

EMPLOYMENT

Does your institution provide specific help to international students seeking part-time work while studying?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – we provide specific services for international students in-house	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – but referred to external agency, not in-house	13%
<input type="checkbox"/> No – same services available as to home students	71%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

Does your institution provide specific help to international students with careers or further study after leaving your institution?

(Tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – we provide specific services in-house	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – but referred to external agency, not in-house	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> No – same services available as to home students	51%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	2%

FEEDBACK

Do you seek international student feedback via any of the following?

(Tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> International student representatives or committee	27%
<input type="checkbox"/> A specific international student satisfaction survey	45%
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups of international students	36%
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular meetings/tutorials	44%
<input type="checkbox"/> Exit interviews	22%
<input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of international student responses from a general student satisfaction evaluation	34%
<input type="checkbox"/> No separate analysis of international student satisfaction	14%
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/can't say	3%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	5%