



6 October 2021

Dear Student,

Whether you are starting a new course or returning to pick up where you left off, welcome to the UK.

UKCISA's mission is to support international students and all who work with them to ensure that you get the most from your experience. We are writing to give you some information that we hope will help you to thrive in the UK and enjoy your studies.

Support on campus

If you encounter any problems or difficulties during your time in the UK, in the first instance you should turn to your education provider. Most institutions will have a Student Services team who look after the wellbeing of students. You can seek confidential support on a range of issues, from financial hardship to housing worries to mental health issues, without judgement or any fear of repercussions to your academic standing.

Your Students' Union is also there for you, so we recommend that you contact them in your first few weeks to find out what they offer. Some Students' Unions have a dedicated International Students' Officer, but all unions have someone who looks after international students and can welcome you to the union.

Student clubs and societies

Student societies, sports clubs and extracurricular activities are a great way to meet other students. When we talk to international students near the end of their studies, they often tell us they wish they had got involved in some of the clubs and societies at their institution earlier. It's likely that clubs and societies will run a mix of face-to-face and online activities this year that will give you a range of opportunities to connect with other students who share similar interests.

Support from UKCISA

The [UKCISA website](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk) has lots of information and advice for international students – from adapting to life in the UK and up-to-date immigration advice, to information on health and wellbeing, including Covid-19 vaccinations.

We also run an advice line, which you can call between 1pm and 4pm Monday to Friday to speak to one of our specialist advisers. This is useful for you if you don't have a specialist immigration adviser at your institution or if you are confused by fees regulations.

- [Find out more here](#)

Covid-19

The UK government continues to monitor cases at local and national levels and guidance is regularly updated. You can keep up-to-date with area specific guidance on the GOV.UK website.

Vaccination, testing and treatment for Covid-19 is **free** to everyone in the UK regardless of immigration status. Information about how to book a test is available on the [GOV.UK website](#).

- For further guidance, [please take a look at our website](#)

UKCISA's work on behalf of international students

Our vision at UKCISA is that every international student who comes to the UK has a positive experience. Over the next academic year, UKCISA is working with its members on an International Student Charter, in support of the UK Government's International Education Strategy aims. We are also working with the Office for Students to identify a range of lessons learned from the pandemic that can help ensure a positive academic and social experience for international students.

- Sign up here to stay informed of all [the work we do on your behalf](#)
- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest update

#WeAreInternational

The #WeAreInternational campaign celebrates the value of international education and international students by sharing stories of those studying in the UK.

In 2020 we appointed the first two cohorts of [#WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors](#), who work with us to shape a quality student experience.

The ambassadors are using their knowledge of studying in the UK to influence policy and lead the #WeAreInternational campaign, so that together we can develop an inclusive global student community.

Applications for the next cohort of student ambassadors are now open until 3rd November 2021- [check the UKCISA website to find out more](#).

We would love for you to share your experiences of student life and studying in the UK with us.

- [Find out how you can get involved with the #WeAreInternational campaign](#)

UKCISA Fest 2021

UKCISA Fest is an annual event in mid-November that celebrates International Students' Day – bringing together international students across the UK, it informs policy and practice through lived experience.

Whether you are newly arrived in the UK, or have been studying here for a while, this is an opportunity to explore and discuss aspects of your student experience, from academic and mental health support, to employability and immigration policy.

From Monday 15th November to Wednesday 17th November, we invite you to participate in virtual webinars and workshops alongside other students, UKCISA members, sector partners and policy makers. Discussions will be led by our #WeAreInternational Student Ambassadors, with sessions aiming to develop a deeper understanding of international students' experiences at every stage of your education journey.

Registration opens soon – follow the [UKCISA website](#) and social media channels to find out more. We hope you can join us!

Fraud and scams

Some criminals specifically target international students, telephoning them and pretending to be from a legitimate organisation (such as the UK Home Office, an embassy, other government departments, an education agent or even UKCISA).

They operate very sophisticated scams, calling or emailing students to demand large sums of money to avoid losing their visa or other punishment, e.g. imprisonment. Scammers often hold a lot of personal information, so it is easy to believe it is genuine.

Please do not make any payments or share personal information on an unsolicited call. UKVI or other bodies will never demand payment over the telephone. If you are in any doubt, please contact your institution.

If you think you may have been targeted by this scam, please contact your university's International Office or report it to [Action Fraud](#). See UKCISA's advice about [identifying a scam](#).

Support from external organisations

There are many other UK organisations that support students:

- [Student Minds](#) has support and resources around mental health, as well as the [Student Space programme](#) to support students through coronavirus
- The [National Union of Students](#) champions student rights
- The [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) reviews complaints about higher education institutions in England and Wales, and is the place to turn to in the unlikely event of an unresolved complaint with your institution

International students are at the heart of everything we do at UKCISA. We understand that it's a huge step to leave home to study abroad and your experience of studying may be different to what you imagined. We know that staff in all our member institutions are working hard to make sure that your time studying here this year will be worthwhile, valuable, and full of opportunity.

With very best wishes,

Anne Marie Graham
Chief Executive, UKCISA



Simran Mahajan
Incoming Chair, Student Advisory Group UKCISA

