LEARN ENGLISH IN THE UK
AN EDUCATION AGENT’S GUIDE

STUDY UK
DISCOVER YOU

BRITISH COUNCIL

GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and studying in the UK</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our quality assurance scheme</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Council Certificate for Agents, Advisors and Counsellors,</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Advanced Certificate for Agents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing a course and a provider</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation options</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visas</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language learning resources</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other types of UK education</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful resources</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome

Welcome to the British Council’s education agent’s guide to studying English in the UK.

The British Council recognises that education agents are important partners for the UK English language sector and is committed to supporting agents who represent British Council accredited UK English language centres. To acknowledge the significant contribution made by agents in promoting UK English language courses to students considering international study, we aim to support you in continuing to build up these opportunities and the profile of UK English language learning courses.

Our aim in developing and updating the Education Agent’s Guide is to support the accredited UK English language teaching sector through ensuring agents, and through agents, students are in a position to make informed decisions about studying in the UK and able to choose the UK course most suitable for them.

Within this guide we have included information that we hope will support you in promoting UK English language courses and in developing your relationships with UK education providers. The main focus of the guide is studying English in the UK. However, we have also included some information on other areas of UK education such as universities, colleges and independent boarding schools. This guide will help you understand the UK English language teaching offer, including types of courses, quality assurance and what life in the UK is like for international students. We hope you find this guide useful.

The British Council also runs an agent training programme. While we do not accredit or officially recognise education agents, we aim to provide support to continually develop the quality and effectiveness of agents representing UK education and the accredited UK English language sector.

Anna Searle
Director English Language
British Council
LIVING AND STUDYING IN THE UK

We are pleased to welcome roughly 500,000 people each year to the UK to study English, and we believe we have a course and a location for everyone.

Choice of courses
The UK has the largest range of English language courses in the world.

Recognised qualifications
UK English language qualifications have international recognition and will be valued anywhere in the world.

Affordable
British Council accredited courses are affordable – there is something to suit all budgets.

Culture
From Shakespeare and Harry Potter to The Premier League and Glastonbury, the UK has something for everyone.

Academic excellence
The UK has a reputation for excellence in teaching English as a foreign language. It has long led the world in language teaching methodology, which means that international students have the potential to achieve a high level of success in the UK.

British Council Accreditation UK
There are over 500 British Council accredited schools, colleges and universities throughout the UK. Accreditation UK covers everything that affects the students’ stay – accommodation, teachers’ qualifications, school premises, leisure activities and even complaints.

Multicultural life
Students can practise their English while meeting people from all over the world.

The home of English
Where better to study than the home of the English language?

Further study
There are great options for students to continue their studies at a high-quality UK further or higher education institution.

Four countries in one
We accredit centres in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
OUR QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME

Choose a high-quality, British Council accredited English language centre.

Accreditation UK is the quality assurance scheme for English language teaching (ELT) course providers in the UK. It is managed by the British Council in partnership with English UK.

British Council inspections ensure centres continue to offer high-quality services and facilities.

Our independent inspectors check that:

- ELT provision is well managed
- brochures and publicity accurately reflect what is provided
- teachers are appropriately qualified and supported
- teaching meets our requirements (inspectors observe all teachers during the inspection)
- teachers and students have access to learning resources and equipment
- premises are safe, with properly equipped classrooms and areas for relaxation
- students receive a 24-hour emergency contact number
- proper emergency procedures are in place
- children receive extra care and specific safeguarding procedures are in place
- accommodation, including homestay, is regularly inspected
- a clear complaints procedure exists.

We have been providing quality assurance to the UK ELT industry since 1982.
Key features of British Council accreditation:

- we are approved by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) for quality assurance of education providers working with students who need a short-term study visa to enter the UK
- we offer students an independent complaints service
- we offer a Student Emergency Support Fund which, in the rare event that an accredited centre closes, ensures students can finish their course at no extra cost
- we have been providing quality assurance to the UK ELT industry since 1982
- we accredit over 500 centres across the UK, including England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands.

Full details of the accreditation scheme, including a list of all accredited centres, the inspection criteria, inspection report summaries and full inspection reports, are available on the website

www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation

For any enquiries related specifically to accreditation, email accreditation.unit@britishcouncil.org

Accredited by the

BRITISH COUNCIL

for the teaching of English in the UK
The British Council is committed to working with quality agents who represent UK institutions.

Our work with agents, advisors, counsellors and consultants centres around promoting and supporting quality, professionalism and integrity. Training is a core component of our strategy.

**British Council Certificate for Agents, Advisors and Counsellors**

Online delivery over eight study weeks includes self-assessment tests, and is assessed by a formal written exam and professional development record.

**About the course**
- The UK education and training system; courses and qualifications at each level.
- The attractions for students considering studying and living in the UK.
- Quality assurance mechanisms and how they operate.
- Student lifestyle issues – living costs, travel and accommodation.
- Course fees and scholarships.
- Welfare and support provided for international students in the UK.
- UK application procedures and standard entry requirements; visa and immigration regulations.
- The agents’ operating environment and legal requirements.

**Benefits of the course**
- Recognition of commitment to quality and professionalism.
- Quality of qualification acknowledged among UK education institutions.
- Certificate to evidence successful completion.
- Public listing on the British Council trained agents list.

This qualification is valid for a period of two years and the certificate is provided to the individual. Reissue is dependent on evidence of participation in continuing professional development activity through the advanced professional development route, the British Council Advanced Certificate for Agents.
**British Council Advanced Certificate for Agents**

This is a portfolio-based qualification that plans and tracks professional development on an ongoing basis, emphasising professionalism, ethical behaviour, excellence in support and service provision.

**About the course**

A minimum of 35 hours of CPD must be covered and include the following areas:

- education sector knowledge
- life in the UK
- visas and immigration
- marketing and promotion
- professionalism and ethics.

**Benefits of the course**

- Access to/recognition of ongoing professional development with the British Council.
- Achieve advanced agent status.
- Continued listing on the British Council trained agents list.
- Increased international recognition.

To be eligible for the training programmes, agents must have agreements in place with at least two institutions that are on the Register of Sponsors or are an accredited language school. References will be checked.

More information on the courses and the trained agents list can be found here: [www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/education-agents)

For information regarding available training in your region, please email [agent.enquiries@britishcouncil.org](mailto:agent.enquiries@britishcouncil.org)

**Study UK: a Guide for Education Agents and Counsellors**

As part of the Study UK: Discover You campaign, we are launching a massive open online course (referred to as a MOOC) on the FutureLearn platform.

You can get a taster by looking at the sign-up page: [www.futurelearn.com/courses/study-uk-education-agents](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/study-uk-education-agents)

This course will be of interest to anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of the UK education system and what it is like to study in the UK. It will be your opportunity to interact with other people around the world with a wide range of contexts and experience and exchange opinions, ideas and expertise while learning.
CHOOSING A COURSE AND A PROVIDER

We have a wide range of courses and providers available throughout the UK, for students of all ages and levels.

**Course providers**
We accredit a range of high-quality providers including:

- private language schools
- boarding schools, international study centres, independent schools and colleges
- further education institutions
- higher education institutions.

Our high-quality providers offer courses for all ages and levels of ability, and often include social, sporting and cultural activities.

**Types of courses and qualifications**
English language courses cover a very wide range of purposes from the general to the very specific. It is possible to choose between intensive English language training courses, or to opt for a course which combines the study of English with a hobby such as tennis or photography.

British Council accredited English language courses fall into 13 main types:

- general and intensive English
- English for Academic Purposes (EAP)
- pre-sessional English courses
- foundation courses
- support/in-session English courses
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
- ‘English Plus’ combined courses
- seasonal courses
- business English courses
- work experience programmes
- individual or one-to-one tuition
- examination courses
- home tuition.
Teaching and learning methods
The UK has long been at the forefront of Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and TEFL itself has pioneered many of the techniques now used for teaching other languages.

The emphasis is on learning the language by using it rather than just studying it. Whatever the students’ level of English – from beginner to advanced – they will be encouraged to communicate from the moment they enter the classroom.

Students may take part in a wide range of activities, including games, problem-solving, discussions and simulations, as well as practising specific language points. If they are studying English for Academic Purposes, the focus will be on developing the skills needed to follow an academic course, such as essay writing, describing statistical data, listening to lectures, reading academic articles and taking part in seminars.

Search for courses online
www.englishuk.com/en/course-finder

Remember to always double-check that the centre you choose is still accredited by the British Council: use the A–Z list on www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation

Please note that some accredited centres aren’t also English UK members and so wouldn’t appear on this course finder. This isn’t an indication of the quality of these centres.
ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

British Council inspectors ensure accommodation provision is of the required standard.

Our inspectors visit a selection of accommodation each centre has to offer as part of the regular inspection process. Additionally, unannounced spot check inspections may focus on accommodation.

Different types of accommodation:

Homestay
- The student lives with a family, with their own bedroom or sharing with another student.
- The hosts treat the student as a full member of the household, eating together and sharing the common living areas.
- No more than four students are accommodated in a homestay at any one time.

Residential
- This includes private homes accommodating more than four students, student houses, halls or hostels, catered or self-catering.
- It is not suitable for under-18s if there is no overnight supervision.

While visiting the accommodation, our inspectors check that accommodation provides:
- bedrooms and common areas that are in a proper state of cleanliness and repair
- adequate heating and lighting
- sufficiently spacious bedrooms with natural light, equipped with an adequately sized bed and adequate hanging and drawer space for clothes
- privacy from members of the opposite sex
- a table for private study (where appropriate)
- sufficient washing facilities and access to a bathroom, with baths or showers available daily
- a change of towels and bed linen each week and an adequate supply of duvets or blankets
- a weekly laundry service (especially in the case of under-16s) or clearly explained laundry arrangements.
We ensure that:

◆ students are given a person within the school who can be contacted if there are any problems
◆ all meals provided are well-balanced
◆ all accommodation is checked (for safety and suitability) before students are placed, and that it is inspected at least once every two years
◆ the accommodation confirmation includes information on location and journey time to and from the centre.

Each type of accommodation offers something different. Talk to your clients about what they want.

If your client wants an authentic UK experience, homestay is a good choice as it gives students the opportunity to speak English with native speakers.

Being in a homestay is all part of the UK cultural experience. Houses will differ in size and décor. However, we check that:

◆ no more than four students are in a homestay, and no more than two students in the same room
◆ students with the same first language are not lodged in the same home at the same time (unless requested)
◆ English is normally the language of communication in the home
◆ hosts caring for children are checked for suitability and given safeguarding training.

In the rare event that your client’s experience does not match these requirements, please draw this to the attention of the accommodation officer immediately and inform the British Council or English UK (for English UK member centres) if action is not taken to remedy the situation:

British Council: accreditation.unit@britishcouncil.org

English UK: info@englishuk.com

For more information on our accommodation requirements please refer to page 28 of the Accreditation Handbook: www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres
VISAS

Working closely with key partners across the UK government and education sector, the British Council aims to help international students have a positive experience of UK student life.

The British Council works closely with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to help students, agents and audiences worldwide understand the UK’s student immigration system.

Please always refer to and use the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) website:

Tier 4 (general) student –
www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/overview

Tier 4 Dependent of student –
www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/family-members

Tier 4 Child student –
www.gov.uk/child-study-visa/overview

Short-term study visa –
www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/overview

Immigration rules change frequently so please use the above links to check that the information is still up-to-date and to confirm any specific information.

Guidance for students and the education community worldwide
The British Council provides information about studying, living and working in the UK to international students, agents and education providers.

❖ First steps – a pre-departure guide for international students coming to study in the UK. Covers immigration, fees and maintenance costs; preparing for their travel to the UK; arrival in the UK; settling in; and useful organisations.

❖ Creating Confidence – the essential personal safety guide for international students studying in the UK.

❖ Safety First – the essential personal safety guide for international visitors and workers to the UK.

These publications are on our agent USB and can also be downloaded from:
www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe/what-we-do/preparation-study-work-uk

https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/planning/pre-departure-briefings
Short-term study visa
Your clients can apply for a short-term study visa if they are doing a short course of study in the UK, are from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, and meet the other eligibility requirements:

They must prove that they:
- have been offered a place on a course in the UK at an accepted place of study
- have enough money to support themselves without working or help from public funds, or that relatives and friends can support and house them
- can pay for their return or onward journey.

They must be accepted on a course with an education provider that holds a Tier 4 sponsor licence.

Otherwise their course will need to be held at an educational institution listed by one of the following organisations found at: www.gov.uk/study-visit-visa/eligibility

They can stay for:
- six months – for any short course (including English language courses), or short period of research if they are 18 or over
- 11 months – if they are 18 or over and taking an English language course.

Tier 4 Child student
Your clients can apply for the Tier 4 (Child) student visa if they are aged between four and 17 and they want to study at an independent school in the UK.

They can:
- study at an independent fee-paying school
- apply from outside the UK
- apply to extend their stay.

They should also:
- have an unconditional place on a course with a licensed Tier 4 sponsor
- have the consent of their parent or guardian
- have enough money to cover their course fees and living costs
- meet the eligibility requirements: www.gov.uk/child-study-visa/eligibility
Tier 4 (General) student visa

Students can apply for a Tier 4 (General) student visa to study in the UK if they are 16 or over and they:

◆ have been offered a place on a course with a licensed sponsor
◆ can speak, read, write and understand English – www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english
◆ have enough money to support themselves and pay for their course – this will vary depending on their circumstances
◆ are from a country that’s not in the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland
◆ meet the other eligibility requirements:

- They can do a course that’s one of the following:
  - full-time leading to a qualification that’s at least level 6 on the Ofqual register www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean
  - an overseas course of degree level study that’s equal to a UK higher education course and is being run by an overseas higher education institution
  - full-time, with at least 15 hours per week of organised daytime study, leading to a qualification which is at last level 3 on the Ofqual register
  - a recognised foundation programme as a postgraduate doctor or dentist.

They can:
◆ study
◆ work as a student union sabbatical officer
◆ apply from inside or outside the UK
◆ apply to extend their stay www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/extend-your-visa
◆ work – depending on what level their course is and what kind of sponsor they have.

Health surcharge

Your clients may need to pay a healthcare surcharge (called the ‘immigration health surcharge’ or IHS) as part of their immigration application.

If they are applying online or through the premium service centre, they will pay the surcharge as part of their application or when they book an appointment.

If they are applying by post, they must pay the healthcare surcharge online before they send their application – they need to include the IHS reference number on their application form.

They don’t have to pay the healthcare surcharge if they are applying from outside the UK for a visitor visa or any visa that lasts six months or less.

www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application/overview
Biometrics
If your clients apply to come to the UK for longer than six months they will need to have their fingerprints and photograph taken at a visa application centre (to get a biometric residence permit) as part of their application.

They will have to collect their biometric residence permit within ten days of when they said they would arrive in the UK (even if they actually arrive at a later date).

They may be able to get their visa faster or other services depending on what country they in – check with their visa application centre.

www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/collection
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCES

Our websites engage adults and children globally, and provide valuable support for learners of English.

LearnEnglish
www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish

The British Council’s website for adult and professional learners of English is available in Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish.

Students can:
◆ watch videos and listen to audio materials
◆ practise and improve their business and professional English
◆ practise grammar using games
◆ watch videos about how to prepare for exams.

Join one of our learning communities:
www.facebook.com/LearnEnglish.BritishCouncil
twitter.com/LearnEnglish_BC
www.youtube.com/britishcouncil

LearnEnglish Mobile
www.britishcouncil.org/mobilelearning

Visit our website to access over 13 English learning apps for an interactive learning experience. English language learners of all ages can listen to podcasts, watch videos and practise and improve their grammar skills.
LearnEnglish Kids
www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishkids
This is a fun, educational website for children aged five to 12 and is available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Thai. There are vocabulary and grammar games, songs, stories and videos. Teachers and parents can also access resources and support to help children learn.

LearnEnglish Teens
www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishteen
This is designed especially for 13–17 year olds where they can:
♦ learn about life, trends and traditions in the UK
♦ practise grammar and vocabulary with videos
♦ find top tips to help them through exams and tests.
English language courses are just one of the many types of education available in the UK.

Other courses and qualifications available to international students:

**Vocational or work-based courses**
Available in a wide range of subjects and levels, including business, welfare and social services, computing, engineering, secretarial, finance and media studies. These are practical courses and provide the necessary skills and experience for employment.

**Access and foundation courses**
Prepare students for higher education, usually offer high levels of support and have an emphasis on study skills such as essay writing. These courses last one year and prepare students to join the education system as an undergraduate.

**Foundation degrees**
These are employment-related qualifications, usually take two full-time years to complete and are one level below honours degrees. Graduates can progress straight into employment or into the final year of a degree course.
**Undergraduate degrees**
Academic study designed to help students gain a thorough understanding of a subject. A full-time course normally takes three to four years to complete and degree titles include: Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Education (BEd) and Bachelor of Engineering (BEng).

**Postgraduate degrees and diplomas**
Available in a wide range of UK taught or research courses, including postgraduate diplomas and certificates, master’s degrees, MBAs and PhDs. To gain entry on to courses students need an undergraduate degree or equivalent in a relevant subject area.

**Professional qualifications**
Courses include accountancy, law and marketing. Most form a flexible route leading to membership of a professional association. Students may need to sit examinations and complete appropriate periods of work experience.
USEFUL RESOURCES

Keeping your professional knowledge up to date is an important activity that will enable you to be more effective in your everyday work and meet the requirements of your clients. The following resources will give you comprehensive and current information.

**English Agenda**

Our English in the UK section contains information and resources to support your work as an agent with UK English language centres. Students can download our brochures that will help them on arrival in the UK and our directory of accredited schools.

http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/english-uk

**BETA (British Education and Youth Travel Association)**

Search for providers of accommodation, leisure activities, travel companies and lots more. www.betauk.com

**British Council Accreditation**

For up-to-date information about Accreditation UK, including the A–Z list of accredited centres.

www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation

**English UK**

Search for courses using the ‘course finder’ tool, find out about international relationship building events and keep up to date with news from the ELT industry.

www.englishuk.com

An entrepreneur. A scientist. An artist. A social leader. What makes a person who can change the world? UK education opens up possibilities – often in the most surprising ways.

From a one week general English course over the summer, English for Business, English and Scuba Diving and up to 11 months’ foundation/pathways courses to help you prepare for higher education, the UK has a huge range of choices to learn English.

study-uk.britishcouncil.org

study-uk.britishcouncil.org/options/courses-qualifications/learn-english-uk
English UK special interest and regional groups
Find information about learning English in specific regions of the UK.
www.englishuk.com/en/students/where-in-the-uk/choosing-where-you-study

Learn English in Northern Ireland
For information about learning English in Northern Ireland.
https://nireland.britishcouncil.org/learn-english/northern-ireland

Learn English in Scotland
For information about learning English in Scotland.
www.englishukscotland.com

Learn English in Wales
For information about learning English in Wales.
www.englishinwales.org.uk

COMING TO THE UK
VISAS, IMMIGRATION AND WORKING IN THE UK
UK Visas and Immigration Agency:
www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration
Jobcentre: www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

LIFE IN THE UK
Visit Britain: www.visitbritain.com
Culture 24: A searchable database of over 3,000 galleries, museums and heritage sites: www.culture24.org.uk
BBC Music: www.bbc.co.uk/music
Brit Events: www.britevents.com
British Council Music:
http://music.britishcouncil.org
British Film Institute: www.bfi.org.uk
Comedy Online: www.comedyonline.co.uk
Ents24: www.ents24.com
Live music and festivals: www.gigwise.com
National Union of Students:
www.nus.org.uk
Time Out: www.timeout.com
UK Sport: www.uksport.gov.uk
What’s On Stage:
www.whatsonstage.com
**HEALTH**
National Health Service: www.nhs.uk

**NEWS AND WEATHER**
BBC: www.bbc.co.uk
Met Office: www.metoffice.gov.uk
The Guardian: www.theguardian.com/uk
The Times: www.thetimes.co.uk

**TRAVEL**
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: www.dvla.gov.uk
International Student Identity Card: www.isic.org
Interrail: www.interrail.eu
National Express Coaches: www.nationalexpress.com
National Rail: www.nationalrail.co.uk
Lastminute: www.lastminute.com

**WHAT’S NEW IN EDUCATION**
**BBC education news**
Education news, features and analysis covering all sectors and products. www.bbc.co.uk/news/education

**British Council International Higher Education**
Explore the news, events, opportunities and research shaping International Higher Education. www.britishcouncil.org/education/ihe

**EL Gazette**
International English language teaching news. www.elgazette.com

**The Financial Times Business Education**
Topics include business school rankings, Global MBA, FT business school, features of the week and business school news. www.ft.com/business-education

**The Guardian**
A comprehensive website covering schools, MBA, TEFL, student news, research and books. www.guardian.co.uk/education

**ICEF Monitor**
Industry news, market intelligence, research and interviews. http://monitor.icef.com

**The PIE News**

**Study Travel Magazine**
A business publication for study abroad professionals. www.studytravel.network/magazine

**Times Higher Education**
Features UK and international stories and also publishes abbreviated versions online. www.timeshighereducation.co.uk