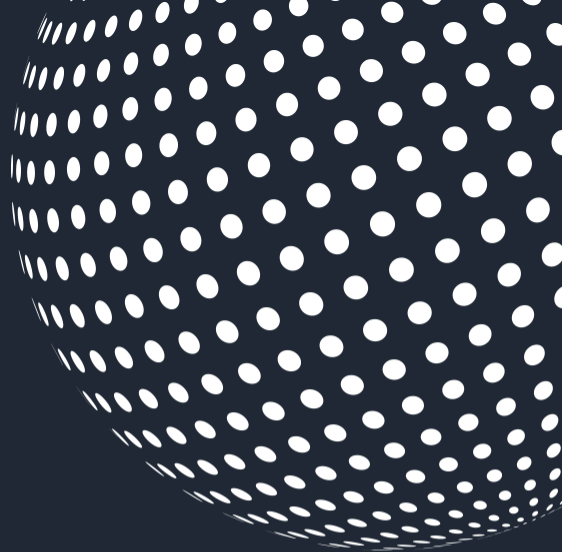# ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS AND ADVISERS CONFERENCE 2023

20 – 21 June 2023, The Building Centre, London

UCAS

INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS AND ADVISERS CONFERENCE 2023

Breakout Session 1

Student Support on Campus

- AHZ Associates

UCAS

ON CAMPUS STUDENT SUPPORT

Orientation seminar for new arrivals

Organise orientation programmes before intakes start cover both academic and non-academic topics such as:

Academic

- ❑ Enrolment guidelines
- ❑ Importance of maintaining minimum 85% attendance
- ❑ Assessments
- ❑ Encouraging the utilisation of university facilities such as career and employability, academic support team, student union, cultural clubs and societies, Library resources, etc.

Non-Academic

- ❑ Register with local GP
- ❑ Opening bank accounts
- ❑ Applying for National Insurance number
- ❑ Applying for Student Oyster cards or Railcards
- ❑ Creating forums for students to connect prior to arrival (e.g apps/Facebook groups)
- ❑ UK cultural orientations

Mental health support

Raise awareness about mental health through workshops, campaigns

Training sessions to reduce stigma and promote a positive and supportive campus environment

Collaboration with local mental health organisations for easy access to the students

Regular communication

Campus Champions

- ❑ Utilize your current students to support incoming international students in the first few weeks
- ❑ Airport pick up services
- ❑ Conduct regular check ins + meet ups
- ❑ Information on local food shopping, cultural food stores, restaurants and student discounts
- ❑ Best practice advice on useful apps for travel e.g. Citymapper, Bus London, Trainline
- ❑ Social orientations

Student activities

Encourage student involvement in clubs, societies and extra curriculum activities on campus

Arranging external events for students such as student networking events, dinner parties, day trips to different cities, etc

Career services

Assist students with career exploration

CV building and improvement

Job interview preparations

Job/placement search strategies

Creating placement opportunities for the placement year students

Arranging career fairs to facilitate connections between students and employers

Accommodation support

❑ Assist students with finding suitable accommodation if needed both on campus and off campus

❑ Tips and techniques for searching accommodation

❑ Information on housing resources, rental agreements, and living arrangements to ensure a smooth transition and comfortable living environment

❑ Using comparison sites and finance tips on how to get best value for money with bills

Student feedback and support

Create mechanism for students to provide feedback and suggestions regarding their experience on campus

Actively listen to student concerns and work with universities to address issues and help improve the overall experience for future students

Academic advice

Arrange events with successful alumni to share their experience and how new students can kick start their time on campus

Share information on where students can get free learning resources to help with their study such as linda.com, khanacademy, udacity, Grammarly etc.

AHZ
ASSOCIATES ™
Trusted UK Universities Representative

Breakout Session 2

Supporting Applicants to Oxford or Cambridge

- Sam Twells, Regional Manager (Europe)

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Contents

- Similarities and differences

- What we're looking for

- Making an application

- Changes to admissions in 2023

Similarities and differences

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CAMBRIDGE

Similarities

- Structure – both collegiate universities

- Same subject, same approach – e.g. Law, Medicine, Maths, Engineering

- Small-group tuition – tutorials (Oxford) / supervisions (Cambridge)

- Extensive academic and pastoral support

- Limited and mostly partial financial support for international students

- Most aspects of the application process

Differences

- Same subject, different approach – e.g. Natural Sciences (Cambridge) vs single Science courses (Oxford)

- Unique courses – e.g. Land Economy (Cambridge), PPE (Oxford)

- Dual degrees

- Entry requirements

- Limited aspects of the application process

- The cities of Oxford and Cambridge

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www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

What we're looking for in applicants

What information do we use to assess applicants?

Every application is considered individually and holistically. All available information is looked at together before decisions are made.

- Academic record

- Personal statement

- School reference

- Submitted written work

- Performance in any written assessment

- Performance at interview (if interviewed)

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www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

Entry requirements

A Level
Cambridge: A*AA / A*A*A, depending on the chosen course
Oxford: AAA—A*A*A, depending on the chosen course

IB Diploma
Cambridge: 40-42 points overall, including core points, with 776 in three Higher Level subjects
Oxford: 38-40 points overall, including core points, with 6s and 7s in the Higher Level subjects

English language requirements
As a condition of any offer, applicants may be asked to provide an English language test result (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL).

Both universities accept many other national and international qualifications – please check our websites for specific information and guidance.

What are we looking for?

Important

Genuine enthusiasm for chosen subject

Good 'fit' between applicant and course

Academic ability and potential

Capacity for hard work (~45 hours per

Interest & initiative > super-curricular

Good core knowledge & technical skills

Vocational commit-ment (where relevant

Not relevant

Personal or family background

School type

Extra-curricular activities

Cambridge is looking for the brightest and best students, irrespective of social, religious or school background.

Super-curricular resources

- [Cambridge: Super-curricular suggestions](#)
  Undergraduate Study website > Applying > Your application > Super-curricular suggestions

- [Cambridge: HE+ (myheplus.com)](#)
  Super-curricular resource bank, created and updated by Cambridge students and academics

- [Cambridge: Isaac Physics (isaacphysics.org)](#)
  Problem-solving activities and revision aids

- [Oxford: Oxplore (oxplore.org)](#)
  The 'Home of Big Questions', for students aged 11-18
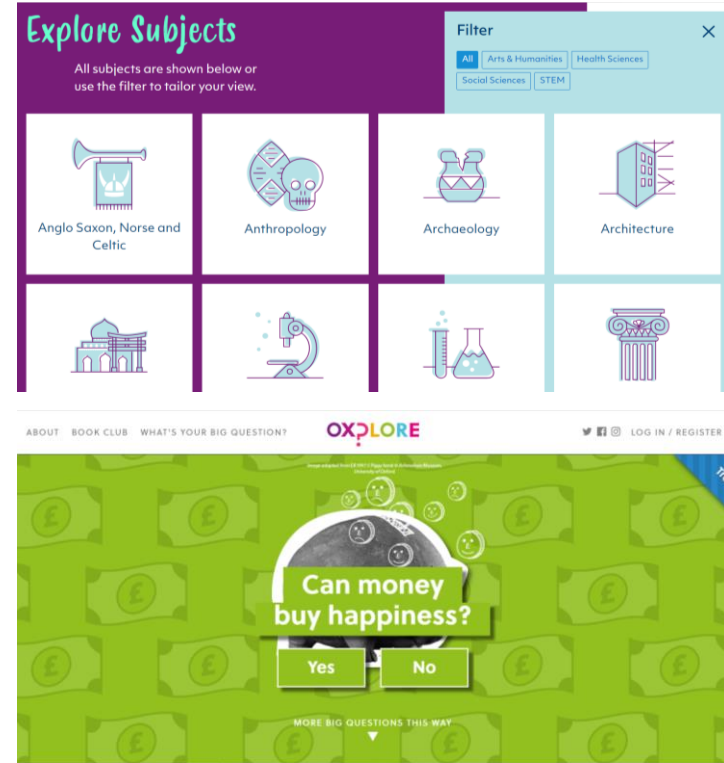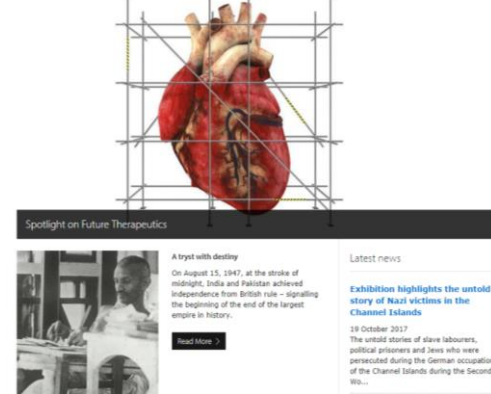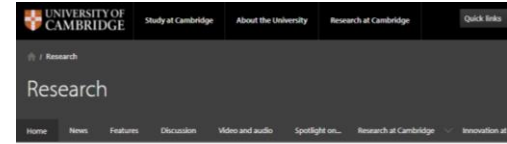
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Super-curricular resources

Making an application

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CAMBRIDGE

Applying to Oxford or Cambridge

1 Choose your course

2 Choose a College or make an open application

3 Check admissions test arrangements

4 UCAS application (16 October 2023)

Remember Application deadline

5 Additional application forms

6 Take admissions assessment and / or submit work

7 Interviews

8 Decision

Changes to admissions in 2023

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

UCAS personal statements

- Ongoing consultation about changes to the UCAS personal statement, but there are no changes for the 2023 or 2024 admissions cycles

- Any changes will be implemented from the 2025 admissions cycle at the earliest, but may come later

UCAS school references

UCAS references will be split into three sections, which cover the same information but are structured differently.

Recommended character limits per section:

- Section 1 – up to 1,000 characters
- Section 2 – up to 500 characters
- Section 3 – minimum of 2,000 characters
- Remaining 500 characters can be used to provide additional detail as appropriate for specific students.

Format:
If needed, please feel free to use short statements.

Admissions assessments

Cambridge
For applicants applying in 2023, admissions testing arrangements will be similar to those in previous years.

For applicants applying from 2024 onwards, changes to testing arrangements will be confirmed later in 2023.

Oxford
For applicants applying in 2023, the BMAT and the TSA will continue to be delivered by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing (CAAT) as paper-based tests.

CAAT will no longer deliver Oxford's own admissions tests. These will now be handled by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).
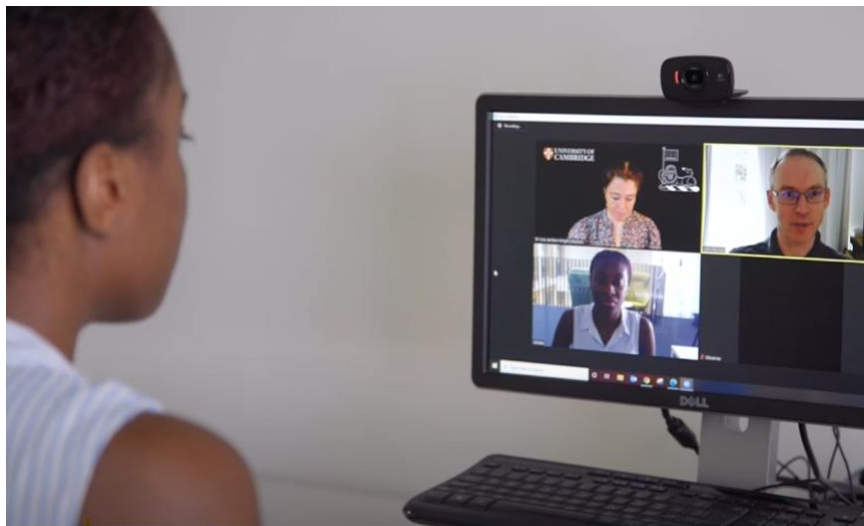
My Cambridge Application

Subject to final testing, My Cambridge Application (MyCApp) will have a new applicant interface this year.

The information requested will be similar to previous versions and we'll update the website shortly with more details.

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/mycamapp

Interviews

Cambridge

For the 2023 admissions cycle, most Cambridge Colleges will interview applicants online.

Six Colleges (Gonville & Caius, King's, Pembroke, Peterhouse, Selwyn and Trinity) will interview UK-based applicants in person and international applicants online.

Our admissions tutors have extensive experience of interviewing both online and in person. Please visit www.cam.ac.uk/interviews for further details.

Oxford

For the 2023 admissions cycle, all Oxford Colleges will interview applicants online.

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www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

How Cambridge communicates decisions

This year the Cambridge Colleges coordinated their communication of admissions decisions, ensuring that all candidates received a response on the same day via UCAS Track.

In 2024:
- We will again release all admissions outcomes on the same day (exact date TBC).
- Applicants will hear via UCAS Track and the College they applied to / were allocated to / have been made an offer by.

Please note:
- Applicants may be made an offer by a College which is different to the one they applied to. In UCAS, this will show as a different campus code, which they can check on our website.
- In a small number of cases, applicants may be made an offer for deferred entry, so should double-check the year of entry.

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www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk

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Thank you for listening

www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk
www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate

InternationalAdmissions@admin.cam.ac.uk
uni-of-oxford.custhelp.com

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Lunch Break, Refreshments and Exhibition

Breakout Session 3

UK Visas and Immigration update for International advisers

- Jack Rose , UK VISAs and Immigration

UCAS

VSI Study Operations
## Operational Update

June 2023

UK Vis

Reflections across 2022/23

➢ The make up of the event, what to expect and what not to expect.

➢ The backdrop of 2022 and the challenges across UKVI visa processing within 2023.

➢ UKVI system overhaul/refresh and current impacts on decision making.

➢ Delivering largest volume of student visas ever seen in 2022 & projected intake for 2023.

➢ Further planned reform across Study operations across 2023.

➢ Service Management focus within UKVI looking at full customer journey.

➢ Review of engagement activity and transparency of information.

UK Visas & Immigration

Student Data Analysis (March 2023)
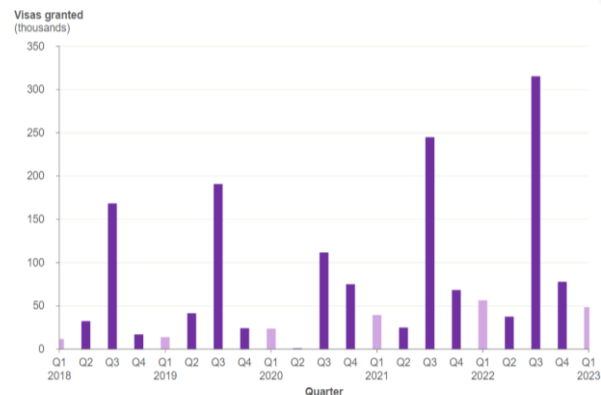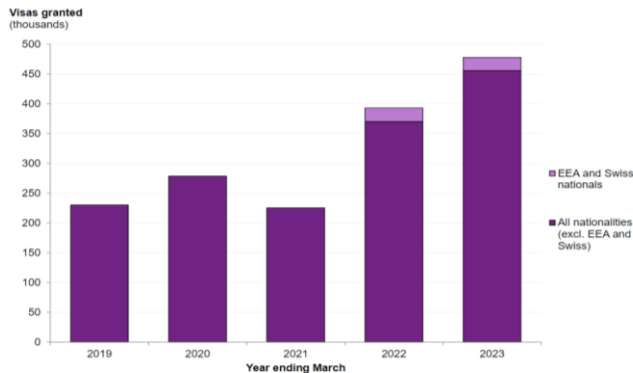
- For the year ending March 2023, there were 477,931 study visas granted to main applicants, this is 22% more than in the year ending March 2022 and 108% more than 2019, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 2023 operational projections show a potential further growth up to c800k including student dependants.

- Indian student numbers (138,532) rose above Chinese (100,397) volumes. Chinese and Indian nationals together comprised half (50%) of all sponsored study grants. Nigeria, Pakistan and the USA comprised the rest of the top 5 intake list.

- EEA students totalled 22,457 with French (4,083) and German (4,040) and students accounting for the highest volumes.

- Significant increase in volumes attributed to both the quality of education on offer within UK institutions as well as the post-study offer of the Graduate route introduced in July 2021.

- Continuing close liaison with sector representatives as well as institutions directly on future forecasting.

UK Visas & Immigration

Source: Why do people come to the UK? To study - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Student Dependant Data Analysis

Visas granted to dependants of sponsored study visa holders by nationality, and percentage of all sponsored study related visas for dependants, year ending March 2020 to 2023
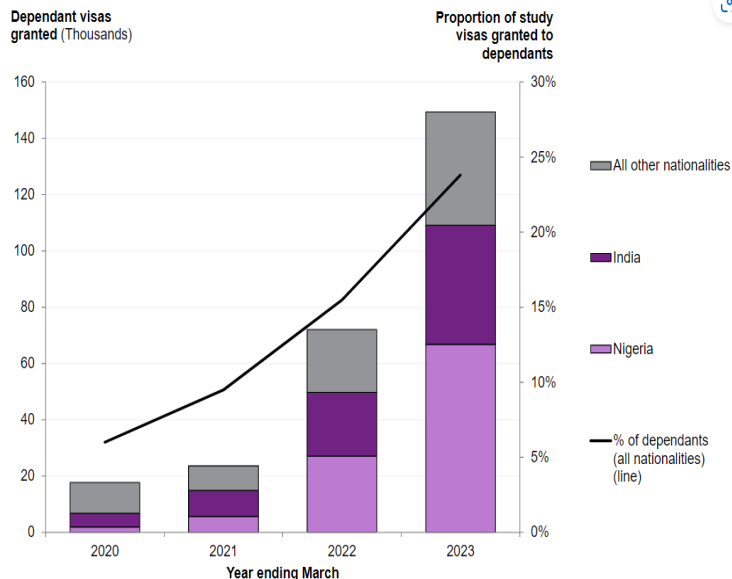
- In the year ending March 2023, almost one quarter (24%) of all sponsored study related visas granted were to dependants of students (149,400), compared to 15% (72,062) in the year ending March 2022.

- Nigeria had the highest number of dependants (66,796) of sponsored study visa holders in the year ending March 2023, increasing from 27,137 in the year ending March 2022.

- 42,381 Indian dependants were granted visas in comparison to 22,958 in the previous year.

- Since 2019, both the total number of dependants and the proportion of all sponsored study related visas granted to dependants have increased. This may reflect a change in the composition of students, if for example there are a greater number of older students attracted to study in the UK.

UK Visas & Immigration

Current Operational Position

Service Standards

Study Casework are currently considering Visa applications several days inside of the published standard application target of 15 days.

In-Country applications are taking approximately 3 weeks (SLA target 8 weeks)

Summer Surge Readiness Preparation:

Intake projections have been finalised with c450k applications expected during the summer surge. Recruitment and casework training has started and a number of projects are underway to implement lessons learnt from the 2022 surge periods.

Student Casework

June 2023

Engagement activity

Work continues on direct engagement with institutions and sector representatives to raise awareness of current risks being seen across student visa intake as well as developing future vision of engagement via the account manager function.

Wider Visa Routes

All Visa routes remain delivering decisions within published SLA.

These include Visit, Work, Marriage and Ukrainian Visas.

UK Visas & Immigration

Surge Readiness Activities

RESOURCE:

- Secured support from a number of teams across UKVI

- Recruited and upskilled managers.

- Onshore support in advance of surge to ensure readiness

- Acted on previous surge review to make improvements in line with lessons learned.

TRAINING:

- Refreshed training package for caseworkers

- Remote training options to secure support from decision making hubs across the UK.

- Capability and quality training measures for trainers and samplers

- Quality Assurance board

COMMS:

- Regular service delivery calls for internal stakeholders

- Social media campaign.

- Sector Briefs and comms directly to students and sponsors with key messages

UK Visas & Immigration

Operational Improvement for 2023

Service Management:

- A comprehensive **Summer Surge review**, with key recommendations for implementation in October 2023 made after interviewing all stakeholders and sector representatives.

- Commissioning of deep dives into the **customer insight** feedback.

- Improved feedback of **Quality Assurance** work to aid with error reduction activity, including new tools for decision makers and an improvement in feedback loops to learn from errors made.

Consideration of closing Premium Customer Service Team offering, replacing it with the formation of three new teams to aid the customer journey:

Continuation of **early life** comms, updating the leaflet on how/when to apply as well as ensuring key documentation requirements are clearly indicated.

UK Visas & Immigration

PCST Reform

Why: The current offer, including fee has been the same for 10 years.

Analysis over a year showed queries received - **70%** - were "transactional" ie BRP Error/not received, application updates or Immigration History Checks.

Following extensive sector feedback, improvements were made including accommodation moves, large scale recruitment, training, a policy embedded lead and a cleanse of AMP.

A 3 tier offer was considered, with a gold, silver, bronze package developed.

One step further- a free service for all sponsors made up of:

- **Engagement team**
- **Customer service team**
- **Enhanced sponsorship team**

The intention is for increased efficiency and for queries to be routed direct to teams that deal with them for a faster resolution.

An online event has been held explaining the changes with a document and 2 FAQ's sent through amp to all premium customers. We will continue our monthly FAQ and in July share the intended customer service contact points, with a final offer submitted in August. Amp will continue to be used for transactional requests and refunds given to those who's contract expire following the new offering.

Following feedback from the sector around surge delivery, this will go live in **October.**

UK Visas & Immigration

Risk updates

Current trends across the study sector:

- Student visa route continues to be a largely compliant route with low refusal rates. Typically the average refusal rate falls around 3% across the course of the calendar year.

- UKVI engage regularly with both sector representatives and institutions directly on emerging risks and challenges. Alongside sharing information with groups such as UKCISA, UUK, BUILA and Russell Group, UKVI student operations produce a quarterly 'Study Brief' which aims to capture and update the sector on emerging risks and challenges.

- Recent topics of engagement have included:

1. Students arriving in the UK and claiming Asylum within a short period of time. Institutions impacted by these students have been engaging directly with UKVI.
2. Individuals identified as having submitted forged documentation as part of their visa application, including bank statements, educational certificates and bank loan letters.
3. Encounters with students either at the application stage or upon arrival at the UK border who don't have the relevant English language skills claimed.
4. Funds being recycled by agents to satisfy the immigration rules. Students being left destitute due to not being able to access funds required to maintain & accommodate themselves, or pay their tuition fees.
5. Increasing numbers of Indian students issued with visas who have then travelled to the UK and been reported by their sponsor as not having enrolled or showing poor attendance.

- UKVI takes varying approaches when engaging on the topic or risk dependant on the scale of the risk and information available to share. We continue to work with institutions directly affected to identify and address the route cause of the problem as well as sharing information with sector partners to help publicise such risk for others to be aware of.

UK Visas & Immigration

Graduate Route

The Graduate Route launched on 1st July 2021.

Since launch we have received **194,973** applications from graduates who are seeking to extend their stay to either work, or to look for work, within the United Kingdom.

Over c148k applications were made from customers who have been able to reuse their biometrics from their last student application, with c46k customers attending Sopra to have new biometrics taken. Most in-person enrolment customers are dependants, or **students who have damaged/misplaced their original BRP card**.

On average, the Graduate Route has less than **1% refusal rate**. Our surge points so far have aligned to the student life cycle, with peaks in **September, January, and May**. We are currently working comfortably within SLA, however we are conscious that there are some longstanding technical issues impacting a small cohort of customers that are currently being prioritised and resolved. A review on priority service options remains under consideration.

Prospective Graduate Route students may be impacted by the marketing boycott. We have circulated a Q&A to help support students who might be impacted by this.

EU / EEA / Nationality

Nationality	Applications
India	82,577
Nigeria	25,077
China	19,042
Pakistan	13,300
United States of America	6,545
Bangladesh	5,708
Malaysia	3,245
Sri Lanka	2,852
Ghana	2,049
Nepal	1,873

We would like to remind students that they must wait for their results before applying, and should wait until their **successful course completion** has been reported to UKVI. Although we continue to exercise some flexibility where the notification is due shortly after application, if they apply too early, their application may be refused.

UK Visas & Immigration
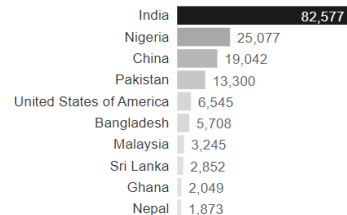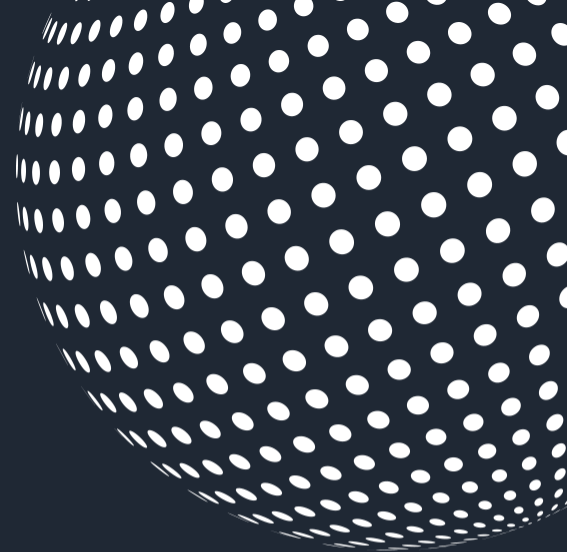
Key messaging for 2023

- We expect high demand for UK student visas this summer. Apply for your student visa as early as possible - as soon as you have received your Certificate of Acceptance for Study (CAS) from your education provider. You can apply 6 months before your course start date.

- August is the peak month for UK student visa applications. Beat the rush and apply before August, if possible, to allow time to travel for September course start dates.

- For the latest student visa decision waiting times see: www.gov.uk/guidance/visa-decision-waiting-times-applications-outside-the-uk

- Complete your student visa application correctly – check you have included all necessary information and documents. Your decision could take longer to be assessed if your application is incorrect or incomplete.

- Students wishing to travel in a hurry may be able to pay for a faster decision on their visa. Find out more on Gov.uk:
- www.gov.uk/faster-decision-visa-settlement/applying-outside-the-uk

- Full information on requirements and eligibility can be found on Gov.uk: www.gov.uk/student-visa

UK Visas & Immigration

Questions

Afternoon Break, Refreshments and Exhibition

UCAS

Afternoon Break, Refreshments and Exhibition

UCAS