

UK universities lead the global pack for international student satisfaction

Report also finds social media is the fastest growing influencer in the international student journey

- International students are more likely to recommend the UK than any other leading English-language study destination. The UK ranks 1st compared to the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany and the Netherlands for recommendation from international students – this is true at all levels of study* (undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT), postgraduate research (PGR)).
- International student satisfaction in the UK overall is higher than in any other of these countries, again at every level*. Satisfaction is particularly high among international UG students in the UK (92%), and this is increasing year-on-year.
- The UK ranks 1st among its competitors for international students' overall satisfaction with support services and overall living experience at their UK university.
- The reputation of the institution is the most important factor in international students' decision to choose the UK at the UG and PGT level (93% and 95% respectively). For PGR students, the most important factor is the research quality (97%).
- 14% of international UG students used a social networking site to help them choose where to study. This has grown from 8% in 2012.

These are the key findings of new research launched today by Universities UK International, based on the results of the world's largest survey of international students – i-graduate's International Student Barometer (ISB).

The report: *The UK's competitive advantage 2017* is based on data collected from over 137,000 respondents.

It examines what influences prospective international students in their choice of study destination. For UG and PGT students, the reputation and quality of institutions are key factors influencing the decision to study in the UK. PGR students cited the quality of the research at their chosen institution as the most important factor.

There has been an overall growth of 6% in the proportion of international UG students using social media to help them choose where to study since 2012. However, this varies considerably according to location. Prospective students in Vietnam (26%) were most likely to use social media, followed by those in Poland (21%) and Bulgaria (20%). At the other end of the spectrum only 5% of those in South Korea used social media to inform their decision.

The biggest influencers on international UG choice were an institution's website (37%), family (36%) and friends (33%).

This is the second iteration of *The UK's competitive advantage* report which echoes previous findings that the UK is ranked first for recommendation by international students. The ISB has collected data from over 3 million students in over 1,400 institutions across 33 countries since its inception.

A full breakdown of statistics is below and [the report can be reached via this link](#).

Director of UUKi, Vivienne Stern says “This study highlights the UK’s strength in the student experience, at every level, and across a wide range of measures: from the quality of teaching and the learning experience, through to the warmth of welcome received. International students are an important part of university communities and bring diversity to the student experience. They provide a global perspective for home students and university staff and add to the quality of the overall university experience. It’s great to hear that UK universities are consistently providing international students with a world-class study experience. However, we mustn’t become complacent. This is a time of great change in the UK and universities must make sure that the student experience, for both international and home students, remains central to their strategies.”

Notes to editors:

* The Netherlands is not included in rankings or comparisons at the PGR level as the sample size was deemed too low for inclusion. It is included at UG and PGT levels.

As the world’s largest international student survey, i-graduate’s International Student Barometer (ISB) has gathered feedback from over 3 million students, in over 1,400 institutions and across 33 countries since its inception. The ISB instrument tracks five dimensions of the international student experience with a total of 152 checkpoints, plus an indication of overall satisfaction and a measure of recommendation – the extent to which a student would recommend their study experience to others. Dimensions covered in the study are on decision-making, arrival, learning, living and support.

About Universities UK International

Universities UK International (UUKi) represents UK higher education institutions (HEIs) globally and helps them flourish internationally. To do this we actively promote UK HEIs abroad, provide trusted information for and about them, and create new opportunities through our unique ability to act at sector level. We draw on UK university expertise to influence policy in the UK and overseas, delivering information, advice and guidance to facilitate mutually beneficial collaboration between UK HEIs and a broad range of international partners. Formerly the UK Higher Education International Unit, we changed our name to Universities UK International (UUKi) in August 2016. This reflects our status as an integral part of Universities UK, increasingly funded by its member vice-chancellors to play a unique role in supporting their international activity. We also receive funding from GuildHE and the higher education funding bodies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. www.international.ac.uk @UUKIntl

About i-graduate

The International Graduate Insight Group (i-graduate) provides the global benchmark for the student experience. We deliver comparative insight to the education sector worldwide, helping institutions deliver a world-class student experience to enhance competitive advantage. Since 2005, we have worked with over 1400 education providers across 33 countries and now have feedback from over 3 million students.

Our suite of tools covers the entire student journey from application to graduation and beyond. The International Student Barometer (ISB) tracks and compares the decision-making, expectations, perceptions and intentions of international students. It enables institutions to make informed decisions to enhance the international student experience and drive successful recruitment and marketing strategies. With feedback from students worldwide across all student types, levels and years of study, the ISB is the leading benchmarking tool used to track the international student experience.

Other tools to help you better understand the student experience include the domestic Student Barometer, DLHE services, and Benchmarking International Operations.

For more information please contact info@i-graduate.org or visit www.i-graduate.org.