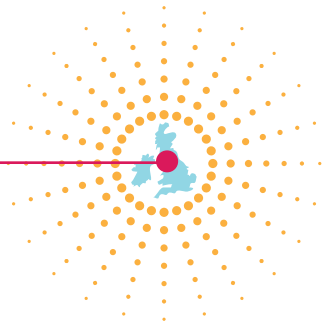
"We need international students and graduates to help us exploit overseas market opportunities, we need an international mindset."

Recruitment manager of a large consumer product company



NASES National Association of Student Employment Services

Graduate Prospects

BRITISH COUNCIL

Universities UK

UK Council for International Student Affairs
UKCISA

agcas

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Home Office
UK Border Agency

Education UK
Innovative. Individual. Inspirational.

A guide for employers recruiting international students and graduates

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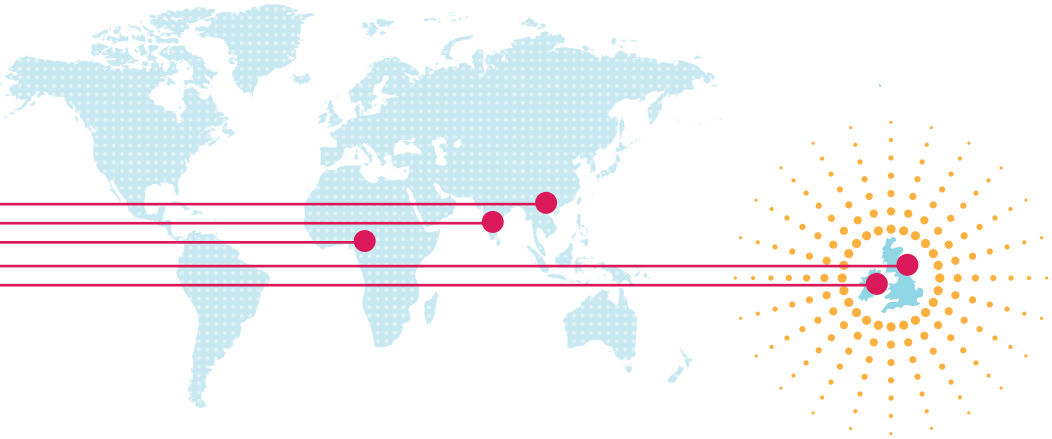
CIHE
LEADERSHIP FOR BUSINESS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

British Chambers of Commerce
The Ultimate Business Network

"If we are to build for the future, we need to continue to benefit from the skills, drive, experiences and the differences that international students and graduates bring to our economy in this ever more globally connected world."

Richard A Brown CIHE



International students and graduates offer UK businesses enhanced opportunities

Did you know that:

- over 350,000 international students from over 150 countries around the world come to UK higher and further education institutions to study;
- 3 out of 5 research students undertaking a PhD come from outside the UK;
- our largest commercial markets also attract the largest intake of international students into the UK; China, India, USA, EU to name a few.

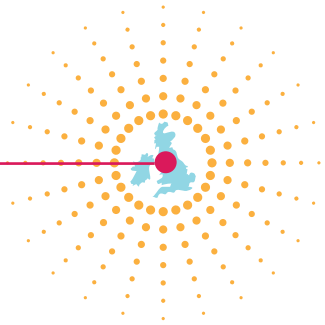
In today's tough and fast-changing economic climate, it has never been more important for UK businesses to stay ahead of the competition.

A recent study discovered that small to medium sized businesses in the UK could grow their businesses through the employment of international students and graduates, who have studied at UK universities.

These talented and hard-working people have a range of skills that can benefit your business. They bring innovative new ideas, strong technical skills and an understanding of new markets, different cultures and languages.

This brochure will help you, as an employer, to understand both the benefits of and the process for employing UK-based international students and graduates.

If you want to try before you buy, why not take a student on a work placement?



Why recruit international students and graduates from UK universities?

Clear benefits

- Specific skills and knowledge about different countries, languages and cultures that could help your business develop into new markets.
- Help you understand and deal more effectively with overseas customers and suppliers.
- Broaden the outlook of your workforce and help make your business more receptive to new ideas.

UK employers say...

A recent study of employers of different sizes and from varying sectors in the UK found that they saw many advantages to employing international graduates and students. They were perceived as offering UK employers:

A broader perspective

"They have helped us as a company to think more about different communities and diversity."

Graduate recruiter, large construction company

Great drive and work commitment

"They tend to be hardworking, more flexible (no family ties here) so can send them to any UK location.

Graduate recruiter, large construction firm

Specialist knowledge of a country and/or language

"We like to recruit Masters graduates who have done their first degree in China and come here to do their Masters degree. We need them to have very good English speaking and writing skills and a good level of understanding of Chinese language and culture. We have found this the best source."

Chairman of small specialist tourism company

Strong technical qualifications and skills

"In my opinion the UK does not develop enough high quality science and technology graduates and post-graduates whereas those from Eastern Europe have such skills."

Head of Resourcing, oil company

Employer case studies

"We find overseas students bring interesting insights and experiences – they have benefited from travel, and they have different ways of looking at things which we like. And we have benefited from the different skills they have brought."

Managing Director, Audata Ltd, Kent

This small South East London-based information management company has recruited several international students over the last few years who are studying at nearby universities. A few have come in on placements during their IT degree courses to work on specific projects, and one stayed on to work after his Masters degree. The company doesn't go out specifically to seek international students as that would break their equal opportunity code of practice. It recruits them through open advertising at job centres, universities and in the local press.

"It's important for employers to think not just of their resident population but the wider pool of talent, that way they can get the widest choice of candidates. It's worked well for us so that's why we continue to do it."

The university job shops have brought to their attention many international and UK students. A lot of international students live and study close by and the fact that the company highlights that they are an equal opportunity employer in their advertisements helps to attract them.

There have been few problems with getting work permits or with the new 'rules' but experience with the changes has been limited so far and clearer guidelines or an advice or support line for businesses would help.

"I hold this graduate placement programme in very high regard. I believe it be very successful both from the employer's perspective and from the graduate's. Our experience has been that it can be a true marriage of skills."

FSL Director, Rochelle Clark

Several high calibre international graduates have been recruited in recent years to help provide critical skills for the expansion of Frank Sammeroff Ltd's (FSL) market share in the UK and the Far East. A family owned business, established in Glasgow since 1939, FSL has grown into one of the UK's leading manufacturers and suppliers of a wide range of first aid kits, sport injury kits and surgical dressings and supplies. It now operates from two manufacturing units in south Glasgow, and a third in Shanghai, China.

One of the international graduate recruits splits her time between offices in Glasgow and China where she has responsibility for cementing relations with managers and employees in the Shanghai factory. Another international graduate, with training in UK accountancy, divides his time between the Shanghai and Glasgow branches.

The international graduates have been accessed by the business through the Scottish programme, Graduates for Business, and several have become permanent employees.

FSL has recently sought to strengthen communication and customer awareness, both with their own business in China and a major new key account which has been acquired in the Far East. So it is taking on another international graduate, with an MSc in Sport and Recreation Business Management, to provide bilingual support to the Shanghai business and an elevated level of communication and customer care for their international market.

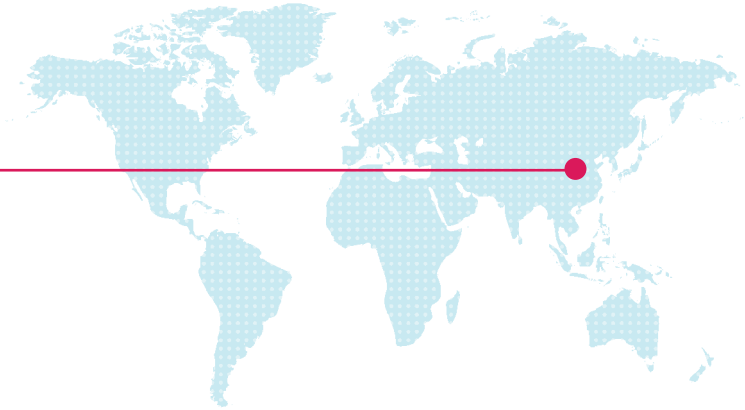
"For the graduates, it is a door opening opportunity to carry out a business development placement – often the first opportunity to put into practice the skills which he/she has learned at university. For my part, as an employer I am very keen to encourage that opportunity. I am often able to take on these graduates as permanent employees who have learned our business from the basics and are then able to use their skills to our mutual benefit."

Student case study

"The opportunities we're given as students [in the UK] are incredible. Establishments in the field are so very willing to take us on for work tasters… These placements inspire me to study hard and contribute similarly to society back home. So far, I have worked with a high-street chemist and been to several hospital pharmacies to see what it is like.

To me, that says a lot about the attitude over here; believing, rather than not, in the abilities of a person, and always ready to give others a chance – while holding yourself to the highest standards. My working experiences are probably the highlight of my stay here in the UK."

Sook Meng Chung (Cardiff University)



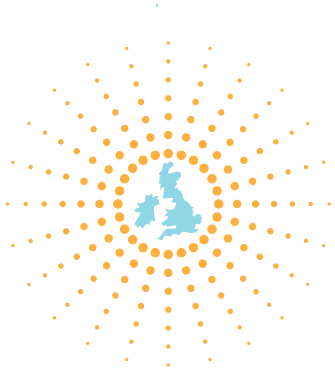
The next steps

How do I ensure that I employ international students/graduates legally?

The UK has a new points-based system for employing foreign nationals, which replaced existing work permit categories in 2008. This applies to migrants from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.

Please note that the information provided here is to be used as a guide only. For specific and detailed information on the new regulations please contact the UK Border Agency.

The next steps



Students during their studies

A general student visa allows international students to work part-time (a maximum of 20 hours a week) during term time and full-time during the holidays. However, they must not fill a full-time permanent vacancy or work as self-employed or as an entertainer or sportsperson. During their studies they can undertake a course related work experience placement or internship from a UK employer, provided it is approved by the university or college providing their course, and that it does not take up more than 50% of the total duration of the course.

Students who have recently completed their studies

International students who have completed an undergraduate or postgraduate degree course at a UK recognised institution are entitled to apply under Tier 1 PSW (Post Study Work) within 12 months of obtaining their qualification.

These post-study workers are free to look for work within the UK labour market. They must demonstrate that they can maintain themselves and their dependants, as they do not have access to state benefits. This visa is valid for up to two years, after this time they will need to apply for either Tier 1 General or Tier 2 (see next) depending on their circumstances.

Highly skilled people - potentially with skills in shortage occupations

Some international graduates may qualify as highly skilled individuals under the Tier 1 (General) category. This requires applicants to demonstrate they have sufficient 'points' from their education, work experience and earnings. The rules currently require them to have at least a Master's qualification and previous earnings above £20,000 (a calculation is done to convert overseas earnings into sterling equivalent). As under Tier 1 PSW, once registered in Tier 1 (General) they are free to move around the labour market and employers need only check their documentation to employ them.

International graduates, who having worked for two years under Tier 1 PSW, can then apply under Tier 2 (or even Tier 1 General) and the experiences gained here will help towards the required points needed. Progression to either Tier means that it is now much simpler to retain good staff who previously studied in the UK.

Help and advice

Where do I go for assistance about international student and graduate employment?

Your local university career service, Jobshop, Chamber of Commerce or business link service can provide assistance and support for employers seeking to recruit international students/graduates in the UK.

For more information visit the Education UK website for links and case studies **www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-pmi2-employability**

The Home Office sponsorship and employers' helpline offers the following dedicated service for employers

Contact: T 0300 123 4699

Full details of the new system can be obtained from the UK Border Agency:

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk.

Please visit this link for specific information for employers:

www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers

For a list of university career services in your area:

www.prospects.ac.uk

Direct link:
www.prospects.ac.uk/links/careersservices

For a list of job shops in your area:

www.nases.org.uk

Direct link:
www.nases.org.uk/jobshoplisting

For employers looking to advertise vacancies:

www.work-experience.org

Direct link:
www.work-experience.org/ncwe.rd/employers_student_placement_initiatives.jsp

While every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this brochure is accurate at the time of writing employers are advised to check for the latest information on the UKBA website at www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/.