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# Executive Summary and Introduction

The following report includes bespoke analysis of Hobsons' syndicated Global Review 2007, looking specifically at respondents from 19 or the 27 countries surveyed. It should be noted, that whilst every effort has been made to access samples within countries that are similar, this is not always possible. Consequently, where relevant, notes of caution are made to the reader, where sample differences by country may have exaggerated findings. More detail on the methodology behind Hobsons' Global Review, can be found in the appendix and at the end of this executive summary.

## Executive Summary

### Barriers and motivations for studying abroad

- Compared to the overall sample, those not interested in studying abroad are more likely to be male, slighter older and working,.
- Cost is the main barrier to studying abroad, especially for Chinese respondents, followed by lack of interest and reluctance to leave family and friends. Visa difficulties were only an issue for 2.4% of respondents who were not interested in studying abroad.
- Looking at the profiles of those interested in studying abroad, most were planning to or had already studied abroad. These respondents showed no gender bias, whilst they tended to be younger, studying at school or university, with excellent English language abilities. Most were interested in postgraduate qualifications (most probably as more were already at university), and in subjects such as engineering, business and IT.
- The UK was the most popular study abroad destination overall, followed by the US and Australia. The UK tended to be a more popular choice amongst those wishing to pursue undergraduate courses, compared to the US and Australia, although interest in postgraduate taught courses was high across all competing countries. The UK attracted most interest from respondents in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan.

### Reasons for studying in the UK, US and Australia

- Academic reputation was the main reason for choosing the UK and US as study abroad destinations, whereas Australia was most likely to be chosen for offering a better standard of education compared to respondents' home countries. Overall, the UK has a clear lead on the US and Australia when it comes to perceptions of academic reputation. However, the US outperforms the UK for perceptions of its strong economy and employment prospects and superior funding opportunities.
- Australia was selected as a preferred study abroad destination for a greater variety of factors, compared to the UK and US which have more defined selling points. Interestingly, Australia is more likely to be chosen for perceptions of its easy visa process and respondents' desire to settle there permanently.

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- Bulgarian and Polish respondents chose the UK more for its economy and career prospects, whereas Taiwanese and Chinese tended to prefer the US for these reasons.

- Polish and Kenyan individuals were more likely to select the UK based on their ability to work whilst studying here, whereas this was less important for those from Taiwan, China and Hong Kong.

- Polish respondents were the most likely to want to live permanently in the UK, whereas for those from Kenya, China, Nigeria and Bangladesh this was not so significant. That said Polish people were equally as attracted to studying in the UK and US so they could settle there permanently.

- When it came to the influence of UK visa processes on respondents' motivations to study here, Pakistani and Ghanaian respondents were more likely to choose the UK for its straight forward approach, compared to Turkish respondents who were least inclined to choose the UK on this basis.

**Barriers to studying in the UK**

- Similarly to results for barriers to studying abroad in general, the main barriers to studying in the UK relate to cost, most specifically fees and the costs of living.

- Visa difficulties were the third main barrier to studying in the UK and visa costs were the fifth most significant (for 28% and 22% respectively). Although general study abroad barriers and UK barriers cannot be directly compared, visa issues do seem to be more of problem for the UK specifically, as these issues were only the ninth most prominent barrier to studying abroad in general.

- Looking more closely at those who said visa difficulties were a reason for rejecting to study abroad in the UK, this was most likely to be felt by Bangladeshi and Nigerian respondents. Interestingly, there were still 14% of Bulgarians and 2% of Polish who were not interested in the UK for this reason, despite their EU membership status.

- Taiwanese were most likely to see UK visa costs as a main barrier to studying here, followed by Vietnamese respondents. Again, Bulgarian and Polish respondents were least inclined to see visa costs as an issue, reflecting their EU status.

- With regards to opportunities to work whilst studying and being able to stay in the UK after their studies, Taiwanese again are the most inclined to see these as reasons not to come to come to the UK, along with the Chinese.

**Information sources for studying in the UK**

# Executive Summary and Introduction

- In terms of information sources used to find out about studying abroad, online resources dominated, with university websites, search engines and education sites coming out top. Education rankings were the next most popular resource for a third of respondents, but were nominated the most useful resource, ahead of online resources.

- A third of respondents had used the British Council website and a quarter had been to one of their offices, only just under a third of those who had used each of these resources claimed have found them useful. Respondents from Taiwan and Russia accessed these resources the most (at the time of fieldwork, most Russian British Council offices were still open). It is worth mentioning a note of caution on this finding, in that there were more females in the samples from Russia and Taiwan, who are more inclined to use these resources compared to men, which would exaggerate this finding to some extent for these countries.

- Education agents were used by 28% of respondents and found useful by just under a third of those using them. Agents are relied upon most by those in Taiwan and Bangladesh and interestingly, these services need most improvement in Bangladesh, Poland and Vietnam.

- In general, resource usage varies by country, which may be a reflection of access or an effect of agent usage which can often remove the need to use other certain resources. For example, Bangladeshi respondents are amongst the most likely to use agents and least inclined to have used UKvisas or the British Embassy to gather information on studying abroad.

- Only 1 in 10 respondents claimed to have used UKvisas' resources and close to one in six or 18% of these people found them useful. Usage peaked amongst those from China, Taiwan and Vietnam and efficiency was greatest amongst those from Bangladesh, Russia and Malaysia. Unfortunately however, the countries where UKvisas is used most, tend to be those where it is least appreciated.

- In general, Malaysians were the most positive about the information resources that they had used, compared to Vietnamese who were the least appreciative. However, this finding may be exaggerated by there being more school students in the Malyasian sample who have lower expectations or specific questions to answer at this stage compared to the Vietnamese sample, who more often tended to be working.

**Education Agents**

- When respondents were asked about the services that Education Agents should offer, the most common responses concerned information on fees and the costs of living, scholarships and passport and visa advice. Perhaps not surprisingly, these factors are also some of respondents' main barriers to studying in the UK.

- Malaysians, Indians and Nigerians place the most importance on passport and visa advice. In keeping with previous findings that suggest that some respondents from Bulgaria are not aware of their visa exemptions, almost half of these respondents believed that it was important for an agent to provide advice on these issues.

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**Future plans**

- Respondents were asked about their future plans after they had completed a study abroad course in the UK. Most planned on remaining in the UK, be that to study or do some form of work. Malaysians and Indians were the most intent on staying here, whilst Russian and Vietnamese were least inclined to want to stay.

- Just less than one in four wished to take up a career job in the UK after their studies, compared to one in five who planned on doing the same back in their home country. Respondents from India and Taiwan were most inclined to want to work full time in the UK, compared to Nigerians who were the least intent on this path and amongst the most intent on returning to work at home. A note of caution accompanies this finding, as the Nigerian sample has a higher percentage of respondents who are already working which may explain why many would prefer to return to this work. A similar pattern can be found for Russian respondents, many of whom are working already and therefore more would prefer to return to working in Russia than to work in the UK.

**Attitudes to studying abroad**

- Respondents were presented with a series of attitude statements about studying abroad and asked for their level of agreement with each one. Overall, a large proportion of respondents claimed to have no opinion in response to statements, which in itself suggests many do not feel experienced enough to comment on such specific issues.

- Most respondents agreed that they would apply to a university directly if they knew how and there was general agreement that they understood how to apply to an institution abroad (which may include using an agent!), except amongst those in Vietnam. This suggests that education agents are offering respondents the easy route to applying to universities and that perhaps as university and government information provision improves, the need for agents may diminish.

- Overall, there is a general consensus that education agents do a good job. Vietnamese respondents were most inclined to believe this and were also amongst those least likely to know how to apply to a university themselves.

- Most felt that UK universities provided accurate financial and visa related information. This was especially felt by those from Pakistan and least so by those from Taiwan and Turkey. Many also agreed that a UK visa was good value for money, in particular those from Nigeria, although Taiwanese again were the least inclined to agree.

- When asked if they would prefer to study at a UK institution but in their home country, there was considerable variation in responses by country. Those from Vietnam were most intent on staying at home, whereas those from Bulgaria and Russia wanted to study abroad. Respondents from these two countries were also amongst those who most wanted to work in the UK–something that is perhaps made easier if they have experience of studying here.

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# Executive Summary and Introduction

- The majority of respondents agreed that a UK visa was good value for money. However, once again, Taiwanese students were amongst those least inclined to believe this, whilst Nigerian respondents were the most positive.

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# Executive Summary and Introduction

## Introduction

In 2007, UKvisas commissioned Hobsons Research to undertake a bespoke analysis of data from Hobson's 2007 Global Review, with particular regard to visa-related questions.

This report aims to provide UKvisas with:

- an up-to-date insight, based on the views of prospective international students, into the impact of visas on student decision-making
- an idea of prospective students' perceptions of the 'value' of student visas, benchmarked against key competitor countries
- an insight into the degree to which prospective students use the UKvisas website compared to other information sources
- market intelligence about where visa information should be targeted (based on information resources used by prospective students and which they find most useful)
- an understanding of the profile and behaviours of key target groups, such as which prospective students are most likely to be put off studying in the UK due to difficulty in obtaining a visa and which prospective students are most likely to wish to stay on and work in the UK after their studies.

## Methodology

Launched in 2006, Hobsons Global Review is an online survey of prospective international students. The findings in this report are based on data gained from the 2007 survey, conducted over a ten-week field period between June and August 2007.

To build the data sample, participants from Hobsons' and selected partner databases were invited to take part in the questionnaire via an e-mail that contained a hyperlink to the questionnaire. The e-mail invitation explained the aims of the study and emphasised that participants' anonymity remained guaranteed throughout. Participation in the survey was incentivised with the offer to enter a prize draw.

Detailed information about the survey methodology is included in Appendix 1.

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# Executive Summary and Introduction

## Sample

The 2007 survey received 12,075 responses from prospective international students, of 27 different nationalities. As the sample included a disproportionately high number of Vietnamese respondents, a random sample of 500 Vietnamese respondents were selected for the purpose of the UKvisas project.

Where sample sizes for specific questions in this report were large enough, responses have been analysed by nationality. Variations in the demographics of each nationality group must be considered when looking at responses in this way. Demographic factors on which there was considerable variation between nationality groups and which may have impacted on responses were gender and activity at the time of completing the survey. The nationalities which have been examined in one or more sections of this report appear in the following tables with a breakdown by total respondents of each nationality on these factors. A more detailed breakdown of gender and activity by nationality for each question is included in Appendix 2.

Gender of respondents by nationality

| Country of nationality | Male | Female | Base |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bangladesh | 84% | 16% | 277 |
| Bulgaria | 35% | 65% | 665 |
| China | 44% | 56% | 1,850 |
| Ghana | 82% | 18% | 254 |
| Hong Kong | 42% | 58% | 201 |
| Hungary | 61% | 39% | 181 |
| India | 73% | 27% | 1,819 |
| Iran | 57% | 43% | 115 |
| Japan | 46% | 54% | 138 |
| Kazakhstan | 32% | 68% | 117 |
| Kenya | 61% | 39% | 243 |
| Malaysia | 49% | 51% | 536 |
| Nigeria | 73% | 27% | 1,229 |
| Pakistan | 82% | 18% | 835 |
| Poland | 41% | 59% | 1,048 |
| Russia | 31% | 69% | 329 |
| Taiwan | 26% | 74% | 627 |
| Turkey | 52% | 48% | 504 |
| Vietnam | 45% | 55% | 476 |
| Gulf Countries | 68% | 32% | 172 |

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# Executive Summary and Introduction

Respondents' activity at time of completing the survey, by nationality

| Country of nationality | Studying at school/college | Studying at university | Working full time/part-time/casual work | Base |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bangladesh | 45.7% | 35.5% | 18.8% | 245 |
| Bulgaria | 32.3% | 42.9% | 24.8% | 548 |
| China | 18.3% | 51.0% | 30.7% | 1,601 |
| Ghana | 13.7% | 15.9% | 70.3% | 182 |
| Gulf Countries | 12.1% | 27.3% | 60.6% | 132 |
| Hong Kong | 72.3% | 17.5% | 10.2% | 177 |
| Hungary | 26.5% | 63.9% | 9.6% | 166 |
| India | 23.3% | 27.5% | 49.2% | 1,352 |
| Iran | 7.4% | 51.1% | 41.5% | 94 |
| Japan | 17.7% | 43.4% | 38.9% | 113 |
| Kazakhstan | 11.1% | 70.4% | 18.5% | 108 |
| Kenya | 24.2% | 28.6% | 47.3% | 182 |
| Malaysia | 40.4% | 38.3% | 21.3% | 428 |
| Nigeria | 12.1% | 19.9% | 67.9% | 898 |
| Pakistan | 30.5% | 32.4% | 37.1% | 652 |
| Poland | 15.7% | 62.4% | 21.9% | 925 |
| Russia | 8.3% | 47.4% | 44.3% | 289 |
| Taiwan | 11.7% | 47.5% | 40.8% | 505 |
| Turkey | 7.0% | 58.6% | 34.3% | 428 |
| Vietnam | 11.7% | 48.7% | 39.6% | 419 |
| Mean | 22.1% | 41.5% | 36.4% | |

Note that options in the survey for current activity also included year out/break from work or study, unemployed and other. The categorisations above, however, were considered to be of most interest to UKvisas so analysis has focused on these groups.

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# Executive Summary and Introduction

**Report Structure**

The main findings in this report have been divided into three sections: views of respondents who were not interested in studying abroad; views of prospective students interested in studying abroad in general and views of prospective students interested in studying in the UK.

1. Views of respondents not interested in studying abroad looks at reasons for this.

2. Views of those interested in studying abroad in general covers:

- Why students choose a specific country to study abroad
- Barriers to studying in the UK

3. Views of those interested in studying in the UK covers:

- Information sources, used and useful
- Future plans
- Opinions and attitudes to studying abroad.

A sample profile of each respondent group is included at the beginning of each section. Analysis of responses to each question begins by looking at total respondents for that question then includes sub-analysis by nationality where sample sizes allow this and further investigation into factors considered to be of particular interest/relevance to UKvisas. Where relevant, any sample differences by country are also noted, where it is thought that these could influence findings (ie. effects for gender and current activity in the main are reviewed).

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# Respondents not interested in studying abroad

This section looks at views of respondents who were not interested in studying abroad.

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# Not interested in studying abroad: Sample profile of respondents

**Sample profile of respondents not interested in studying abroad**

In total, 408 respondents indicated that they did not want to study abroad in the future.

62% of these respondents were male and 38% were female. Over half (53%) were aged 20-25 years, with just 10% below this age. 16% were 26-29 years old and 21% were aged 30 plus.

29% of respondents who didn't want to study abroad were Polish, 21% were Indian and 13% were Chinese. No other single nationality made up a significant proportion of these respondents.

The activity of respondents who didn't want to study abroad at the time they completed the survey is shown below:

| Activity | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Studying at school/college | 16% |
| Studying at university | 35% |
| Working full-time/part-time/casual work | 49% |

Respondents rated their English language ability as follows:

| | Ability | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating | Spoken | Written |
| 1 - Basic | 18% | 17% |
| 2 | 15% | 13% |
| 3 | 31% | 31% |
| 4 | 21% | 19% |
| 5 - Fluent | 16% | 20% |

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# Not interested in studying abroad: Why prospective students do not study abroad

**Reasons for not studying abroad**

Respondents surveyed who indicated that they did not want to study abroad in the future were asked what the main reason for this was. Almost one third (30.4%) of these respondents reported that study abroad costs too much. Other key reasons for these respondents choosing not to study abroad in the future were that they didn't want to study any further (16.3%) and they didn't want to leave family and friends (14.6%).

Because the vast majority of respondents to the survey were interested in studying abroad, the sample of those who answered this question was relatively small. For this reason, the only nationality groups with sample sizes large enough to be statistically significant were China, India and Poland. Looking at respondents from these countries, it can be seen that their reasons for not studying abroad were generally the same as those of the total sample. Noticeable exceptions to this were that Chinese respondents were more likely to have cited cost as being a key reason (41.5%) while Indian respondents were less likely to see cost as a barrier (22.7%), and Polish respondents were more likely than others to not want to leave their family and friends (22.4%).

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## Not interested in studying abroad: Why prospective students do not study abroad

Getting a visa was not generally seen as a major barrier, with just 2.4% of respondents citing that getting a visa was too difficult/expensive as a

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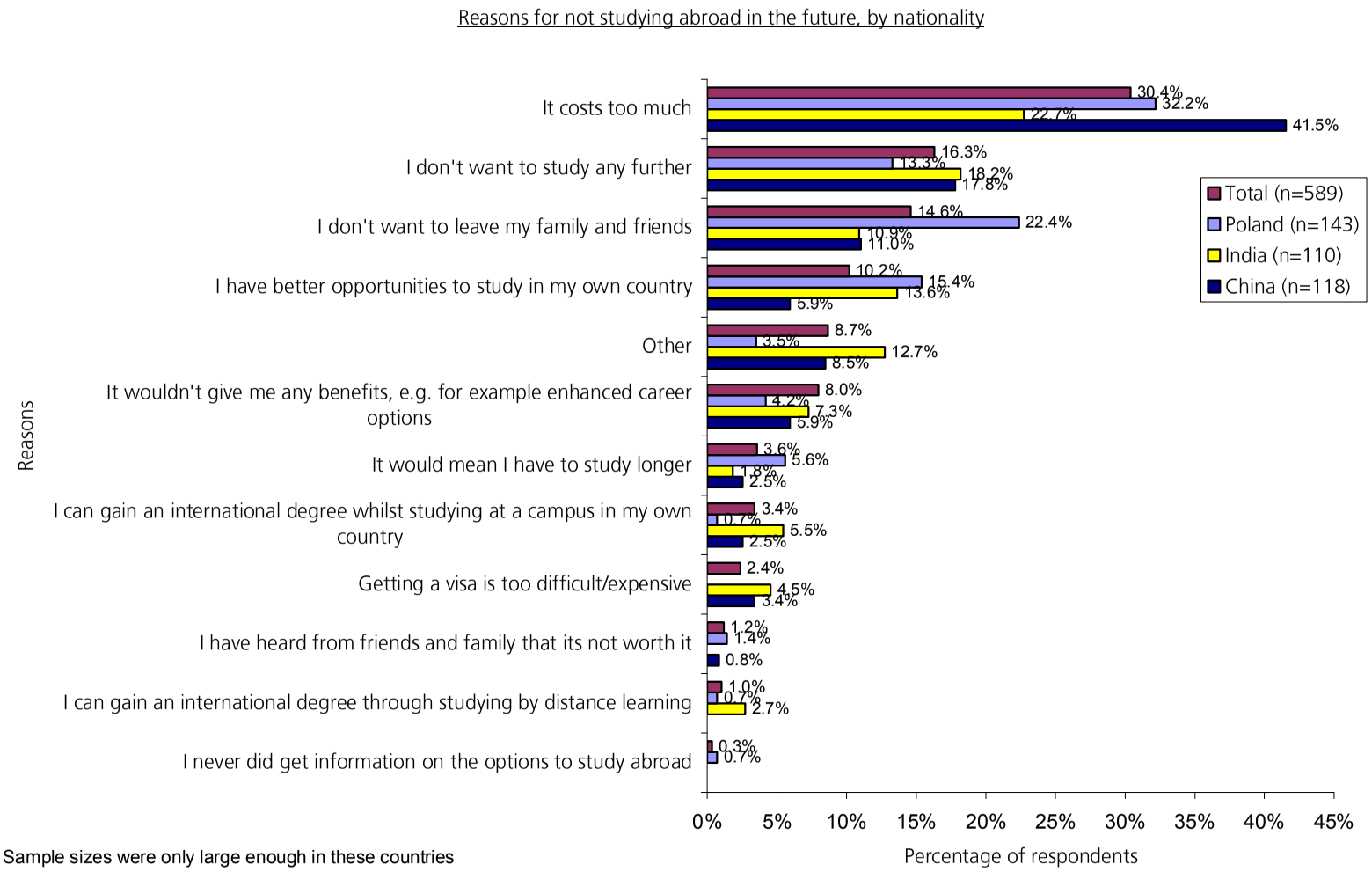
reason for not studying abroad in the future. Once again due to the small sample size, it was not possible to conduct reliable analysis of these

# Not interested in studying abroad: Why prospective students do not study abroad

NBnb




NB. Sample sizes were only large enough in these countries

# Respondents interested in studying abroad

This section looks at views of respondents who were interested in studying abroad in general, including why prospective students choose a specific country to study abroad, and perceived barriers to studying in the UK.

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# Studying abroad: Sample profile of respondents interested in studying abroad

**Sample profile of respondents interested in studying abroad**

In total, 11,459 respondents indicated that they were interested in studying abroad in the future.

55% of these respondents were male and 45% were female. Over half (52%) were aged 20-25 years, with 22% below this age. 15% were 26-29 years old and 11% were aged 30 plus.

Chinese (16%), Indians (15%) and Nigerians (11%) were the largest respondent groups by nationality. No other nationality made up over 10% of total respondents who were interested in studying abroad.

The activity of respondents interested in studying abroad at the time they completed the survey is shown below:

| Activity | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Studying at school/college | 21% |
| Studying at university | 42% |
| Working full-time/part-time/casual work | 37% |

Respondents rated their English language ability as follows:

| | Ability | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating | Spoken | Written |
| 1 - Basic | 4% | 3% |
| 2 | 5% | 5% |
| 3 | 22% | 21% |
| 4 | 26% | 28% |
| 5 - Fluent | 43% | 43% |

6% of respondents interested in studying abroad were interested in courses of up to six months, and the remainder longer courses. 39% were interested in postgraduate and 25% in undergraduate study. 18% were interested in a Masters of Business Administration. In terms of intended subjects of study, 13% were interested in engineering, 12% in business studies and 10% in computer science/IT.

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# Studying abroad: Sample profile of respondents interested in studying abroad

When asked which statement best described their situation in relation to studying in a country other than their home country, respondents replied as follows:

| Statement | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I would like to study abroad | 24% |
| I have started planning to study abroad (but not yet started looking for information) | 8% |
| I have started planning to study abroad (and started looking for information) | 22% |
| I have applied to an institution abroad | 25% |
| I am studying abroad at the moment | 14% |
| I have already studied abroad | 7% |

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# Studying abroad: Attractive countries

**Attractive countries for studying abroad**

Respondents surveyed who indicated that they were interested in studying abroad in the future were asked which country or countries they would like to study in.

The UK was the most frequently selected country, chosen by almost 70% of respondents, followed by the US (55.9%) and Australia (30.7%). The most popular non-English speaking country was Germany (14.3%), followed by France (11.2%). To some extent, these results will reflect the sampling pools for the survey (see Appendix for more detail).

Attractive countries for studying abroad (continued onto next page)

| Country | Percentage of respondents |
|---|---|
| United Kingdom | 69.6% |
| United States | 55.9% |
| Australia | 30.7% |
| Canada | 24.8% |
| Germany | 14.3% |
| France | 11.2% |
| Switzerland | 9.3% |
| New Zealand | 8.8% |
| Netherlands | 8.3% |
| Japan | 8.2% |
| Sweden | 8.1% |
| Singapore | 7.4% |
| Italy | 6.8% |
| Spain | 6.4% |
| Denmark | 4.6% |
| Finland | 4.6% |
| Hong Kong | 4.6% |
| Norway | 4.4% |
| Austria | 4.1% |
| Belgium | 3.5% |

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# Studying abroad: Attractive countries

| Country | Percentage of respondents |
|---|---|
| Other | 3.1% |
| Malaysia | 3.1% |
| India | 2.6% |
| China | 2.5% |
| Korea | 2.2% |
| Luxembourg | 2.1% |
| Russia | 2.0% |
| Greece | 1.8% |
| Portugal | 1.5% |
| Taiwan | 1.0% |
| Thailand | 0.8% |
| Bangladesh | 0.2% |
| Base | 10,655 |

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# Studying abroad: Respondents who chose the UK, the US and Australia

**Selected countries – the UK, the US and Australia**

As the main English language destinations for international students and as the UK's key competitors, this report looks in depth at where the UK, the US and Australia were selected as the most attractive countries to study in.

***Demographic information***

Demographics of respondents who would like to study in each of these three countries are shown in the tables below. The most interesting points based on demographics include:

- The UK was most popular as a study destination amongst respondents from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan, the US was most popular amongst respondents from Turkey and Iran, and Australia amongst respondents from Iran and Vietnam. Of the nationalities looked at, Vietnamese and Chinese respondents were least likely to have selected the UK. While the UK was generally chosen the most attractive destination for each nationality group, this was not the case amongst Chinese, Japanese, Turkish and Vietnamese respondents, higher proportions of whom all chose the US.
- A higher proportion of male respondents chose Australia (61.5%) than the UK (56%) or the US (57%).
- A higher proportion of respondents under 20 years of age selected the UK (24.6%) than the US (19.6%) or Australia (18.3%). Respondents who chose Australia (56.4%) were more likely to be in the 20-25 year bracket than those who selected the UK (49.5%) or the US (53.3%).
- A higher proportion of respondents who were studying at school/college selected the UK (23.2%) than selected the US (18.6%).
- Respondents who chose the UK were more likely to be interested in undertaking an undergraduate degree (30.3%) and less likely to be undertaking a Masters of Business Administration (16.3%) than those who chose the US or Australia. Respondents who chose the US were more likely to be interested in postgraduate degrees (41.4%) than those who chose the UK or Australia.
- There was no significant relationship between the intended subject of study and the country selected.

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# Studying abroad: Respondents who chose the UK, the US and Australia

Nationality of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia

| | Study destination | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Nationality** | **UK** | **US** | **Australia** | **Base** |
| Bangladesh | 78.3% | 40.7% | 41.4% | 263 |
| Bulgaria | 77.9% | 41.2% | 10.4% | 607 |
| China | 48.3% | 66.0% | 35.1% | 1,643 |
| Ghana | 77.7% | 63.9% | 21.8% | 238 |
| Hong Kong | 83.0% | 43.4% | 22.0% | 182 |
| Hungary | 78.8% | 61.6% | 26.0% | 146 |
| India | 69.0% | 66.1% | 44.4% | 1,623 |
| Iran | 71.6% | 72.5% | 53.2% | 109 |
| Japan | 56.8% | 64.8% | 22.4% | 125 |
| Kazakhstan | 83.0% | 67.0% | 13.2% | 106 |
| Kenya | 80.1% | 55.7% | 37.1% | 221 |
| Malaysia | 87.7% | 39.9% | 39.7% | 514 |
| Nigeria | 77.0% | 51.6% | 14.2% | 1,150 |
| Pakistan | 79.2% | 48.3% | 42.4% | 754 |
| Polish | 77.6% | 35.9% | 23.3% | 859 |
| Russia | 78.1% | 51.7% | 27.3% | 319 |
| Taiwan | 78.3% | 61.9% | 15.9% | 577 |
| Turkey | 65.4% | 73.5% | 22.8% | 457 |
| Vietnam | 40.3% | 56.1% | 49.0% | 471 |
| Gulf Countries | 60.5% | 53.1% | 41.5% | 147 |
| Total | 69.6% | 55.9% | 30.7% | 10,655 |

Gender of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia

| **Gender** | **UK** | **US** | **Australia** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 56.0% | 57.0% | 61.5% |
| Female | 44.0% | 43.0% | 38.5% |

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# Studying abroad: Respondents who chose the UK, the US and Australia

Age of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia

| Age | UK | US | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| <18 | 5.4% | 4.4% | 4.5% |
| 18-19 | 19.2% | 15.2% | 13.8% |
| 20-21 | 16.7% | 16.4% | 16.8% |
| 22-23 | 19.0% | 22.0% | 23.3% |
| 24-25 | 13.8% | 14.9% | 16.3% |
| 26-27 | 8.4% | 9.4% | 8.8% |
| 28-29 | 6.3% | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| 30+ | 11.2% | 11.5% | 10.2% |

Activity of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia at the time of completing the survey-

| Activity | UK | US | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Studying at school/college | 23.2% | 18.6% | 20.0% |
| Studying at University | 39.3% | 43.6% | 39.7% |
| Working full time/part-time/casual work | 37.5% | 37.8% | 40.3% |

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# Studying abroad: Respondents who chose the UK, the US and Australia

Intended study abroad level of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia

| Level | UK | US | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Postgraduate degree - Research-based (e.g. MPhil or PhD) | 13.3% | 18.9% | 16.9% |
| Postgraduate degree - Taught course (e.g. MSc, MA) | 22.3% | 22.5% | 20.8% |
| Postgraduate qualification (e.g. PGCE, PDip) | 2.5% | 2.4% | 2.8% |
| Masters of Business Administration (MBA) | 16.3% | 20.2% | 22.3% |
| Pre-Masters Programme (PMP) | 0.9% | 1.1% | 1.3% |
| Undergraduate Degree (e.g. BA, Bsc) | 30.3% | 20.6% | 20.4% |
| Foundation Degree | 0.9% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| Diploma course (e.g. BTEC HND, HNC) | 1.8% | 1.9% | 2.7% |
| University access course/Pre-university programme | 1.0% | 1.3% | 1.7% |
| Vocational course (e.g. NVQ) | 0.5% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| A-level | 1.3% | 0.6% | 0.8% |
| Summer school or other short course | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.8% |
| English language course | 3.1% | 3.2% | 2.9% |
| Other | 4.0% | 4.5% | 4.3% |

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# Studying abroad: Respondents who chose the UK, the US and Australia

Intended subject of study of respondents who chose each the UK, the US and Australia

| Subject | UK | US | Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accounting | 4.1% | 3.5% | 5.8% |
| Architecture, Building & Planning | 2.6% | 2.3% | 2.5% |
| Biology | 3.4% | 3.8% | 4.2% |
| Business studies | 12.2% | 11.7% | 11.9% |
| Chemistry | 1.2% | 1.6% | 1.0% |
| Computer Science / IT | 10.0% | 11.9% | 12.1% |
| Creative Arts & Design (including Drama, Dance) | 3.2% | 2.8% | 2.4% |
| Economics | 4.7% | 4.6% | 3.8% |
| Education/Teaching (including Physical Education) | 1.8% | 1.9% | 2.0% |
| Engineering | 13.2% | 13.5% | 13.3% |
| Finance | 6.0% | 7.1% | 6.0% |
| Geography | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| Health (including nursing etc) | 1.4% | 1.6% | 2.0% |
| History | 0.5% | 0.4% | 0.3% |
| Human Resource Management | 3.6% | 3.4% | 4.2% |
| Languages, Literature, Classics & related subjects | 3.7% | 3.1% | 3.0% |
| Law | 4.6% | 3.3% | 2.4% |
| Marketing | 5.7% | 5.8% | 5.6% |
| Mass Communication & Documentation (including Media studies, Publishing, Journalism) | 3.3% | 3.0% | 2.8% |
| Mathematics | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.0% |
| Medicine & Dentistry (including subjects allied to Medicine & Dentistry) | 3.2% | 3.4% | 3.8% |
| Physics | 1.2% | 1.5% | 1.4% |
| Psychology | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.1% |
| Religious Studies | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.1% |
| Sociology, Social Work | 1.4% | 1.4% | 1.0% |
| Sports Science | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.3% |
| Tourism, Transport & Travel | 2.2% | 1.8% | 2.7% |
| Other | 2.7% | 2.4% | 2.6% |

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**Reasons for choosing a specific country**

To obtain the following information, respondents were asked to select why they chose the UK, the US and Australia as the most attractive to them, selecting all reasons that applied.

***UK***

For respondents who chose the UK as an attractive country to study in, the key attraction was clearly the fact that the UK was seen to have an excellent academic reputation, with 61.4% of respondents selecting this as a reason. Significant proportions of respondents also considered that the standard of education in the UK was better than in their home country (48.6%), that studying in the UK would improve their career prospects in their home country (43.0%), that studying in the UK would improve their career prospects in the UK (41.0%) and that the UK has a strong economy with good career opportunities (38.0%).

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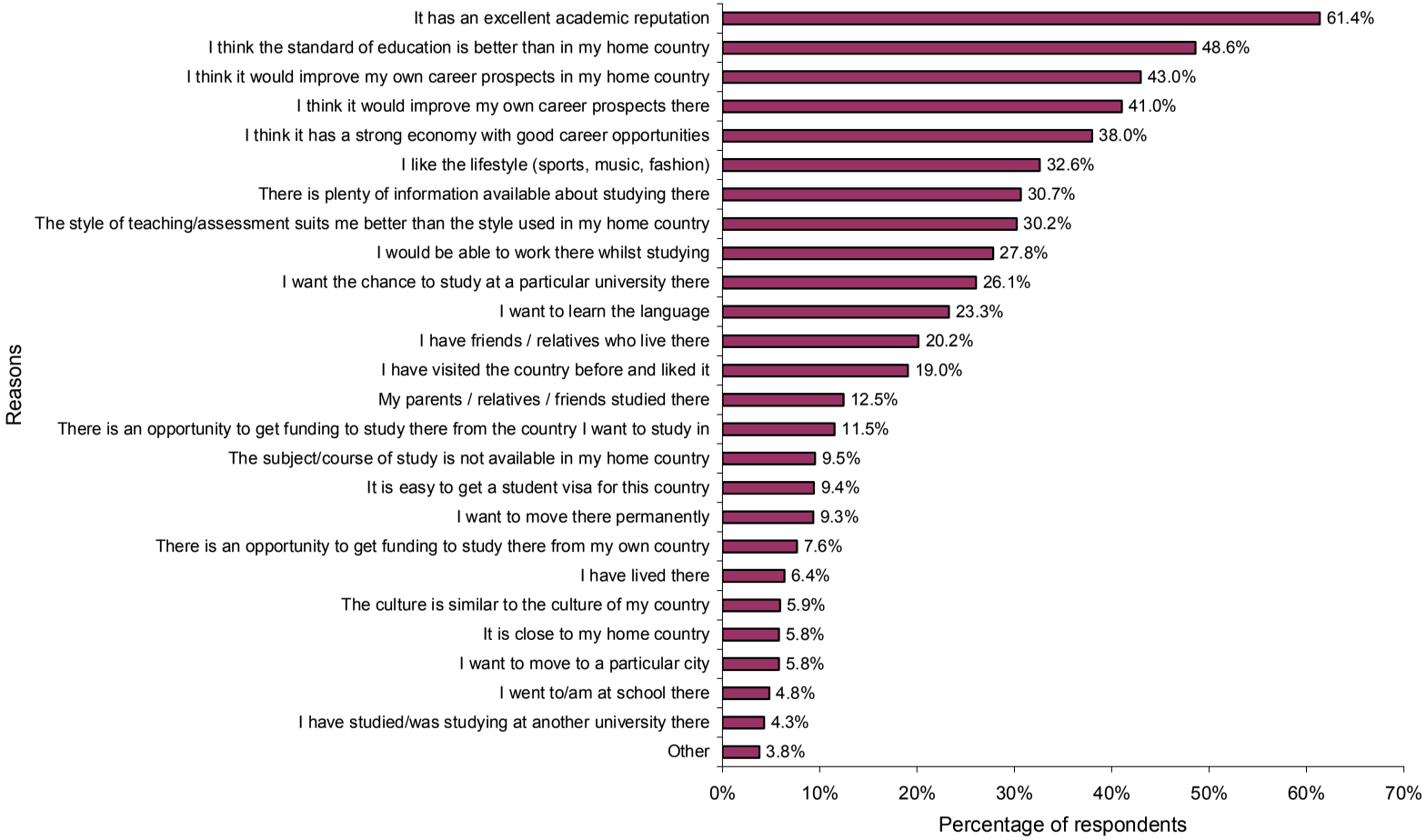
# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Why respondents chose the UK as most attractive

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***US***

Respondents who chose the US as an attractive country to study in did so largely for the same reason that respondents chose the UK. The top five reasons for choosing the US were: its academic reputation (56.3%), a better standard of education than in their own country (51.6%), a strong economy with good career prospects (44.3%), the perception that studying in the US would improve respondents' career prospects there (44.2%) and the perception that studying in the US would improve respondents' career prospects in their home country (42.9%).

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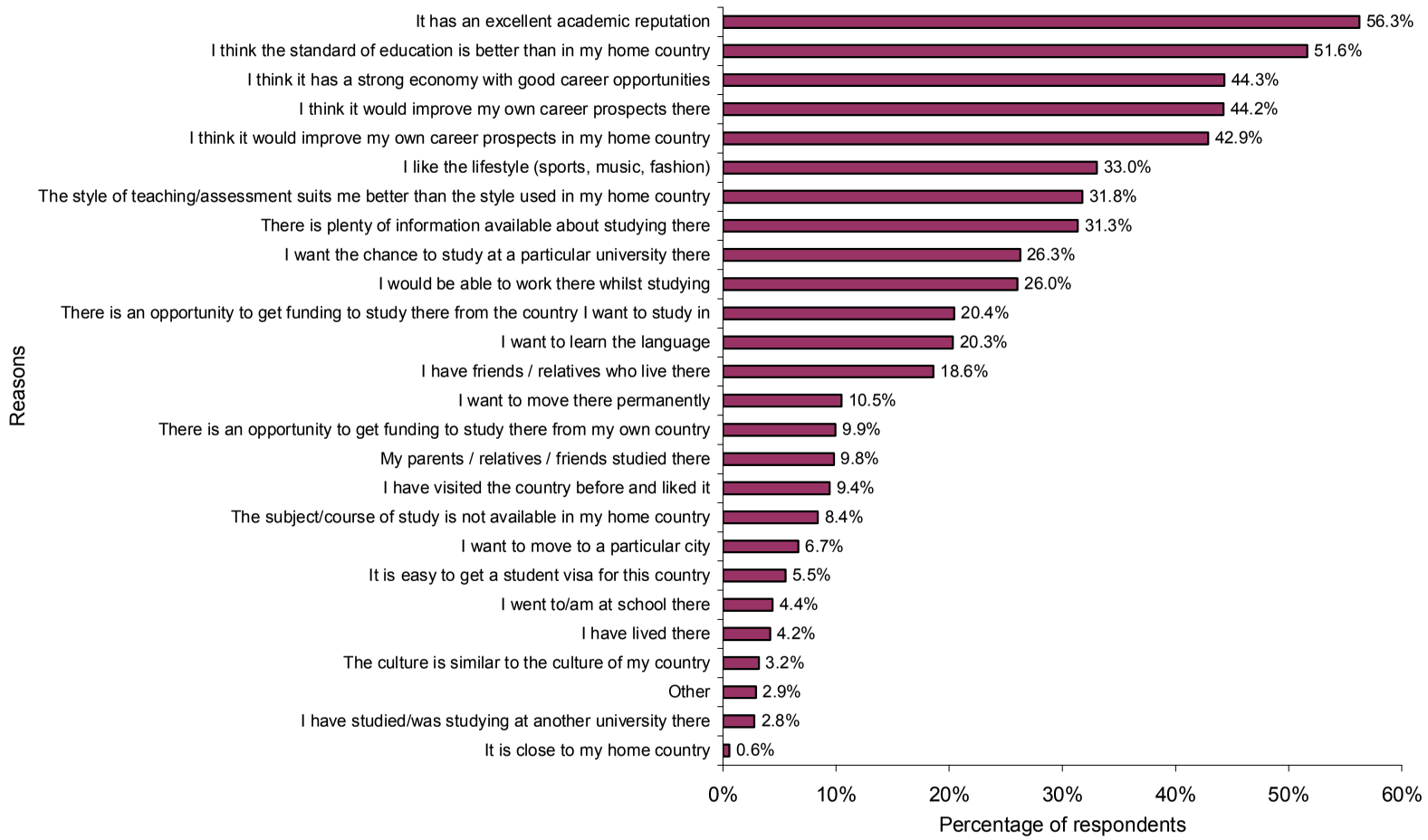
# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Why respondents chose the US as most attractive

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***Australia***

The most common reason for choosing Australia as an attractive study destination was that respondents considered that the standard of education there was better than in their own country (38.9%). This was closely followed by respondents liking the lifestyle there (36.7%), the perception that it has a good economy with good career opportunities (34.2%), the perception that it would improve respondents' career prospects there, and that it has an excellent academic reputation (33.1%).

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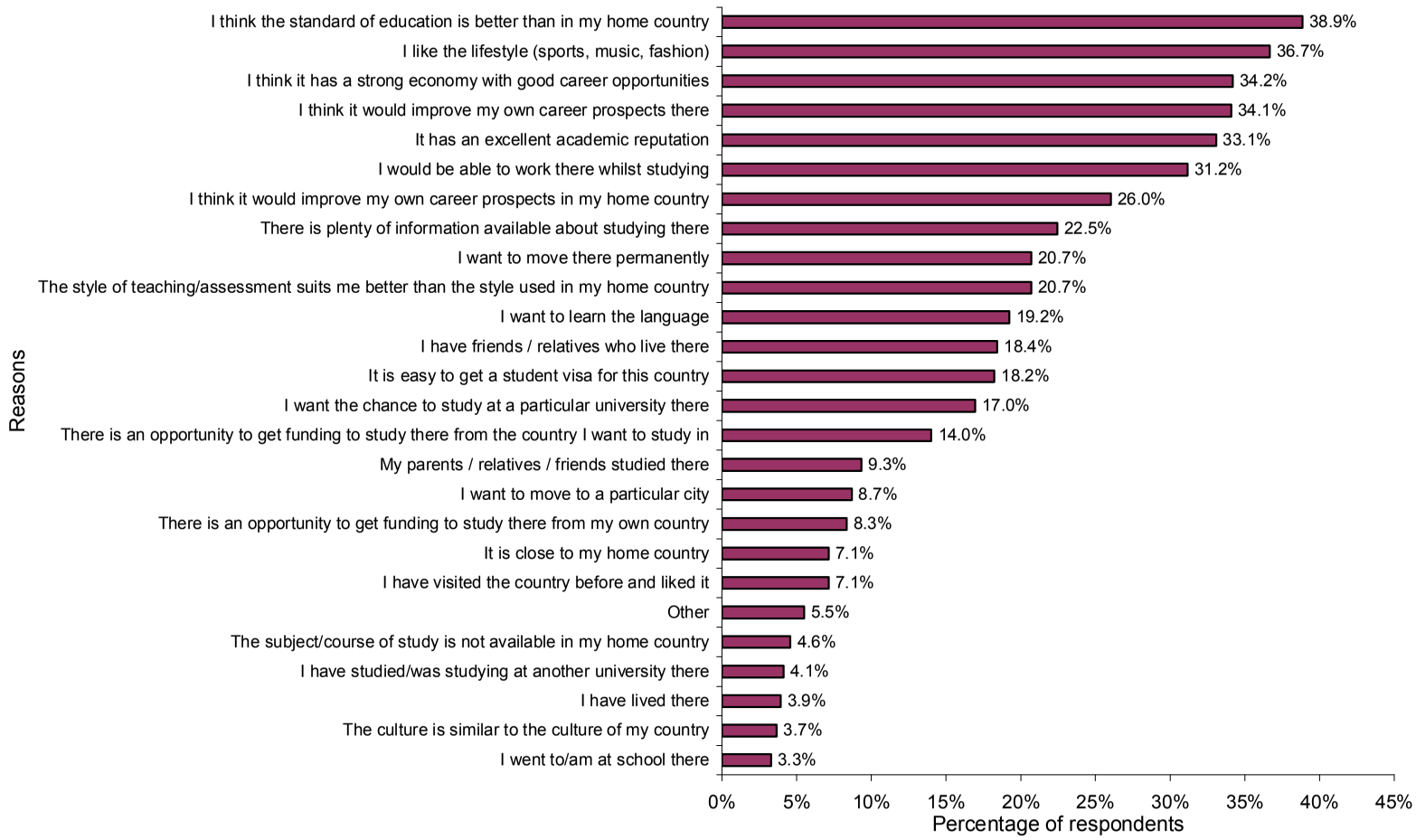
# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Why respondents chose Australia as the most attractive

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***Comparison of the UK, the US and Australia***

Possibly more interesting than looking at the "attractiveness factors" of each country in isolation is looking at the similarities and differences between why respondents chose the UK, the US and Australia as attractive study destinations[1].

As previously mentioned, respondents chose the UK and the US as attractive countries to study in for largely the same reasons, with an excellent academic reputation and a better standard of education than their home country noticeably further ahead than other reasons, followed by career prospects (both in the home and destination countries) reasons. There were a few differences between the UK and the US for lower-ranked reasons, most notably being that 19% of respondents who chose the UK did so as they had visited the country before and liked it, whereas only 9.4% of respondents selected this reason for the US, and 20.4% of respondents who chose the US saw the opportunity to get funding from the US to study there as making it an attractive destination, but only 11.5% selected this reason for the UK.

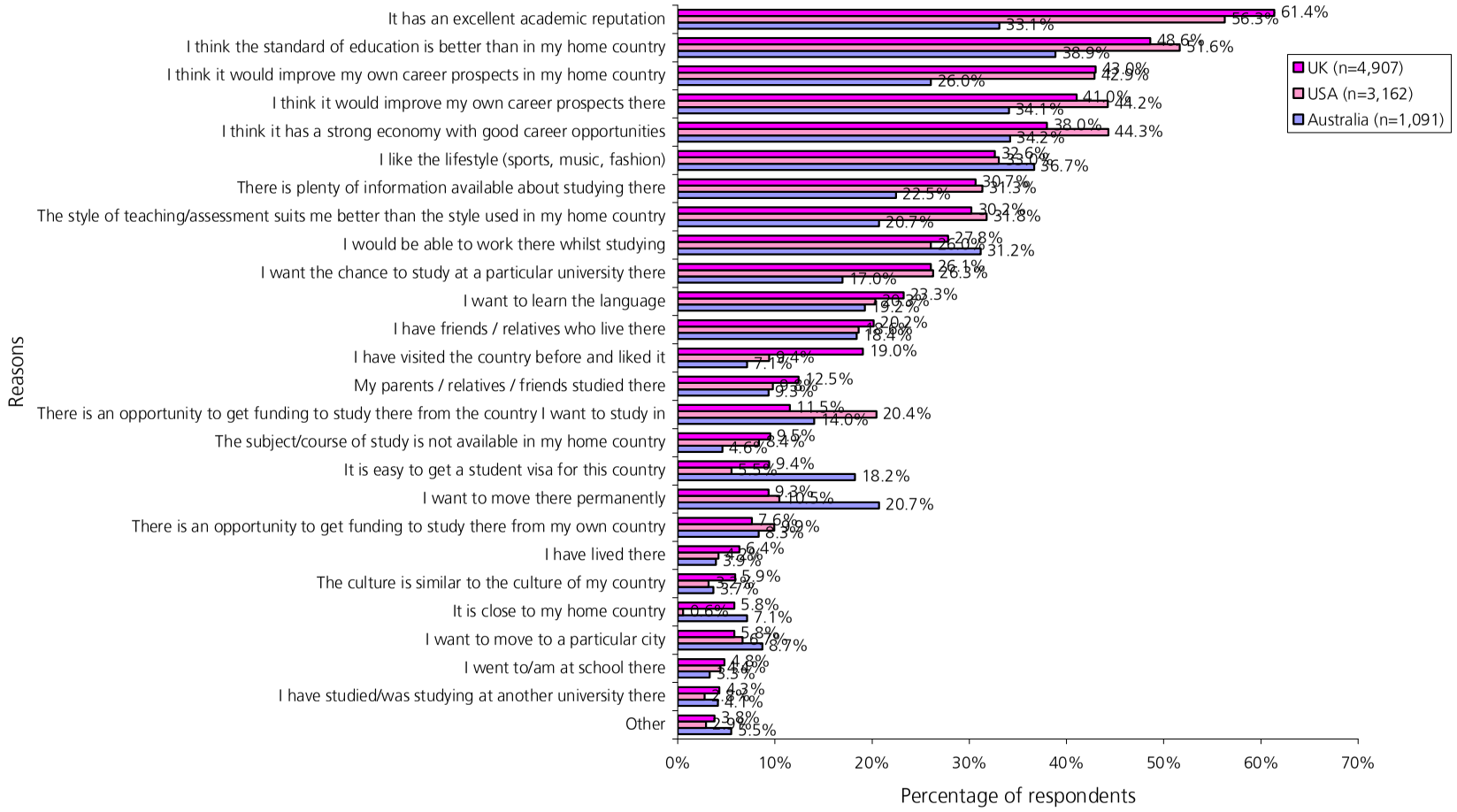
The reasons that respondents chose Australia as an attractive country to study in, however, followed quite a different pattern to both the UK and the US. In comparison to the UK and the US, there was no stand-out reason why respondents chose Australia as being attractive, and while an excellent academic reputation was still a key reason, only one third of respondents selected this, just over half the number of respondents who chose this reason for the UK and the US. In fact, fewer respondents who chose Australia as attractive selected Australia as being attractive in each of the top five reasons selected for the UK and US. Overall, there was a much more even spread between the top six reasons that respondents chose Australia which may indicate that the respondents surveyed saw Australia as being equally attractive on a wide range of different factors. The fact that respondents who chose Australia as attractive selected fewer overall reasons for its attractiveness than respondents who chose the UK or the US, however, may also have had an impact.

Reasons for which Australia received significantly higher ratings than the UK and the US were ease of getting a student visa and respondents wanting to move there permanently. As these reasons are both likely to be of considerable interest to UKvisas, they, along with three other factors that relate directly to visas/immigration are looked at in more detail in the following section.

[1] It should be noted that this data is based on different sample sizes and that as respondents could select multiple reasons, more reasons have been selected for some countries than others

# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Why students chose the UK, the US and Australia as most attractive, total respondents for each country

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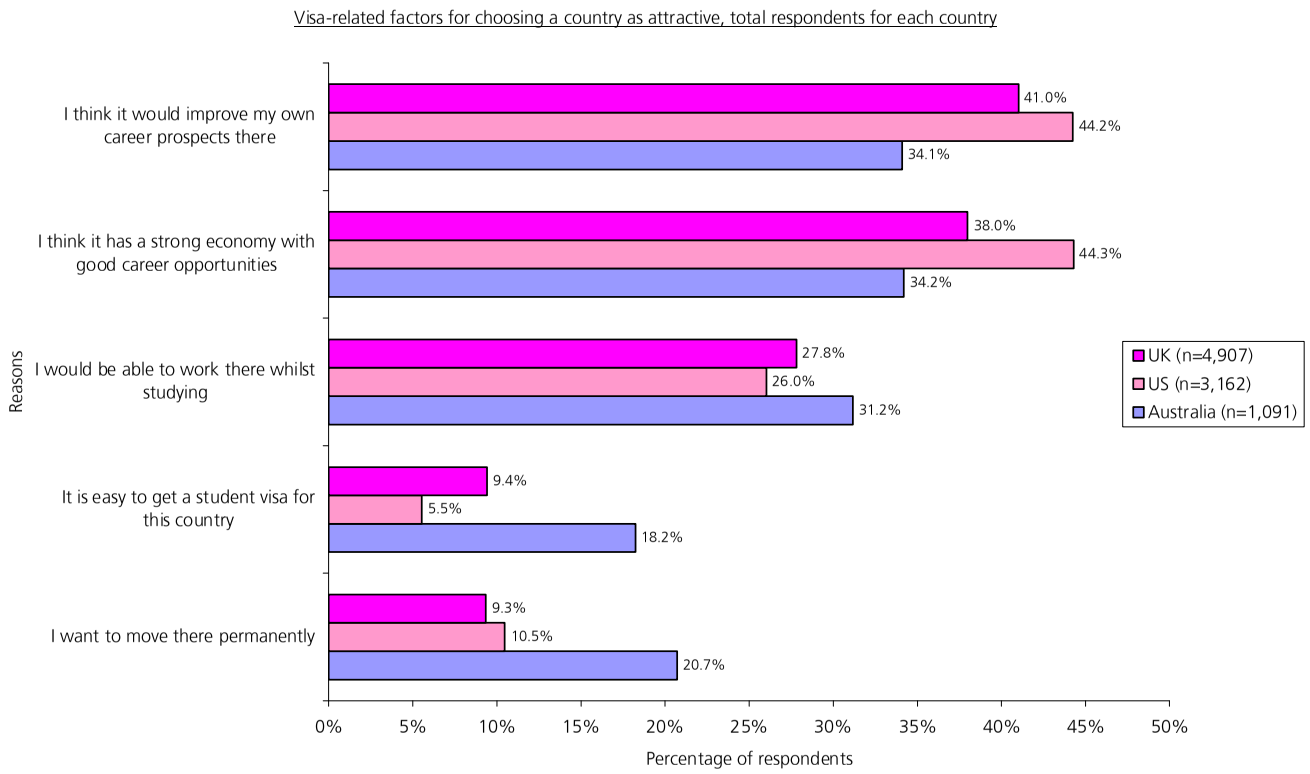
**Analysis of visa-related factors**

Of the options provided as reasons why a country was most attractive to prospective students, five have were related to visas/immigration: I think it would improve my own career prospects there; I think it has a strong economy with good career opportunities; I would be able to work there whilst studying; It is easy to get a student visa for this country; I want to move there permanently.

The following graph shows the percentage of total respondents who chose each of the UK, the US and Australia who selected each of these factors. A more detailed analysis of each factor is included below.



***Post-study employment in the destination country***

Of these factors, improving their career prospects and a perception that the country has a strong economy with good opportunities were selected by respondents in the top five factors for each the UK, the US and Australia. This seems to indicate that a significant proportion of the prospective students surveyed had a desire to work in the selected destination country post-study. Both of these factors were selected by a slightly larger proportion of respondents who chose the US as attractive and a smaller proportion of respondents who chose Australia than those who chose the UK. This may indicate that of the three destination countries, the US is considered the most attractive destination for post-study employment reasons and Australia the least attractive.

Where sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality, it can be seen that there was considerable variation by nationality of respondent in the attractiveness of the UK for post-study employment reasons. Of nationalities with a useable sample size, Bulgarian respondents were most likely to see the UK as an attractive study destination for post-study employment reasons followed by Polish respondents. This is perhaps not surprising given the proximity to and relationship as EU co-members with the UK. A high proportion of Malaysian respondents also considered the UK as attractive for these reasons. Respondents from Hong Kong, China and Taiwan were considerably less likely than average to see the UK as attractive for post-study employment reasons.

Bulgarian respondents who chose the US as attractive were also considerably more likely than other nationalities to see the US as an attractive study destination for post-study employment reasons, and respondents from China and Taiwan less likely. This may suggest that as national groups, Bulgarian respondents were likely to consider future employment prospects abroad when selecting a study destination, and Chinese respondents not so likely.

While fewer countries had adequate sample sizes for sub-analysis by nationality, amongst respondents who chose Australia, Indian respondents were more likely to see it as an attractive study destination for post-study employment reasons, and Chinese respondents once again less likely.

Respondents who selected a country as they considered that studying there would improve their career prospects there, by nationality (- indicates where sample sizes are too small to report on)

| | **Country of nationality of respondents** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Ghana | Hong Kong | India | Kenya | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
| **UK** | 34.4% | 54.3% | 25.9% | 34.6% | 29.3% | 45.6% | 42.1% | 52.9% | 42.0% | 40.6% | 50.4% | 37.7% | 29.4% | 37.2% | - | 41.0% |
| **US** | - | 60.5% | 41.7% | - | - | 45.2% | - | - | 52.4% | 32.9% | 41.6% | - | 49.5% | 47.1% | 32.5% | 44.2% |
| **Australia** | - | - | 25.0% | - | - | 42.4% | - | - | - | 37.1% | - | - | - | - | 33.0% | 34.1% |

Respondents who selected a country as they considered that it had a strong economy with good career prospects, by nationality

| | Country of nationality of respondents | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Ghana | Hong Kong | India | Kenya | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
| **UK** | 37.7% | 59.0% | 24.4% | 41.5% | 19.5% | 43.3% | 38.8% | 45.5% | 38.1% | 37.5% | 49.0% | 27.5% | 17.6% | 33.8% | - | 38.0% |
| **US** | - | 66.7% | 38.9% | - | - | 49.3% | - | - | 53.2% | 47.6% | 47.5% | - | 31.9% | 35.7% | 41.7% | 44.3% |
| **Australia** | - | - | 20.7% | - | - | 44.1% | - | - | - | 38.1% | - | - | - | - | 31.3% | 34.2% |

### *Ability to work while studying*

Between a quarter and a third of respondents for each of the three countries reported that the ability to work in the destination country whilst studying was a reason for choosing the country as attractive. This proportion was slightly higher for those who chose Australia than those who chose the UK or the US and was the sixth most frequently selected reason for choosing Australia.

Where sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality, it can be seen that for the UK, Polish respondents were most likely to choose the ability to work there whilst studying as a reason for choosing the UK. With Polish respondents (as EU nationals) having the right to work in the UK with no restrictions on hours of work[2], this is to be expected. Kenyan respondents were also considerably more likely than average to choose the ability to work in the UK whilst studying as a reason for finding the country an attractive study destination. Respondents from Hong Kong, China and Taiwan were all unlikely to select this reason for finding the country an attractive study destination.

[2] Polish students may, however, need to register their work under the Worker Registration Scheme.

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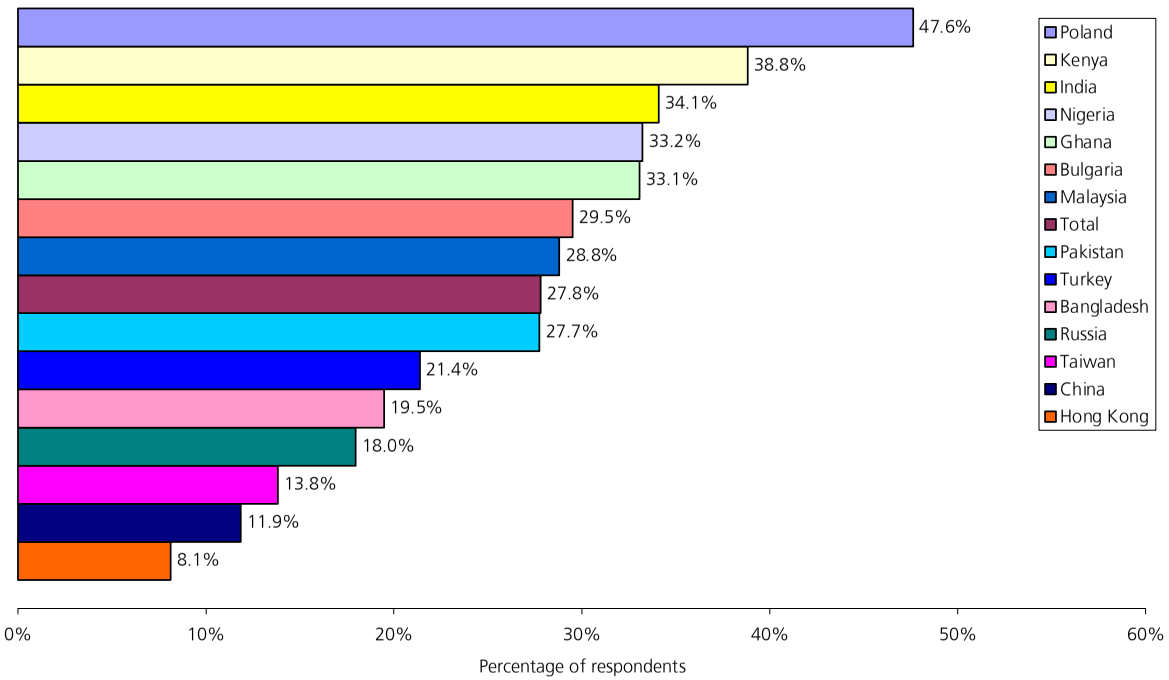
# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Respondents who selected the UK as they would be able to work there whilst studying, by nationality




A similar pattern emerged for the US, with Nigerian respondents being markedly more likely than others to have chosen the ability to work there whilst studying as a reason for finding the country an attractive study destination, and respondents from China and Taiwan less likely.

While few countries with adequate sample sizes makes sub-analysis by nationality for Australia less useful, of the countries looked at, Indian respondents were most likely and Chinese respondents least likely to have chosen Australia as attractive for the ability to work there whilst studying.

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Respondents who selected a country as they would be able to work there whilst studying, by nationality

| | Country of nationality of respondents | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Ghana | Hong Kong | India | Kenya | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
| **UK** | 19.5% | 29.5% | 11.9% | 33.1% | 8.1% | 34.1% | 38.8% | 28.8% | 33.2% | 27.7% | 47.6% | 18.0% | 13.8% | 21.4% | - | 27.8% |
| **US** | - | 35.1% | 12.8% | - | - | 30.5% | - | - | 42.1% | 31.7% | 32.7% | - | 16.5% | 20.5% | 25.8% | 26.0% |
| **Australia** | - | - | 23.6% | - | - | 40.8% | - | - | - | 27.6% | - | - | - | - | 27.0% | 31.2% |

***Desire to move to the country permanently***

A desire to move to the selected country permanently was selected by 20.7% of respondents surveyed who chose Australia as most attractive but just 10.5% of those who chose the US and 9.3% who chose the UK. Also interesting to note is that this reason was the ninth most frequently selected reason for choosing Australia.

Where sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality, Polish respondents who chose the UK as attractive were most likely to want to move there permanently (16.3%). With EU nationality allowing Polish citizens to live and work in the UK and the large number of Polish citizens who choose to do so, this was not unexpected. The largest non-EU group was Malaysians (12.3%) followed by Indians (11.8%). Kenyan respondents were least likely to have wanted to move to the UK permanently (2.5%) and, perhaps surprisingly, other African respondents from Ghana (4.6%) and Nigeria (5.2%) were also not very likely to have chosen the UK as attractive on this factor.

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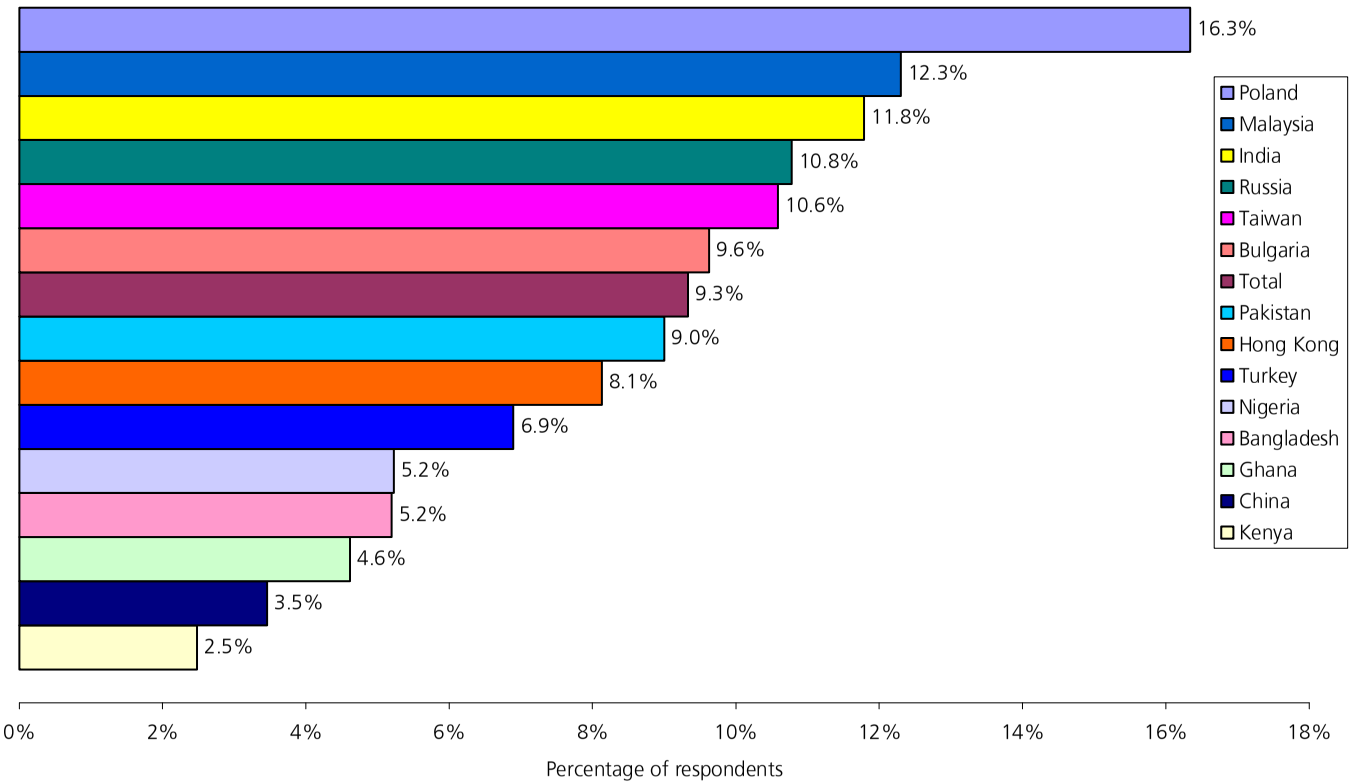
# Studying abroad: Why students choose the UK, the US and Australia

Respondents who selected the UK as they wanted to move there permanently, by nationality




Of groups with adequate sample sizes, Pakistani respondents were most likely to have chosen the US as attractive based on a desire to move there permanently, with 17.1% choosing this as a reason compared to just 9.0% of respondents choosing this for the UK. Polish and Bulgarian respondents were also markedly more likely than other nationalities to choose this as a reason for selecting the US.

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Although based again on just a few countries for which adequate sample sizes were attained, Chinese respondents were markedly more likely than the total sample to have chosen Australia as attractive based on a desire to move there permanently (27.2%) and Vietnamese respondents were significantly less likely than the total (6.1%).

Respondents who selected a country as they wanted to move there permanently, by nationality

| | Country of nationality of respondents | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Ghana | Hong Kong | India | Kenya | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
| **UK** | 5.2% | 9.6% | 3.5% | 4.6% | 8.1% | 11.8% | 2.5% | 12.3% | 5.2% | 9.0% | 16.3% | 10.8% | 10.6% | 6.9% | - | 9.3% |
| **US** | - | 15.8% | 8.7% | - | - | 9.2% | - | - | 9.9% | 17.1% | 16.8% | - | 11.5% | 7.6% | 6.6% | 10.5% |
| **Australia** | - | - | 27.2% | - | - | 23.1% | - | - | - | 14.3% | - | - | - | - | 6.1% | 20.7% |

***Ease of getting a student visa***

While ease of getting a visa was obviously a lower consideration for respondents when considering study destinations, it is interesting to note that where Australia was chosen as most attractive, the proportion of respondents who selected ease of getting a visa as a reason (18.2%) was much higher than where the UK (9.4%) or the US (5.5%) was chosen.

Where sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality, it can be seen that respondents from Pakistan (16.3%) and Ghana (15.4%) who chose the UK as attractive were noticeably more likely than the total sample to have chosen ease of getting a student visa as a reason. Respondents from Turkey were very unlikely to have chosen this as a reason (1.4%), as were respondents from Taiwan (3.5%) and Russia (3.6%).

Of the countries with useable sample sizes, Nigeria (9.9%) and Poland (9.9%) were most likely to have chosen ease of getting a student visa as a reason for choosing the US as attractive. Chinese respondents were least likely, with just 1.3% of Chinese who chose the US as attractive selecting this as a reason compared to 10.4% of Chinese who chose the UK.

There was little variation between nationality groups on this issue for respondents who chose Australia as most attractive.

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Respondents who selected a country as they considered that it was easy to get a student visa for that country, by nationality

| | Country of nationality of respondents | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | Ghana | Hong Kong | India | Kenya | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
| **UK** | 7.8% | 4.3% | 10.4% | 15.4% | 5.7% | 9.4% | 12.4% | 8.9% | 13.5% | 16.3% | 9.1% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 1.4% | - | 9.4% |
| **US** | - | 5.3% | 1.3% | - | - | 7.6% | - | - | 9.9% | 6.7% | 9.9% | - | 4.9% | 4.3% | 5.3% | 5.5% |
| **Australia** | - | - | 20.7% | - | - | 19.7% | - | - | - | 21.9% | - | - | - | - | 19.1% | 18.2% |

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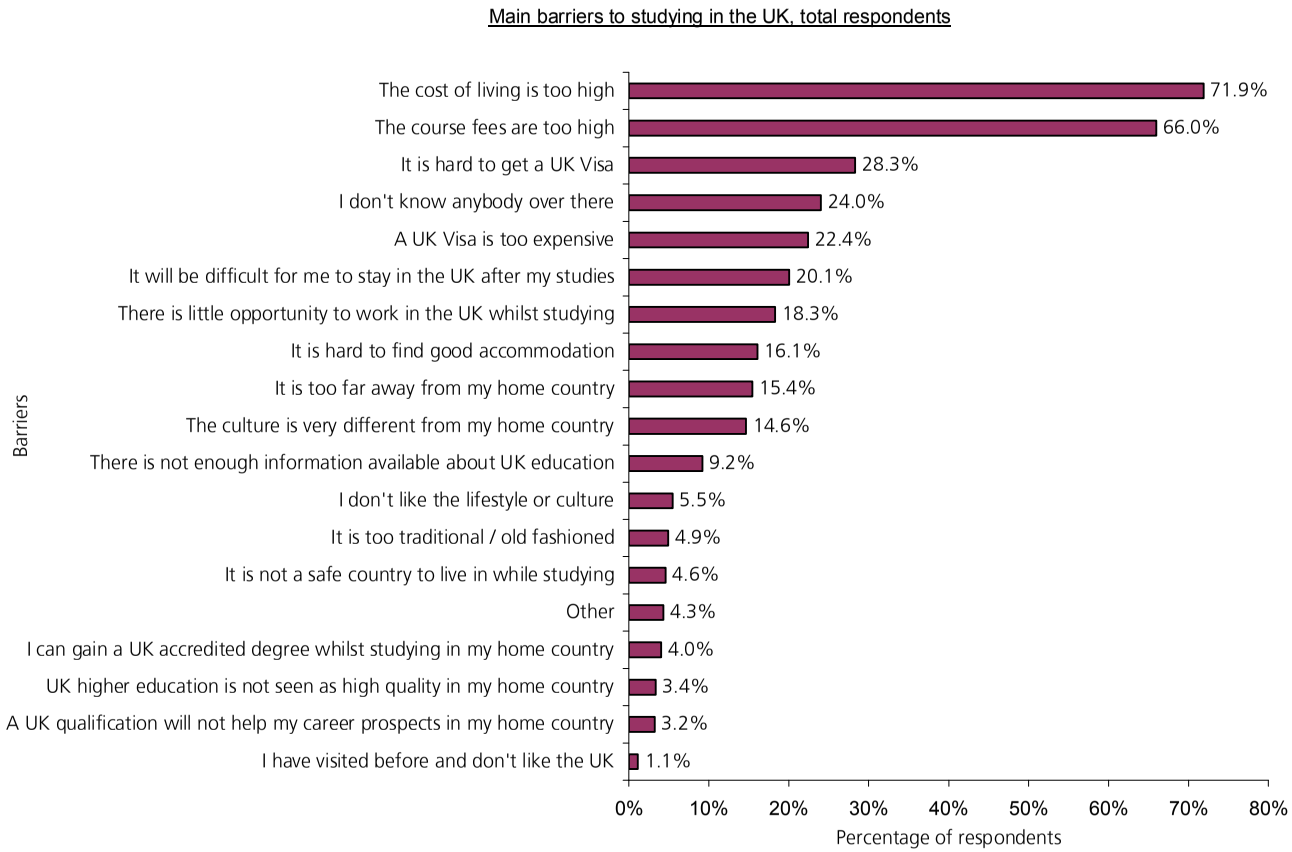
# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK

## Barriers to studying in the UK

Respondents who had indicated that they were interested in studying abroad in the future were asked what they thought the main barriers to studying in the UK were and, not unexpectedly, cost – both the cost of living (71.9%) and course fees (66.0%) - emerged overwhelmingly as the main barrier. The third most cited barrier (selected by 28.3% of respondents) was that it was difficult to get a UK visa. Other barriers as rated in the top five were that the respondents didn't know anyone in the UK (selected by 24.0%) of respondents and that a UK visa was too expensive (selected by 22.4% of respondents).

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**Barriers by nationality**

Sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality for respondents from 12 countries. From this analysis it is obvious that while some factors were significant regardless of country – for example, the cost of living and course fees were rated as the top two barriers for all countries except for Bangladesh and Nigeria – there was considerable variation by nationality on other factors.

With the exception of barriers considered to relate directly to visas/immigration which are looked at in more detail in the following section, some of the more notable differences in responses by nationality were:

- 20.1% of respondents from Vietnam considered that a lack of information available about the UK was a main barrier to studying there while only 3.3% of respondents from Malaysia and 4.5% from Bangladesh considered this.

- 20.8% of respondents from Pakistan considered that difficulties in finding good accommodation was a main barrier, more than twice the proportion of Nigerians who saw this as a main barrier.

- Almost four times the proportion of Vietnamese respondents (27.3%) considered that the large difference between their culture and UK culture was a main barrier as the proportion of Russian respondents (7.4%).

- 10.2% of respondents from Vietnam considered that safety in the UK was a main barrier, compared to just 1.2% of respondents from Kenya.

It should be noted that because respondents could select as many options as applied, respondents from some countries selected more barriers than respondents from others. A propensity for certain nationalities to be more or less positive than others, therefore, may have impacted on the results.

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# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK

The main barriers to studying in the UK, by nationality

| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The cost of living is too high | 55.1% | 81.6% | 71.1% | 68.5% | 85.2% | 55.0% | 64.5% | 77.7% | 74.7% | 87.0% | 75.4% | 71.1% | 71.9% |
| The course fees are too high | 53.5% | 65.8% | 64.7% | 62.2% | 83.6% | 72.0% | 67.5% | 54.9% | 68.4% | 71.3% | 64.2% | 58.1% | 66.0% |
| It is hard to get a UK Visa | 58.0% | 13.6% | 21.1% | 28.1% | 14.8% | 55.5% | 42.1% | 2.3% | 39.4% | 9.8% | 39.6% | 30.2% | 28.3% |
| I don't know anybody over there | 14.7% | 26.8% | 19.8% | 28.3% | 22.7% | 22.1% | 22.1% | 27.1% | 19.5% | 16.5% | 27.9% | 35.7% | 24.0% |
| A UK Visa is too expensive | 23.3% | 8.4% | 24.5% | 22.5% | 22.5% | 26.9% | 24.8% | 2.7% | 17.5% | 42.5% | 25.6% | 31.5% | 22.4% |
| It will be difficult for me to stay in the UK after my studies | 18.8% | 11.7% | 26.9% | 25.4% | 24.9% | 13.2% | 20.2% | 9.1% | 15.8% | 27.2% | 18.0% | 24.0% | 20.1% |
| There is little opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying | 18.8% | 15.6% | 25.0% | 20.1% | 13.7% | 15.7% | 17.2% | 5.7% | 17.8% | 31.4% | 17.8% | 18.5% | 18.3% |
| It is hard to find good accommodation | 17.6% | 15.8% | 12.0% | 18.6% | 15.6% | 8.7% | 20.8% | 19.8% | 16.8% | 14.0% | 19.8% | 19.0% | 16.1% |
| It is too far away from my home country | 13.1% | 15.4% | 15.3% | 11.5% | 36.0% | 6.1% | 16.6% | 12.1% | 7.1% | 24.1% | 7.4% | 25.5% | 15.4% |
| The culture is very different from my home country | 12.2% | 17.1% | 13.6% | 15.9% | 20.2% | 7.8% | 18.0% | 10.0% | 7.4% | 17.4% | 13.5% | 27.3% | 14.6% |
| There is not enough information available about UK education | 4.5% | 5.0% | 8.7% | 14.1% | 3.3% | 4.9% | 6.7% | 9.9% | 7.7% | 6.5% | 15.0% | 20.1% | 9.2% |
| I don't like the lifestyle or culture | 3.3% | 6.1% | 9.4% | 4.3% | 4.0% | 1.5% | 3.4% | 7.1% | 4.7% | 6.1% | 5.8% | 4.7% | 5.5% |
| It is too traditional / old fashioned | 3.7% | 4.8% | 8.5% | 3.0% | 5.0% | 1.9% | 2.2% | 4.5% | 6.1% | 3.8% | 5.1% | 7.6% | 4.9% |
| It is not a safe country to live in while studying | 2.4% | 4.3% | 5.0% | 5.2% | 2.5% | 1.2% | 3.9% | 5.4% | 4.7% | 6.5% | 4.3% | 10.2% | 4.6% |
| Other | 2.9% | 5.2% | 2.6% | 5.7% | 6.0% | 5.2% | 5.6% | 4.3% | 6.1% | 3.1% | 4.1% | 2.9% | 4.3% |
| I can gain a UK accredited degree whilst studying in my home country | 7.3% | 1.5% | 2.7% | 4.7% | 8.9% | 2.6% | 5.8% | 2.1% | 2.7% | 1.9% | 3.6% | 6.3% | 4.0% |
| UK higher education is not seen as high quality in my home country | 2.4% | 0.6% | 4.8% | 5.3% | 1.7% | 0.4% | 2.2% | 3.5% | 2.4% | 5.4% | 3.8% | 5.5% | 3.4% |
| A UK qualification will not help my career prospects in my home country | 2.0% | 0.9% | 5.9% | 5.2% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 1.9% | 2.7% | 2.0% | 3.6% | 3.8% | 4.4% | 3.2% |
| I have visited before and don't like the UK | 0.8% | 0.4% | 1.4% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 1.2% | 1.8% | 0.7% | 1.3% | 0.8% | 2.6% | 1.1% |
| Base | 245 | 538 | 1,431 | 1,411 | 481 | 1,002 | 673 | 771 | 297 | 522 | 394 | 384 | 9,424 |

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**Visa-related barriers**

Of the main barriers options to studying in the UK, four were more weighted towards visas/immigration: It is hard to get a UK visa; A UK visa is too expensive; There is little opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying; It will be difficult for me to stay in the UK after my studies.

***Difficulty in getting a UK visa***

In total, 28.3% of respondents saw difficulties in getting a UK visa as a main barrier to studying in the UK. Of the nationality groups with adequate sample sizes, Bangladeshi respondents (58.0%) were most likely to perceive this followed closely by Nigerians (55.5%). More Bangladeshi respondents saw visa difficulties as a barrier compared to any other factors (more respondents seeing this a barrier than cost), and for just over half of the nationality groups looked at, visa problems were one of their top five barriers.

While being the nationality group least likely to see visa difficulties preventing them from studying in the UK, the fact that 2.3% of respondents from Poland felt this is surprising and suggests that not all prospective Polish students are aware that they do not need a visa to study in the UK. The same applies to Bulgarian respondents, 13.6% of who saw getting a visa as a main barrier.

With just 9.8% of respondents selecting this option, respondents from Taiwan did not consider getting a visa to be such a barrier.

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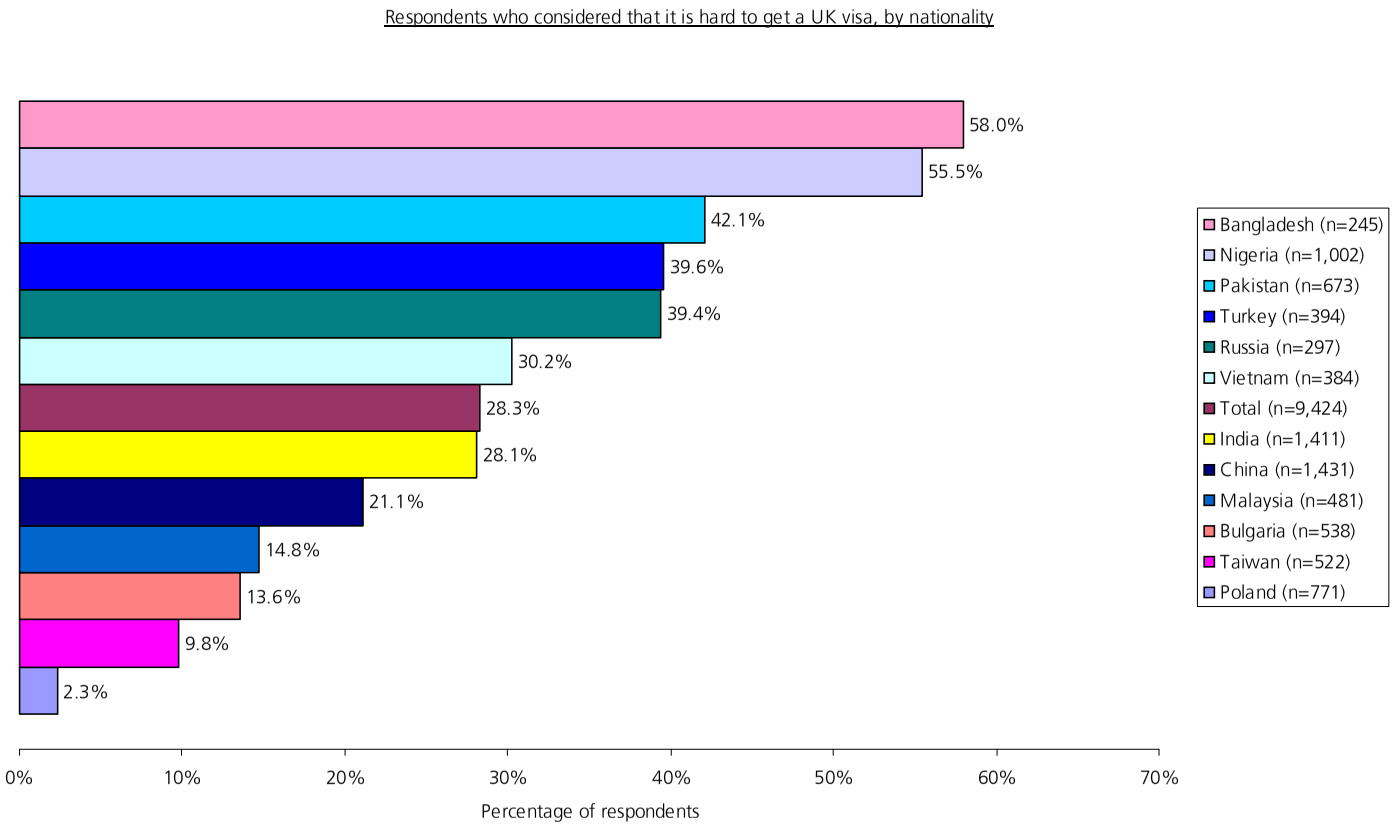
# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK




There was no correlation between the length of the intended course of study and the proportion of respondents who considered that it is hard to get a UK visa.

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***Cost of UK visas***

As previously noted, overall, 22.4% of respondents considered that the cost of a UK visa was a main barrier to studying in the UK. Of the nationality groups with adequate sample sizes, Taiwanese respondents were the most likely to feel this (42.5%), followed by almost one third of respondents from Vietnam (31.5%). While not considered as much of a barrier as difficulties in getting a visa, UK visa costs were in the top five barriers to studying there for two thirds of the nationality groups looked at.

As with the previous visa-related barrier, it is surprising to see that 8.4% of Bulgarians and 2.7% of Polish respondents considered that a UK visa was too expensive. Again this may suggest that not all of these prospective students are aware of their EU status.

Nationalities who seemed to find the cost of a UK visa as comparatively less of a barrier were respondents from Russia (17.5%).

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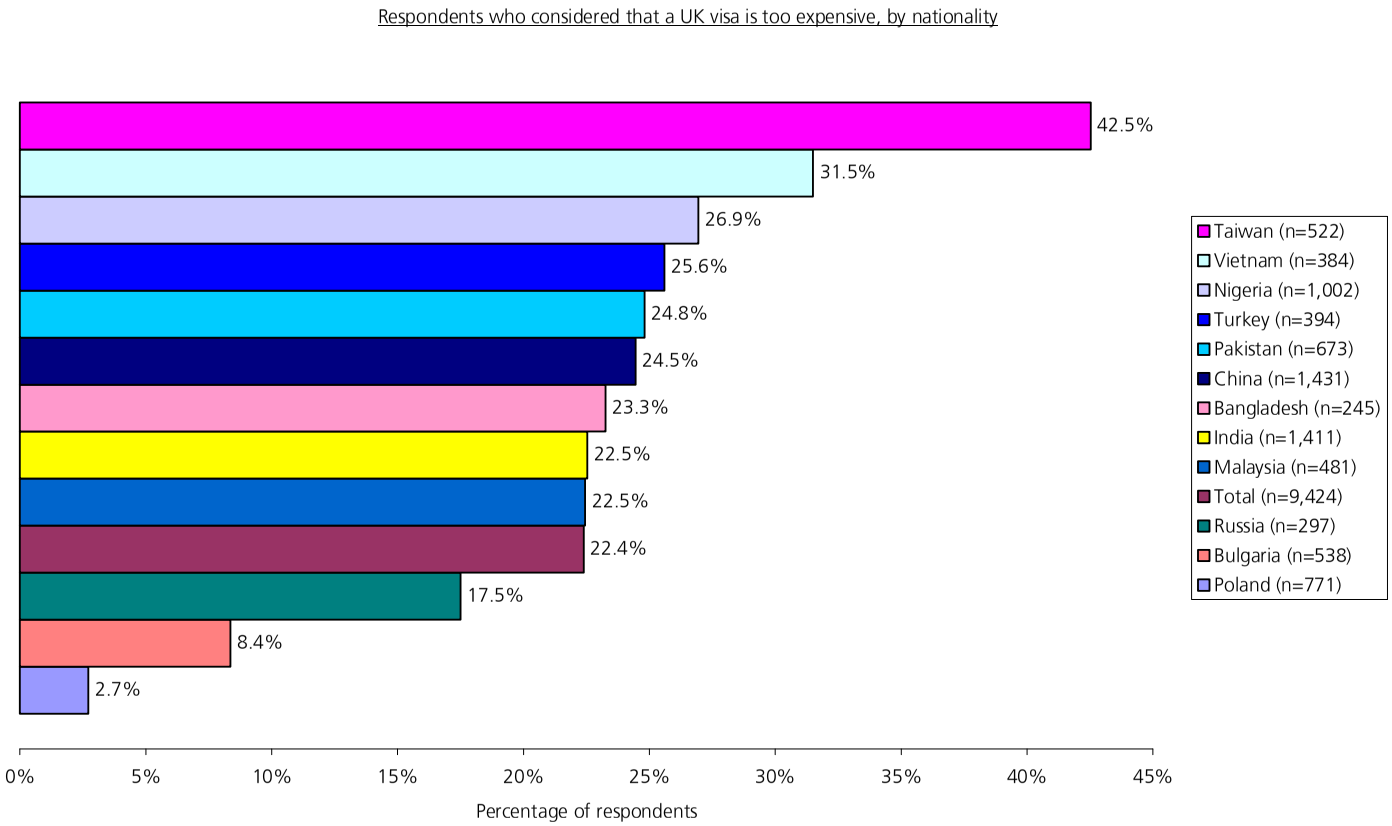
# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK

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# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK

***Lack of opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying***

While 18.3% of total respondents considered that there was little opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying, it is not clear whether they felt this because of conditions or perceived conditions related to student visas or because of a perceived lack of appropriate jobs. Regardless of this, Taiwanese respondents (31.4%) were the national group most likely to see lack of opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying as a main barrier. A quarter of Chinese students also saw this as a main barrier.

Polish students (5.7%) were least likely to see little opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying as a main barrier. This may indicate that the majority of Polish respondents considered this question to be in relation to the ability to work in the UK and were aware that as EU nationals there were no visa-related restrictions on this.

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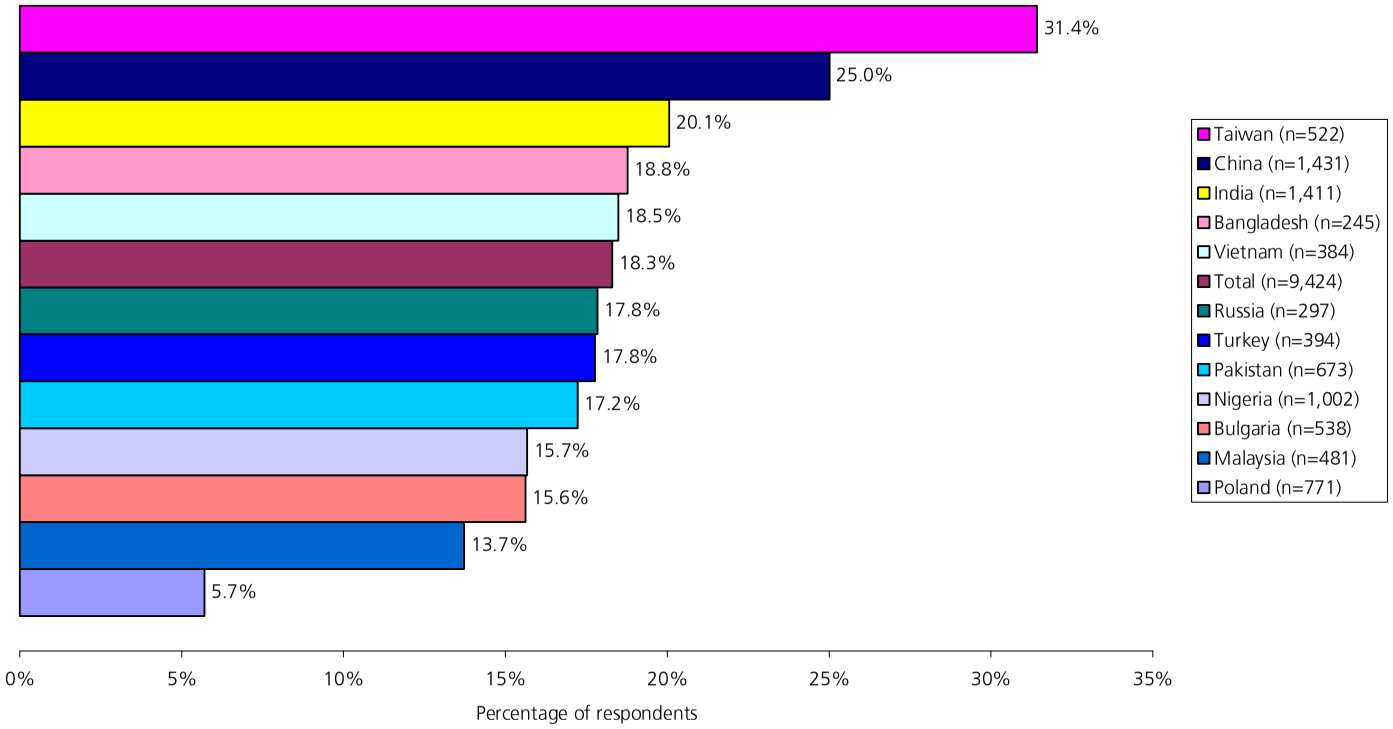
# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK

Respondents who considered that there is little opportunity to work in the UK whilst studying, by nationality

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***Difficulties staying in the UK post-study***

20.1% of respondents saw difficulties in staying in the UK after their studies as a main barrier to studying here, the sixth most highly ranked barrier. Without knowing what proportion of respondents were actually interested in staying the UK post-study, however, it is difficult to draw useful conclusions from this. Also, while visa-related issues may be a major factor in why someone would consider it difficult to remain in the country, there is likely be a myriad of other reasons.

While the exact reasons behind the selection of this barrier and the overall proportion of respondents who this may affect are unknown, it may be interesting to note that there few differences on this factor by nationality (where samples allowed analysis). Taiwanese (27.2%) and Chinese (26.9%) respondents were most likely to have selected that it would be difficult for them to stay in the UK after their studies as a main barrier to studying there and Polish respondents (9.1%) were least likely (possibly reflecting an awareness that as EU nationals, Polish citizens are entitled to live and work in the UK).

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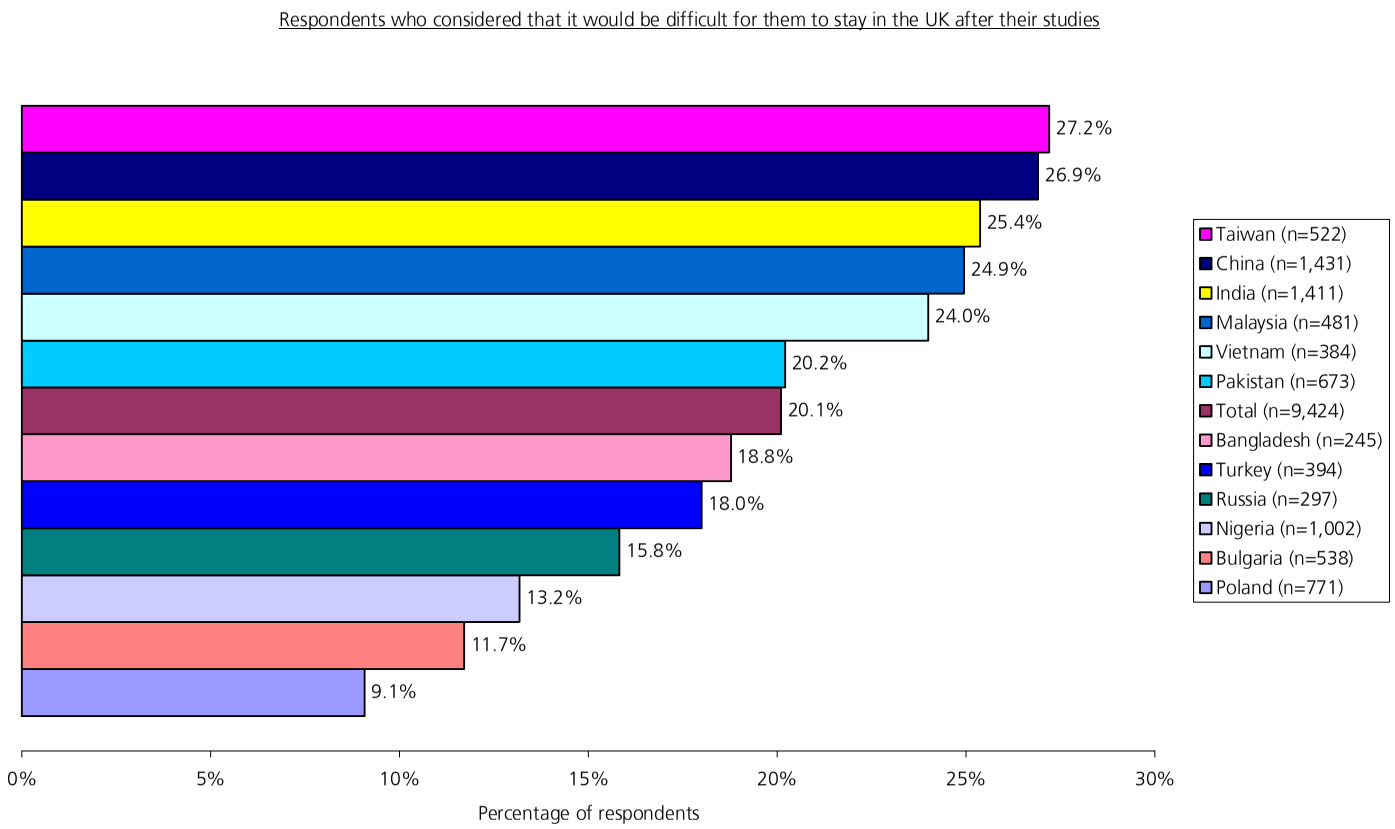
# Studying abroad: Barriers to studying in the UK




There was no correlation between the intended level of study and the proportion of respondents who selected that it would be difficult to stay in the UK after their studies as a main barrier to studying there.

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# Views of prospective students interested in studying in the UK

This section looks at views of prospective students interested in studying in the UK, including information sources, future plans, and opinions on statements related to studying in the UK.

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# Studying in the UK: Sample profile of respondents

**Sample profile of respondents interested in studying in the UK**

In total, 8,797 respondents indicated that they were interested in studying in the UK in the future. In terms of characteristics, this group was similar to those who were studying abroad in general.

55% of respondents interested in studying in the UK were male and 45% were female. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents were aged under 20 years, and just over half (51%) were 20-25. 14% were 26-29 years old and 11% were 30 plus.

Indians (15%), Chinese (13%) and Nigerians (12%) were the largest respondent groups by nationality. No other nationality made up over 10% of total respondents who were interested in studying in the UK.

The activity of respondents interested in studying in the UK at the time they completed the survey is shown below:

| Activity | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Studying at school/college | 22% |
| Studying at university | 40% |
| Working full-time/part-time/casual work | 38% |

Respondents rated their English language ability as follows:

| | Ability | |
|---|---|---|
| Rating | Spoken | Written |
| 1 - Basic | 4% | 3% |
| 2 | 4% | 4% |
| 3 | 21% | 20% |
| 4 | 27% | 28% |
| 5 - Fluent | 44% | 45% |

7% of respondents interested in studying abroad were interested in courses of up to six months, and the remainder longer courses. 38% were interested in postgraduate and 28% in undergraduate study. 18% were interested in a Masters of Business Administration. In terms of intended subjects of study, 13% were interested in engineering, 12% in business studies and 10% in computer science/IT.

When asked which statement best described their situation in relation to studying in a country other than their home country, respondents replied as follows:

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# Studying in the UK: Sample profile of respondents

| Statement | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I would like to study abroad | 24% |
| I have started planning to study abroad (but not yet started looking for information) | 9% |
| I have started planning to study abroad (and started looking for information) | 22% |
| I have applied to an institution abroad | 27% |
| I am studying abroad at the moment | 13% |
| I have already studied abroad | 6% |

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# Studying in the UK: Information sources

**Information sources used**

Looking at the information sources used by respondents interested in studying in the UK gives an idea of the most effective means of conveying information to prospective students. The most commonly used sources amongst respondents for information about UK institutions and courses were, online sources; 50.1% of respondents indicated that they had used UK university websites, 47.7% had used web search engines, e.g. Google or Yahoo, and 39.9% of respondents had used education websites such as Study UK.

After these top three sources, the large number of different sources which had been used by around a quarter to a third of respondents shows that a variety of sources had been reasonably frequently used. Other relatively highly used UK university-managed sources were e-mails sent from universities and university or college prospectuses (either paper copies or CD ROMs), both used by almost one third of respondents, while similar proportions of respondents had used school/university information services and teachers/lecturers in their home country.

32.2% of respondents had used the British Council website and 24.9% had used the British Council office. 28.1% had attended education fairs/exhibitions for information about UK institutions and courses. UK education rankings had been a source of information for 32.5% of respondents, and word of mouth/information based on personal experience was frequently used with 32.1% getting information from friends/family who were already studying/had studied in the UK, 25.3% getting it from friends/family who were based in the UK, and 23.7% using friends/family who have studied at the institution they wanted to study at.

Less frequently used sources were the British embassy (12.5%), UKvisas (11.2%), alumni forums (10.6%) and UKCISA (9.1%).

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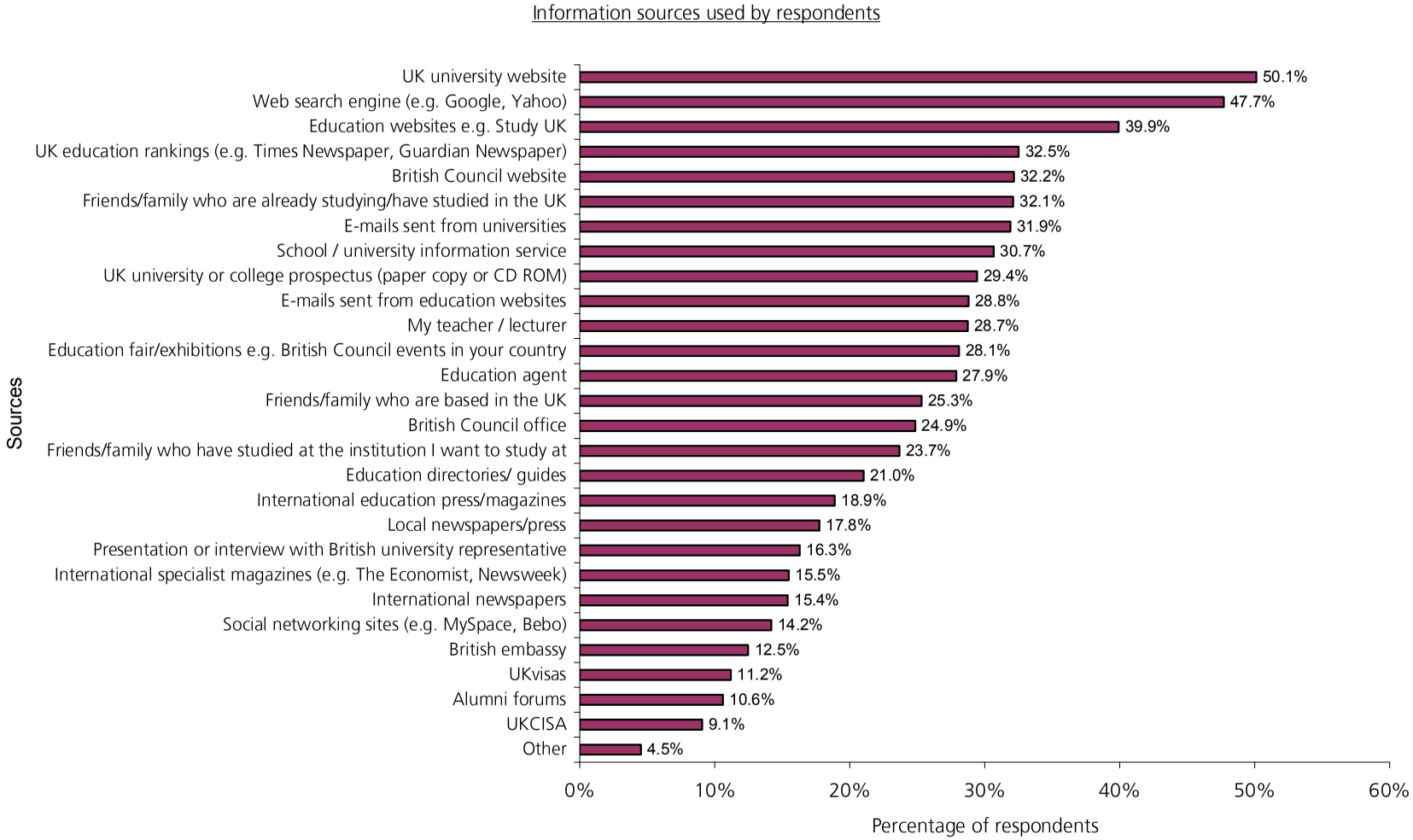
# Studying in the UK: Information sources

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**Information sources used by nationality**

Sample sizes allowed for a sub-analysis by nationality for respondents from 12 countries. While the top three sources for total respondents - UK university websites, web search engines and education websites– were ranked as the top three sources in the vast majority of countries looked at, the ranking of other sources and the proportions of respondents who used them differed by nationality.

While information sources considered to be of particular interest to UKvisas are looked at in more detail in the following section, some of the more interesting differences in responses by nationality were:

- Over half of the respondents from Malaysia (52.8%) and Taiwan (52.5%) had used UK education rankings as an information source, with this source being ranked third and second by respondents from each country respectively. UK education rankings were also the third most commonly cited information source used by Chinese respondents.

- Respondents from Taiwan (23.1%), Malaysia (21.8%) and Bulgaria (20.1%) were most likely to have attended a presentation or interview with a British university representative and Bangladeshi respondents (7.2%) were least likely.

- Vietnamese (25%), Chinese (23.2%) and Taiwanese (21.5%) respondents were considerably more likely to have used social networking sites such as MySpace and Bebo.

- While alumni forums were generally not widely used, almost a quarter of respondents from Taiwan used them as an information source.

It should be noted that because respondents could select as many options as applied, respondents from some countries selected more sources overall than respondents from others. An analysis of respondents by nationality shows that respondents from Malaysia were most likely to have used a wide range of education sources and respondents from Bangladesh least likely.

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# Studying in the UK: Information sources

Information sources used, by nationality (continued over the page)

| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK university website | 33.7% | 58.5% | 46.2% | 47.6% | 65.5% | 47.7% | 47.3% | 56.8% | 56.2% | 56.0% | 42.3% | 37.0% | 50.1% |
| Web search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo) | 31.5% | 55.8% | 45.0% | 47.4% | 51.4% | 51.9% | 46.3% | 47.2% | 50.5% | 46.8% | 45.4% | 43.2% | 47.7% |
| Education websites e.g. Study UK | 26.0% | 42.8% | 35.4% | 44.8% | 42.1% | 38.8% | 38.8% | 40.9% | 53.6% | 41.5% | 33.9% | 32.8% | 39.9% |
| UK education rankings (e.g. Times Newspaper, Guardian Newspaper) | 17.1% | 35.5% | 38.9% | 26.8% | 52.8% | 16.9% | 28.4% | 36.4% | 22.7% | 52.5% | 26.9% | 25.0% | 32.5% |
| British Council website | 24.9% | 26.0% | 32.4% | 32.3% | 33.6% | 22.3% | 34.0% | 34.2% | 48.5% | 45.3% | 30.8% | 39.1% | 32.2% |
| Friends/family who are already studying/have studied in the UK | 16.6% | 27.4% | 34.9% | 27.8% | 53.4% | 28.2% | 28.6% | 37.2% | 26.8% | 40.5% | 25.1% | 29.2% | 32.1% |
| E-mails sent from universities | 19.9% | 34.1% | 30.1% | 34.5% | 45.5% | 30.0% | 33.6% | 39.2% | 28.9% | 30.1% | 26.0% | 22.4% | 31.9% |
| School / university information service | 16.6% | 29.5% | 33.5% | 23.5% | 45.2% | 25.3% | 20.8% | 47.0% | 27.3% | 40.5% | 26.4% | 30.7% | 30.7% |
| UK university or college prospectus (paper copy or CD ROM) | 22.7% | 33.6% | 30.5% | 25.3% | 45.8% | 27.3% | 27.7% | 40.4% | 26.3% | 29.7% | 17.6% | 20.8% | 29.4% |
| E-mails sent from education websites | 19.9% | 27.4% | 26.5% | 32.1% | 30.5% | 29.3% | 27.7% | 24.0% | 34.5% | 30.7% | 37.9% | 32.8% | 28.8% |
| My teacher / lecturer | 19.3% | 28.2% | 34.9% | 20.2% | 50.0% | 15.9% | 32.2% | 32.5% | 23.7% | 32.0% | 27.8% | 34.4% | 28.7% |
| Education fair/exhibitions e.g. British Council events in your country | 20.4% | 29.0% | 26.8% | 25.8% | 52.3% | 16.9% | 28.4% | 20.0% | 38.1% | 43.7% | 26.4% | 30.7% | 28.1% |
| Education agent | 43.1% | 33.3% | 34.7% | 30.5% | 33.1% | 20.9% | 18.4% | 14.5% | 19.1% | 47.2% | 32.2% | 31.3% | 27.9% |
| Friends/family who are based in the UK | 13.3% | 22.8% | 27.8% | 22.8% | 35.0% | 23.6% | 28.1% | 27.7% | 16.0% | 23.4% | 23.8% | 25.5% | 25.3% |
| British Council office | 24.9% | 23.0% | 20.9% | 24.2% | 26.0% | 21.1% | 19.6% | 26.8% | 33.5% | 34.8% | 13.7% | 31.8% | 24.9% |
| Friends/family who have studied at the institution I want to study at | 13.3% | 18.2% | 30.0% | 20.7% | 38.1% | 16.9% | 22.7% | 25.7% | 19.6% | 29.7% | 20.3% | 23.4% | 23.7% |
| Education directories/ guides | 7.7% | 28.2% | 23.4% | 20.2% | 28.0% | 16.7% | 14.4% | 19.8% | 18.6% | 31.6% | 18.5% | 23.4% | 21.0% |
| International education press/magazines | 9.4% | 19.5% | 22.7% | 17.1% | 20.1% | 16.5% | 13.0% | 20.4% | 26.8% | 24.7% | 18.1% | 25.0% | 18.9% |
| Local newspapers/press | 11.6% | 11.9% | 22.9% | 20.5% | 22.9% | 14.3% | 18.4% | 14.2% | 17.0% | 14.9% | 12.3% | 29.2% | 17.8% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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# Studying in the UK: Information sources

| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Presentation or interview with British university representative | 7.2% | 20.1% | 19.4% | 15.3% | 21.8% | 11.0% | 13.0% | 17.7% | 17.0% | 23.1% | 14.1% | 17.2% | 16.3% |
| International specialist magazines (e.g. The Economist, Newsweek) | 7.7% | 15.7% | 18.5% | 13.2% | 16.7% | 9.1% | 11.6% | 23.8% | 18.6% | 18.4% | 16.3% | 28.1% | 15.5% |
| International newspapers | 6.6% | 12.5% | 22.6% | 11.6% | 12.4% | 11.3% | 12.3% | 23.2% | 20.6% | 19.9% | 15.0% | 20.8% | 15.4% |
| Social networking sites (e.g. myspace, bebo) | 3.3% | 11.9% | 23.2% | 13.2% | 16.1% | 7.3% | 8.7% | 17.5% | 11.9% | 21.5% | 18.5% | 25.0% | 14.2% |
| British embassy | 6.6% | 7.3% | 18.4% | 11.0% | 14.1% | 7.9% | 11.1% | 10.2% | 13.4% | 16.8% | 9.7% | 28.1% | 12.5% |
| UKvisas | 4.4% | 3.3% | 17.4% | 11.1% | 13.8% | 9.6% | 13.0% | 8.1% | 7.7% | 16.8% | 11.0% | 17.2% | 11.2% |
| Alumni forums | 2.8% | 8.4% | 17.4% | 9.0% | 11.3% | 3.5% | 8.5% | 13.2% | 15.5% | 22.2% | 7.5% | 18.2% | 10.6% |
| UKCISA | 4.4% | 6.0% | 13.2% | 8.1% | 9.9% | 7.1% | 7.6% | 10.2% | 6.2% | 15.5% | 4.8% | 17.2% | 9.1% |
| Other | 1.1% | 0.8% | 8.2% | 3.2% | 2.5% | 2.7% | 4.3% | 5.5% | 3.1% | 9.2% | 2.6% | 14.6% | 4.5% |
| Count | 181 | 369 | 717 | 803 | 354 | 593 | 423 | 530 | 194 | 316 | 227 | 192 | 5,673 |

**Analysis of information sources used of most interest/relevance to UKvisas**

Of the options provided in the survey as information sources, five are deemed as being of most interest/relevance to UKvisas: British Council office; British Council website; British embassy; Education agent; UKvisas. These sources are looked at in more detail below.

***British Council***

Just under a quarter of total respondents had used a British Council office to find out about UK institutions and courses. Of the nationality groups looked at, Taiwanese respondents (34.8%) were most likely to have used such offices, followed by Russian respondents (33.5%). Turkish respondents (13.7%) were least likely to have visited a British Council Office.

The British Council website was used by more respondents than British Council offices, with almost one third of total respondents having used it, making it one of the most widely used sources of information. Russian respondents (48.5%) were most likely to have used this website, followed by Taiwanese respondents (45.3%). The fact that both the British Council website and offices were most used by the same two nationalities (followed in both cases by respondents from Vietnam) may indicate a greater awareness of the British Council in these countries. It is interesting to note that the British Council website was the second most widely used information source amongst Vietnamese respondents. Respondents from Nigeria (22.3%), Bangladesh (24.9%) and Bulgaria (26.0%) were least likely to have used the site.

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***British embassy***

Overall, the British embassy was not widely used, with just 12.5% of respondents having used it. Vietnamese respondents were considerably more likely than other nationality groups to have used the British embassy, with 28.1% indicating that they had used it, more than 10% more than the next nationality group of Chinese respondents (18.4%). Bangladeshi (6.6%), Bulgarian (7.3%) and Nigerian (7.9%) respondents were least likely to have used the British embassy as an information source.

***Education agents***

27.9% of total respondents had used an education agent although proportions varied considerably from nationality to nationality. Taiwanese (47.2%) and Bangladeshi (43.1%) respondents were considerably more likely than others to have used them, with education agents the most frequently used source of information amongst respondents from Bangladesh (the only country looked at for which this was the case), and the second most frequently cited source of information used amongst respondents from Taiwan. Conversely, just 14.5% of Polish respondents selected education agents as an information source, possibly reflecting the more straightforward nature of choosing/preparing to study in the UK for EU nationals.

***UKvisas***

UKvisas was one of the least widely used sources of information, with just over 10% of respondents having used them. By nationality, Chinese (17.4%), Vietnamese (17.2%) and Taiwanese (16.8%) respondents were most likely to have used UKvisas. Bulgarian respondents (3.3%) were least likely to have used UKvisas, a lower figure to be expected due to the fact that Bulgarian students do not need a visa to study in the UK, while Bangladeshi respondents (4.4%) were also very unlikely to have used UKvisas.

A possible explanation for the low use of UKvisas as an information source may be that visas are only one aspect of studying in the UK while other sources cited cover a range of aspects.

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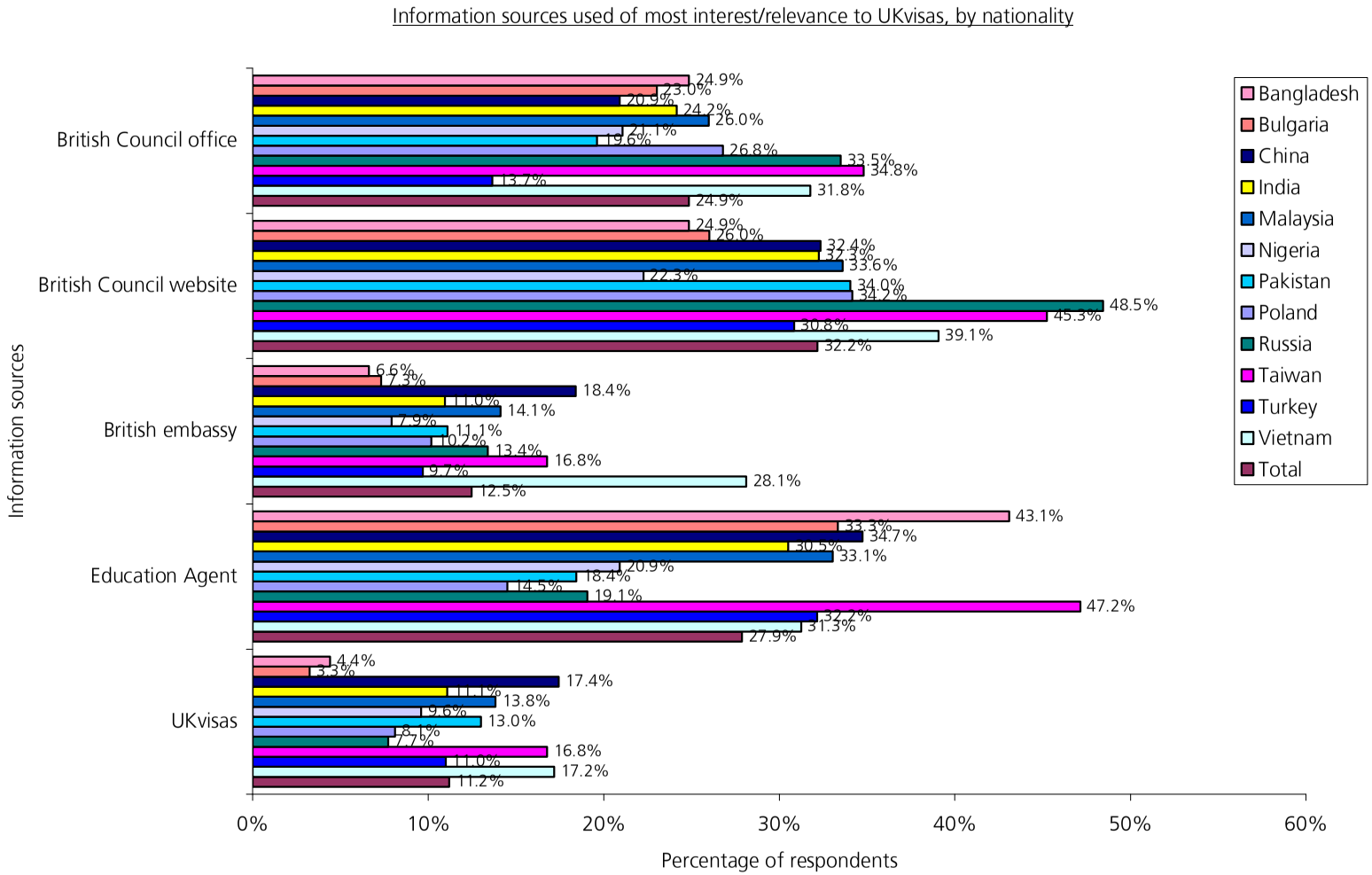
# Studying in the UK: Information sources



**Information sources found useful**

Respondents were also asked to indicate which information sources they had found useful, giving an indication of how successful sources were at providing the information prospective students wanted.

Looking at the proportion of respondents who found a source useful against the proportion who indicated that they had used it, there was no information source that stood out as being notably more useful than others and no considerable variation in the range of scores for sources ranked in the top two thirds. UK education rankings were seen to be the most useful source, with 42.8% of respondents who used them having deemed them useful, followed by UK university websites (42.3%), web search engines (41.7%), UK university of college prospectuses (41.6%) and friends/family who were already studying/had already studied in the UK (40.1%). The fact that the most useful sources were found useful by such small proportions of respondents is perhaps a cause for concern.

The three sources deemed useful by the smallest proportion of respondents who used them were UKvisas (18.1%), local newspapers (18.1%) and UKCISA (18.1%).

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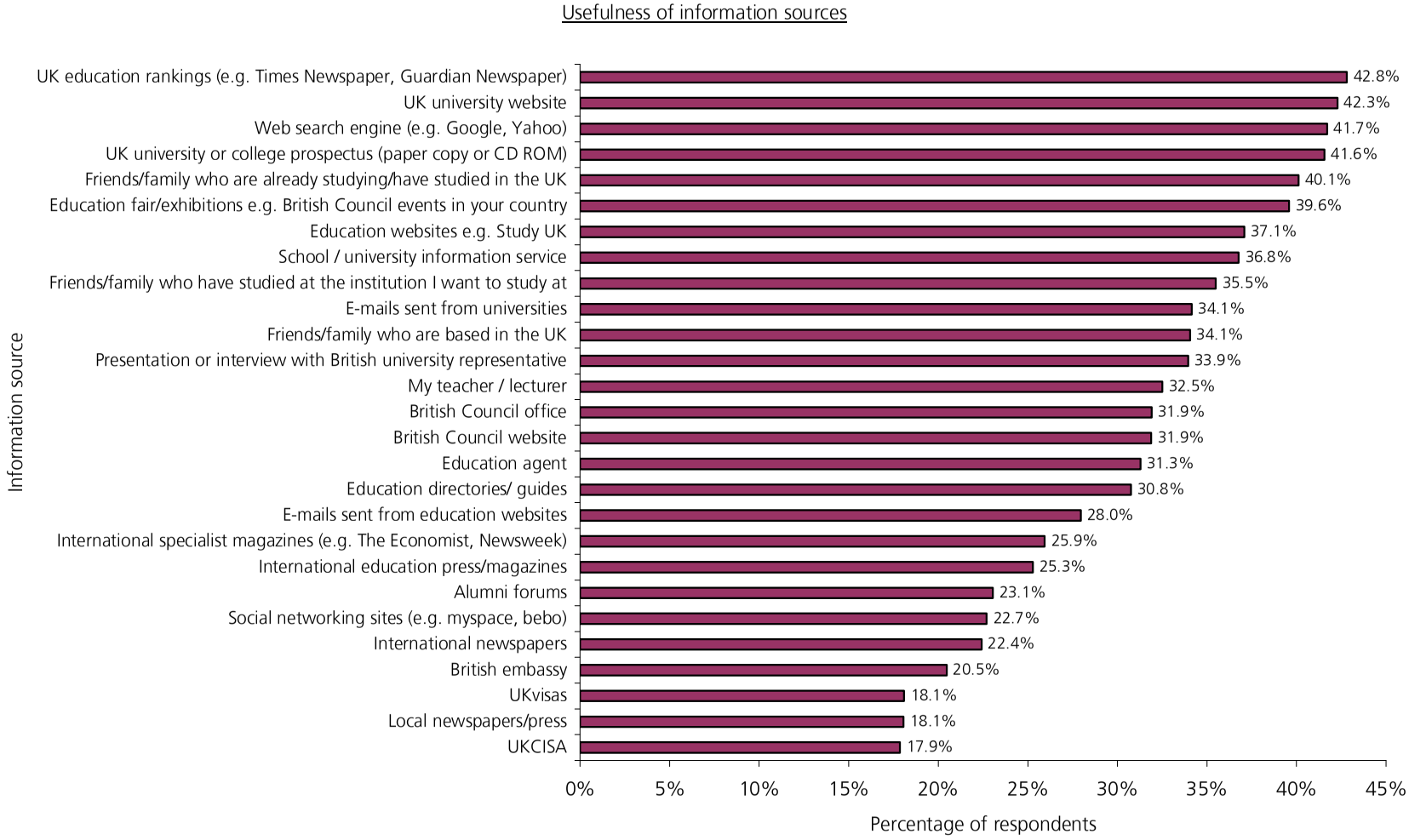
# Studying in the UK: Information sources

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**Information sources found useful by nationality**

Respondents from Malaysia were most likely to find information sources useful overall, whereas respondents from Vietnam were least likely. To illustrate this, over 50% of Malaysian respondents found eight of the specified information sources useful, a rating scored on just one information source from one other nationality, and these individuals gave the highest ratings of usefulness on over one third of sources. At the other end of the spectrum, the information source found useful by the highest proportion of Vietnamese respondents, UK university websites, was found useful by just 29.6% of those who used it, and Vietnamese respondents were least likely of any nationality looked at to rate all but six information sources as useful. While this may reflect information content in these countries, it may also be due to nationality traits with Malaysian respondents likely to be more generous and Vietnamese respondents more critical.

While sample sizes were very small in some cases, other interesting observations by nationality were:

- UK university websites were given the highest usefulness ranking by respondents from half of the countries looked at.
- Respondents from India (37.7%) and Pakistan (46.7%) gave UK education rankings the highest usefulness scores (an equal number of Pakistani respondents reporting that education fairs/exhibitions were useful).
- Turkish respondents gave friends/family who were based in the UK the highest usefulness rating (46.3%). Relatively high proportions of Turkish respondents who used them also found international specialist magazines and international education press/magazines useful.

Usefulness of information sources, by nationality

| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UK education rankings (e.g. Times Newspaper, Guardian Newspaper) | 45.2% | 43.5% | 38.4% | 37.7% | 49.2% | 35.0% | 46.7% | 45.1% | 38.6% | 39.2% | 44.3% | 20.8% | 42.8% |
| UK university website | 47.5% | 50.0% | 40.8% | 34.8% | 55.2% | 33.9% | 37.0% | 48.8% | 48.6% | 43.5% | 39.6% | 29.6% | 42.3% |
| Web search engine (e.g. Google, Yahoo) | 47.4% | 44.2% | 39.0% | 34.1% | 55.5% | 36.7% | 39.3% | 46.4% | 53.1% | 42.6% | 42.7% | 28.9% | 41.7% |
| UK university or college prospectus (paper copy or CD ROM) | 41.5% | 48.4% | 26.0% | 37.4% | 64.8% | 38.9% | 37.6% | 47.2% | 47.1% | 26.6% | 37.5% | 12.5% | 41.6% |
| Friends/family who are already studying/have studied in the UK | 43.3% | 42.6% | 40.4% | 31.8% | 51.9% | 33.5% | 40.5% | 38.1% | 34.6% | 43.0% | 45.6% | 19.6% | 40.1% |
| Education fair/exhibitions e.g. British Council events in your country | 32.4% | 45.8% | 32.8% | 37.2% | 52.4% | 34.0% | 46.7% | 32.1% | 47.3% | 38.4% | 36.7% | 20.3% | 39.6% |
| Education websites e.g. Study UK | 40.4% | 41.1% | 34.6% | 32.2% | 46.3% | 32.6% | 33.5% | 36.4% | 47.1% | 43.5% | 44.2% | 25.4% | 37.1% |
| School / university information service | 36.7% | 42.2% | 30.4% | 33.9% | 51.9% | 36.0% | 40.9% | 40.2% | 39.6% | 28.1% | 33.3% | 20.3% | 36.8% |
| Friends/family who have studied at the institution I want to study at | 45.8% | 29.9% | 31.6% | 33.1% | 57.0% | 35.0% | 38.5% | 30.1% | 31.6% | 33.0% | 23.9% | 26.7% | 35.5% |

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# Studying in the UK: Information sources

| Table continued: | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E-mails sent from universities | 30.6% | 42.9% | 30.6% | 26.7% | 43.5% | 32.6% | 35.2% | 44.2% | 35.7% | 22.1% | 37.3% | 20.9% | 34.1% |
| Friends/family who are based in the UK | 33.3% | 34.5% | 29.6% | 26.2% | 46.8% | 31.4% | 34.5% | 33.3% | 25.8% | 39.2% | 46.3% | 22.4% | 34.1% |
| Presentation or interview with British university representative | 23.1% | 48.6% | 25.2% | 38.2% | 50.6% | 27.7% | 32.7% | 31.9% | 42.4% | 24.7% | 37.5% | 21.2% | 33.9% |
| My teacher / lecturer | 28.6% | 33.7% | 28.8% | 27.2% | 48.0% | 30.9% | 36.0% | 28.5% | 32.6% | 32.7% | 31.7% | 21.2% | 32.5% |
| British Council office | 37.8% | 34.1% | 24.7% | 33.5% | 34.8% | 36.0% | 33.7% | 27.5% | 44.6% | 36.4% | 25.8% | 23.0% | 31.9% |
| British Council website | 28.9% | 31.3% | 25.9% | 27.4% | 37.8% | 34.8% | 29.2% | 34.3% | 48.9% | 34.3% | 22.9% | 25.3% | 31.9% |
| Education agent | 6.4% | 40.7% | 31.7% | 27.8% | 36.8% | 33.1% | 29.5% | 19.5% | 37.8% | 37.6% | 37.0% | 16.7% | 31.3% |
| Education directories/ guides | 28.6% | 34.6% | 24.4% | 28.4% | 37.4% | 30.3% | 26.2% | 30.5% | 38.9% | 26.0% | 33.3% | 20.0% | 30.8% |
| E-mails sent from education websites | 38.9% | 28.7% | 24.2% | 28.7% | 35.2% | 31.0% | 26.5% | 25.2% | 49.3% | 13.4% | 25.6% | 14.3% | 28.0% |
| International specialist magazines (e.g. The Economist, Newsweek) | 28.6% | 37.9% | 18.0% | 17.9% | 25.4% | 33.3% | 30.6% | 30.2% | 44.4% | 13.8% | 43.2% | 9.3% | 25.9% |
| International education press/magazines | 23.5% | 34.7% | 16.0% | 22.6% | 39.4% | 28.6% | 32.7% | 15.7% | 38.5% | 21.8% | 43.9% | 12.5% | 25.3% |
| Alumni forums | 40.0% | 35.5% | 16.0% | 13.9% | 35.0% | 38.1% | 22.2% | 25.7% | 40.0% | 25.7% | 23.5% | 8.6% | 23.1% |
| Social networking sites (e.g. myspace, bebo) | 16.7% | 36.4% | 20.5% | 22.6% | 24.6% | 27.9% | 18.9% | 19.4% | 47.8% | 13.2% | 26.2% | 22.9% | 22.7% |
| International newspapers | 25.0% | 30.4% | 14.2% | 28.0% | 27.3% | 29.9% | 30.8% | 18.7% | 27.5% | 19.0% | 29.4% | 12.5% | 22.4% |
| British embassy | 8.3% | 40.7% | 10.6% | 23.9% | 26.0% | 29.8% | 23.4% | 14.8% | 38.5% | 9.4% | 4.5% | 22.2% | 20.5% |
| UKvisas | 37.5% | 8.3% | 11.2% | 22.5% | 30.6% | 19.3% | 25.5% | 14.0% | 33.3% | 13.2% | 20.0% | 9.1% | 18.1% |
| Local newspapers/press | 19.0% | 20.5% | 10.4% | 20.6% | 21.0% | 22.4% | 20.5% | 18.7% | 12.1% | 4.3% | 25.0% | 17.9% | 18.1% |
| UKCISA | 37.5% | 22.7% | 9.5% | 24.6% | 28.6% | 21.4% | 21.9% | 14.8% | 25.0% | 6.1% | 27.3% | 3.0% | 17.9% |
| Count | 181 | 369 | 717 | 803 | 354 | 593 | 423 | 530 | 194 | 316 | 227 | 192 | 5,673 |

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**Analysis of information sources most relevant to UKvisas**

***British Council***

Almost one third of all respondents who had used a British Council office had found it useful, more or less in line with the average usefulness rating. Of the nationality groups looked at, Russian respondents (44.6%) were most likely to have found British Council offices useful. Vietnamese (23.0%) and Chinese (24.7%) respondents were least likely.

Interestingly, the same proportion of total respondents who found a British Council office useful found the British Council website useful (31.9%). Russian respondents (48.9%) were again the most likely to have found the British Council website useful (which were still open at the time of fieldwork), and it was ranked in their top five most useful sources. The same was true for Vietnamese respondents although only 25.3% of those who used the website found it useful. Turkish (22.9%), Vietnamese (25.3%) and Chinese (25.9%) respondents were least likely to have found the website useful.

***British embassy***

Just one fifth of total respondents who used a British embassy found it useful, making it one of the least useful sources overall. Bulgarian and Russian respondents were the exception to this, however, with 40.7% of Russian respondents who used one and 38.5% of Russian respondents who used one having found it useful. Turkish respondents who used a British embassy were very unlikely to have found it useful (4.5%).

***Education agents***

As with British Council sources, almost one third of total respondents who used them found education agents useful. No one nationality stood out as having found education agents considerably more useful than others, with relatively similar proportions from Bulgaria (40.7%), Russia (37.8%), Taiwan (37.6%), Turkey (37.0%) and Malaysia (36.8%) reporting to have found them useful. Considerably fewer Bangladeshi than other respondents found education agents to be useful, just 6.4% of those who had used them. It is interesting, and perhaps concerning, to note that education agents were the most widely used information source amongst Bangladeshi respondents, given such low appreciation.

***UKvisas***

Only 18.1% of total respondents who used UKvisas, found it useful. It was also, however, one of the least widely used sources overall. In terms of nationalities who found UKvisas most useful, 37.5% of Bangladeshi respondents who used them found them to be useful (although just 4.4% of Bangladeshi respondents reported having used UKvisas) and 33.3% of Russian respondents. Where the proportion of respondents who used UKvisas was higher, such as Chinese (17.4%) or Vietnamese (17.2%) respondents, a lower proportion (11.2% and 9.1% respectively) found them to be useful.

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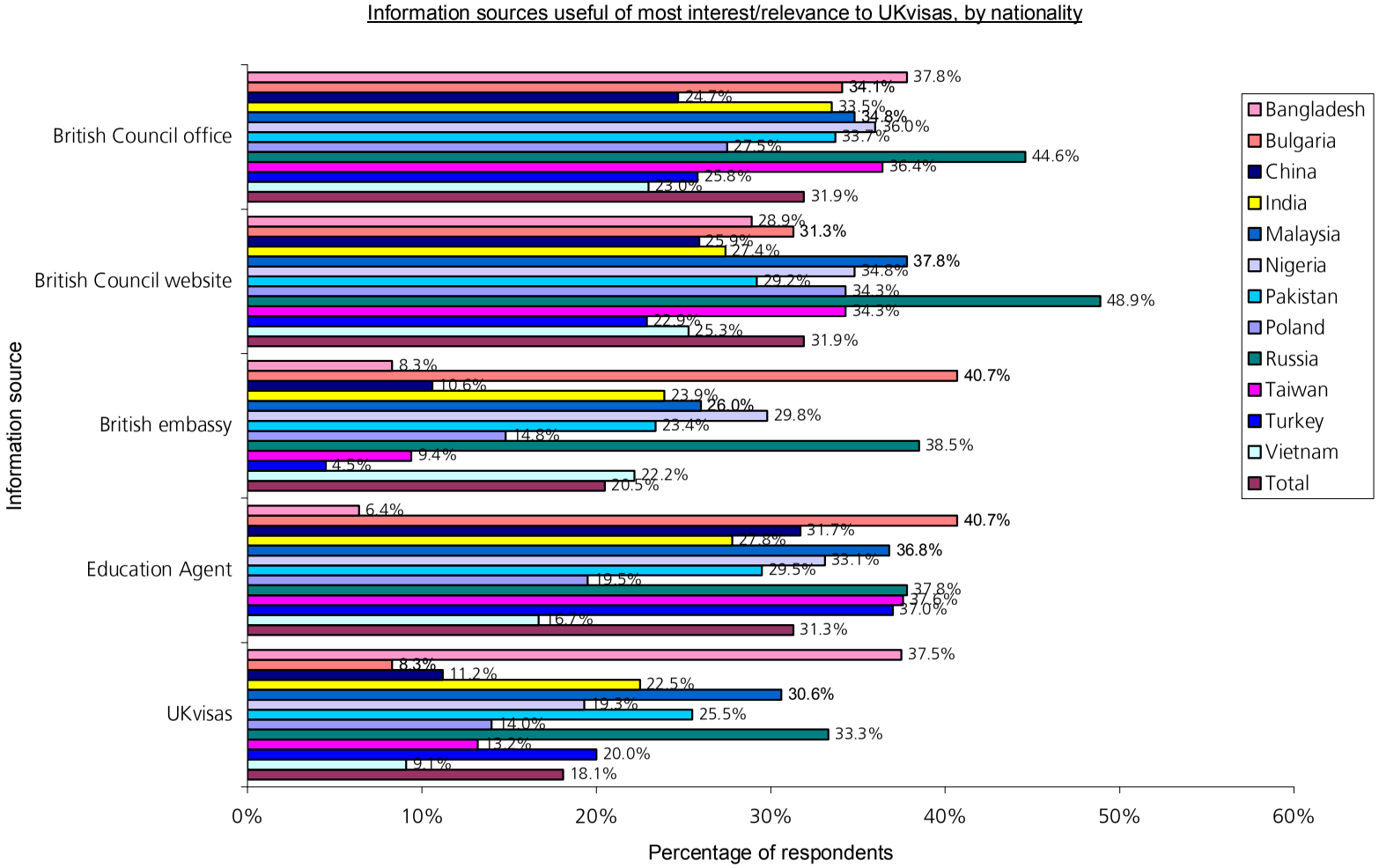
# Studying in the UK: Information sources

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**Education agent services**

As shown in the previous section, 27.9% of respondents indicated that they had used an education agent to find out about UK institutions and courses, and of these, 31.3% had found an education agent useful.

**Most important services**

Respondents who stated that they had used an education agent were then asked what they saw as the most important services an agent should provide. The service deemed most important was information provision on course fees and living costs, with almost three quarters of respondents considering this an important service. As costs were considered the key barrier to studying in the UK, this was perhaps to be expected. Similar proportions of respondents considered each of the following six services important: scholarship information; passport and visa advice; help with application forms; university contacts; detailed course information and accommodation arrangements, and another four services were considered important by over half of respondents, showing that overall, a wide range of services were considered important. The services provided by education agents considered important by the smallest number of respondents were alumni contacts and information in their native language.

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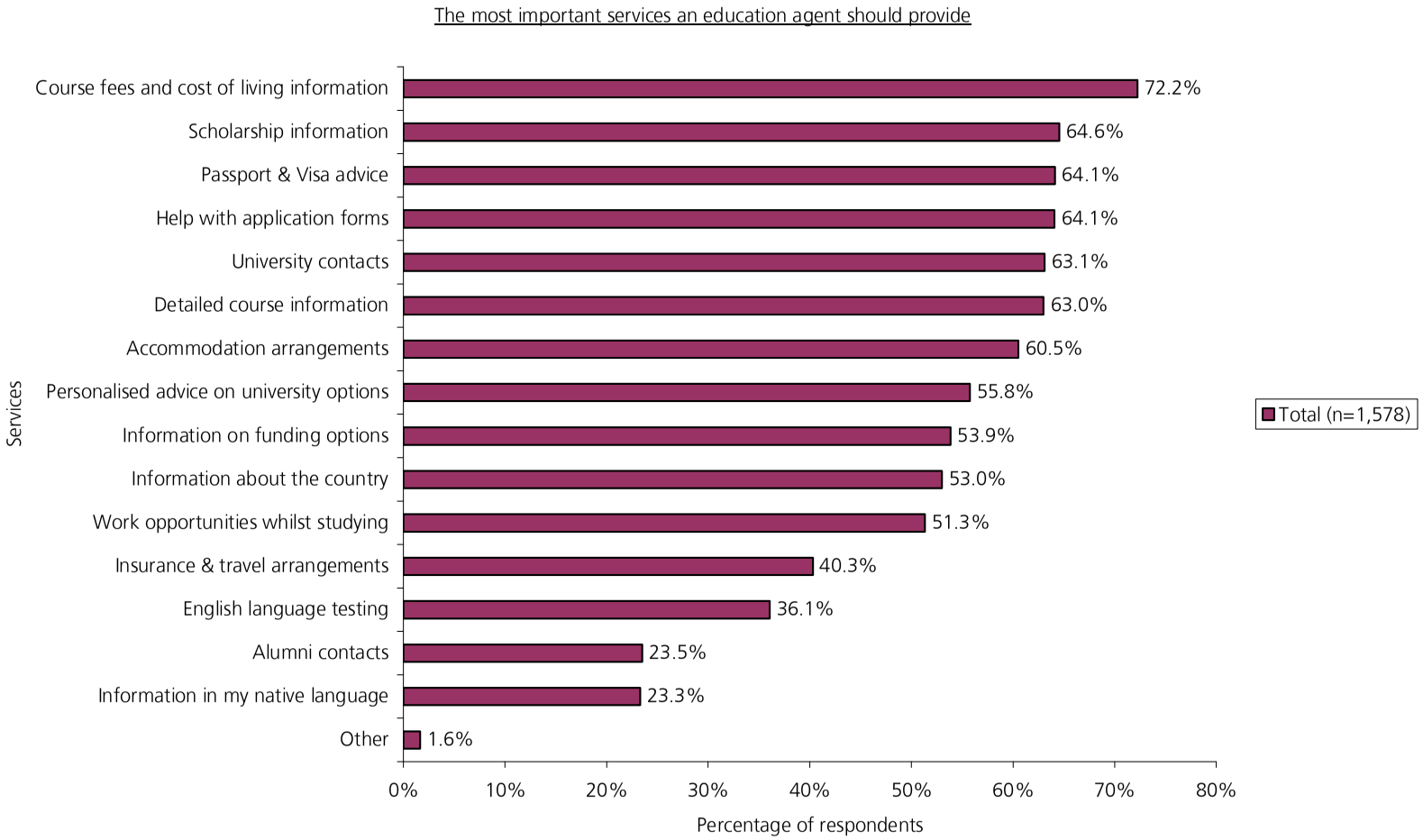
# Studying in the UK: Future plans

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**Most important services by nationality**

Where sample sizes allowed for sub-analysis by nationality, the top five agent services were the same regardless of nationality, although to varying degrees (note that respondents could choose as many services as they considered important and, as with other questions, respondents from some countries, e.g. Malaysia, chose more services as important than those from other countries, e.g. China).

Most important services an education agent should provide, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Taiwan | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Course fees and cost of living information | 86.2% | 59.0% | 81.5% | 89.7% | 80.6% | 67.1% | 72.2% |
| Scholarship information | 76.4% | 57.0% | 77.0% | 76.9% | 76.6% | 58.4% | 64.6% |
| Passport & Visa advice | 47.2% | 68.7% | 80.2% | 82.1% | 76.6% | 53.7% | 64.1% |
| Help with application forms | 80.5% | 51.0% | 73.7% | 81.2% | 69.4% | 67.8% | 64.1% |
| University contacts | 71.5% | 52.2% | 73.7% | 68.4% | 72.6% | 67.1% | 63.1% |
| Detailed course information | 66.7% | 58.2% | 76.5% | 82.1% | 62.9% | 57.0% | 63.0% |
| Accommodation arrangements | 69.9% | 50.6% | 68.7% | 81.2% | 59.7% | 54.4% | 60.5% |
| Personalised advice on university options | 66.7% | 50.6% | 61.7% | 69.2% | 55.6% | 57.7% | 55.8% |
| Information on funding options | 73.2% | 41.0% | 69.1% | 70.9% | 65.3% | 42.3% | 53.9% |
| Information about the country | 48.0% | 49.4% | 66.3% | 72.6% | 60.5% | 53.7% | 53.0% |
| Work opportunities whilst studying | 56.9% | 42.6% | 67.5% | 67.5% | 62.1% | 33.6% | 51.3% |
| Insurance & travel arrangements | 45.5% | 34.5% | 45.7% | 61.5% | 41.9% | 30.9% | 40.3% |
| English language testing | 22.8% | 33.7% | 44.4% | 28.2% | 37.9% | 35.6% | 36.1% |
| Alumni contacts | 18.7% | 17.3% | 37.9% | 19.7% | 24.2% | 28.9% | 23.5% |
| Information in my native language | 29.3% | 25.3% | 18.5% | 12.8% | 14.5% | 30.2% | 23.3% |
| Other | 1.6% | 0.8% | 4.1% | 0.9% | 4.0% | 1.3% | 1.6% |
| Base | 123 | 249 | 243 | 117 | 124 | 149 | 1,578 |

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**Passport and visa advice by education agents**

Passport and visa advice was considered as one of the most important services education agents should provide, with 64.1% of total respondents considering it an important service.

In terms of nationality, as with most other services, Malaysian respondents (82.1%) were most likely to consider passport and visa advice as an important service, followed by Indian respondents (80.2%) and Nigerian respondents (76.6%).

Respondents from Bulgaria were least likely to have considered passport and visa advice as an important service which is logical as Bulgarian students do not need visas to study in the UK. The fact that almost half of Bulgarian respondents saw passport and visa advice as an important service of education agents, however, seems to reflect that not all Bulgarian respondents were aware of this, with a proportion of Bulgarian respondents (13.6%) still having considered that difficulties in getting a visa is a barrier to studying in the UK.

**Future plans**

Respondents were asked, if they decided to study in the UK or were currently studying there, what they thought they would do immediately after finishing their course. Almost a quarter (23.2%) of respondents indicated that they would get a full-time career job in the UK, and 18.9% that they would get a full-time career job in their home country.

Based on responses to this question, just over 50% of total respondents would plan on staying in the UK, at least at first, immediately after finishing their course.

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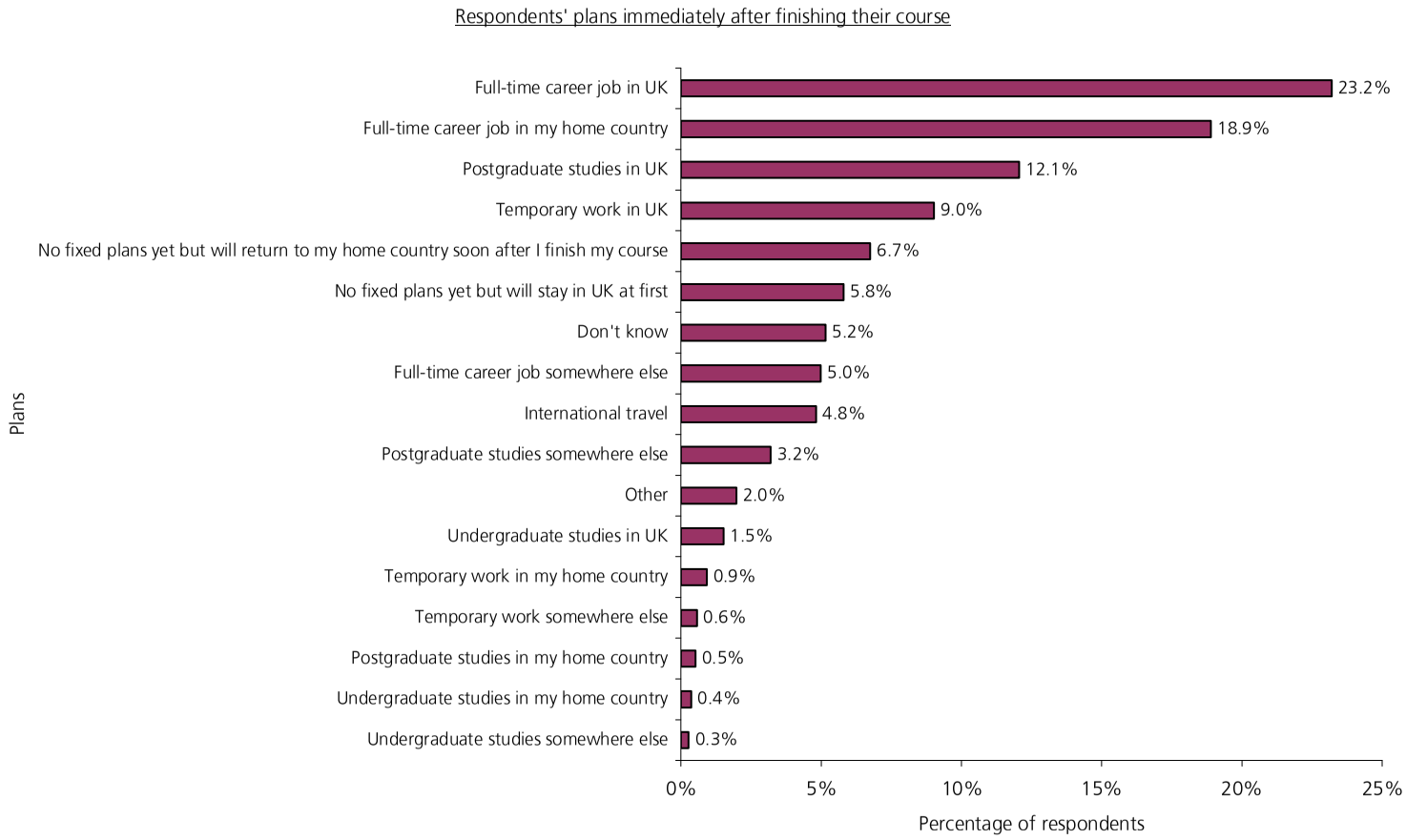
# Studying in the UK: Future plans

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**Future plans by nationality**

Sample sizes allowed for sub-analysis by nationality for respondents from 12 countries. Analysis of data shows that the most common plan for respondents from seven of these countries was a full time career job in the UK. Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Russian and Vietnamese respondents were more likely to have plans for a full-time career job in their home country than in the UK.

Malaysians were most likely to have plans which involved staying in the UK, with 64.8% indicating such plans, followed by Indian respondents (61.8%). Russian (40.5%), Vietnamese (41.0%) and Bangladeshi (41.4%) respondents were least likely to have plans which involved staying in the UK, and Bangladeshi (42.4%), Vietnamese (41.5%) and Nigerian (40.0%) respondents were most likely to plan to return to their home country immediately after finishing their course. Interestingly, over a quarter of Bangladeshi respondents indicated that they had no fixed plans yet but would return to their home country.

Respondents' plans immediately after finishing their course, by nationality

| | Bangladesh | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Russia | Poland | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-time career job in UK | 12.6% | 19.3% | 25.8% | 31.3% | 27.3% | 15.9% | 22.1% | 17.2% | 27.2% | 28.9% | 24.8% | 21.8% | 23.2% |
| Full-time career job in my home country | 14.6% | 11.3% | 16.7% | 11.9% | 10.2% | 29.0% | 16.5% | 24.2% | 12.3% | 17.1% | 24.8% | 30.6% | 18.9% |
| Postgraduate studies in UK | 17.2% | 22.0% | 8.1% | 11.0% | 15.6% | 15.0% | 15.5% | 9.3% | 15.6% | 6.6% | 8.3% | 3.9% | 12.1% |
| Temporary work in UK | 4.5% | 6.8% | 9.7% | 9.1% | 15.3% | 11.6% | 9.3% | 8.8% | 3.8% | 8.3% | 6.5% | 9.2% | 9.0% |
| No fixed plans yet but will return to my home country soon after I finish my course | 26.8% | 3.8% | 4.1% | 5.8% | 7.4% | 9.7% | 8.9% | 4.8% | 2.4% | 4.7% | 5.8% | 6.1% | 6.7% |
| No fixed plans yet but will stay in UK at first | 4.5% | 6.5% | 4.9% | 9.2% | 5.6% | 5.0% | 3.9% | 5.3% | 6.9% | 5.0% | 7.2% | 3.5% | 5.8% |
| Don't know | 5.6% | 8.3% | 4.8% | 3.8% | 5.1% | 1.6% | 6.0% | 6.2% | 8.1% | 4.7% | 5.4% | 3.5% | 5.2% |
| Full-time career job somewhere else | 3.5% | 5.5% | 6.0% | 5.8% | 2.0% | 2.9% | 6.2% | 9.3% | 4.0% | 7.4% | 7.2% | 4.8% | 5.0% |
| International travel | 1.0% | 5.0% | 8.6% | 3.1% | 3.6% | 2.4% | 2.1% | 6.6% | 7.4% | 12.1% | 2.5% | 4.8% | 4.8% |
| Postgraduate studies somewhere else | 3.5% | 6.8% | 4.2% | 3.4% | 2.3% | 1.0% | 2.5% | 3.1% | 5.9% | 1.4% | 2.9% | 0.9% | 3.2% |
| Other | 1.0% | 2.3% | 0.5% | 3.5% | 2.3% | 2.9% | 2.9% | 3.1% | 1.0% | 1.1% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 2.0% |
| Undergraduate studies in UK | 2.5% | 1.3% | 2.7% | 1.1% | 1.0% | 1.6% | 2.1% | 0% | 0.7% | 1.1% | 0% | 2.6% | 1.5% |
| Temporary work in my home country | 0.5% | 0.5% | 1.3% | 0.2% | 1.0% | 1.1% | 1.2% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 0% | 1.1% | 3.1% | 0.9% |
| Temporary work somewhere else | 0% | 0.3% | 1.3% | 0.2% | 0.5% | 0.1% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 1.2% | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.9% | 0.6% |
| Postgraduate studies in my home country | 0% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0.1% | 0.8% | 0.1% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 1.9% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 0.5% |
| Undergraduate studies in my home country | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0% | 0% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 0.7% | 0.3% | 0.7% | 0.9% | 0.4% |
| Undergraduate studies somewhere else | 1.5% | 0.3% | 0.5% | 0% | 0% | 0.1% | 0% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 1.3% | 0.3% |
| Base | 198 | 400 | 852 | 942 | 392 | 700 | 484 | 227 | 578 | 363 | 278 | 229 | 6,538 |

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**Plans of particular relevance to UKvisas**

Of the options provided in the survey as future plans, five were of particular importance to UKvisas as they would involve students staying in the UK following the completion of their courses: Full-time career job in the UK; Temporary work in the UK; Postgraduate studies in the UK; Undergraduate studies in the UK; No fixed plans yet but will stay in the UK at first. Results of the survey related to these plans are looked at in more detail below.

***Working in the UK***

As previously noted, almost a quarter (23.2%) of total respondents indicated that their future plans involved a full-time career job in the UK. Indian respondents (31.3%) were most likely to plan to get a full-time career job in the UK immediately after finishing their course, followed by Taiwanese respondents (28.9%). Bangladeshi (12.6%) and Nigerian (15.9%) respondents were least likely to plan for a full-time career job in the UK following completion of their course.

In addition to respondents who planned on a full-time career job in the UK, 9% of total respondents indicated that their future plans involved temporary work in the UK. Malaysian respondents (15.3%) were most likely to have plans involving temporary work in the UK and Polish respondents (3.8%) least likely.

Overall, Malaysian respondents (42.6%) were most likely to have plans involving working the UK on completion of their studies, followed by Indian respondents (40.4%).

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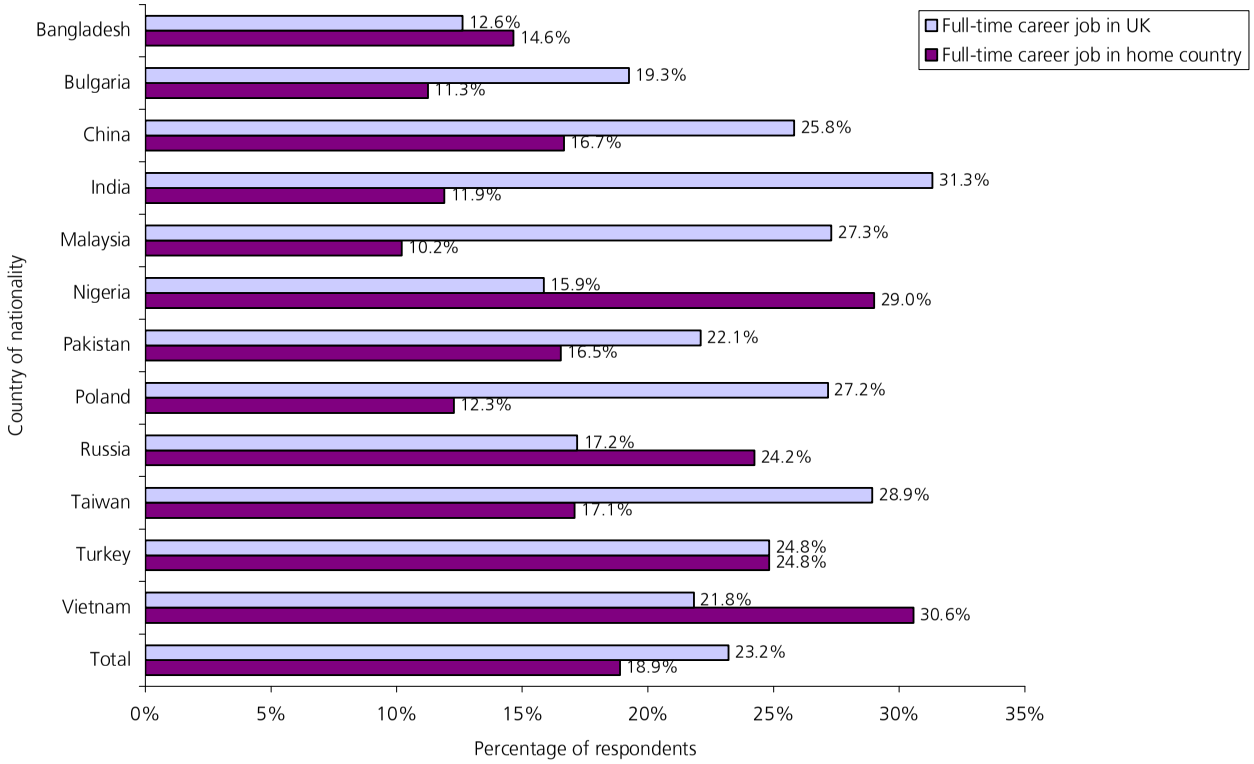
# Studying in the UK: Future plans

Plans of a full-time career job in the UK compared to a full-time career job in respondents' home country, by nationality

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# Studying in the UK: Future plans

***Studying in the UK***

12.1% of total respondents indicated that they would plan on postgraduate studies in the UK immediately after finishing their course there. Bulgarian respondents were considerably more likely to plan on UK postgraduate studies, with 22% selecting this option, and it is interesting to note that more Bulgarian respondents planned on postgraduate study than on full-time career jobs in the UK.

As may be expected, very few respondents (just 1.5% of the total) indicated that they would plan on undergraduate studies in the UK (or in fact undergraduate studies anywhere) after finishing their course. Of those who did, 60.5% were studying at school/college at the time they completed the survey.

***No fixed plans yet but will stay in the UK at first***

5.8% of total respondents indicated that they had no fixed plans yet but would plan on staying in the UK at first upon completion of their course. 9.2% of Indian respondents selected this option, a similar proportion to those who selected each temporary work in the UK, postgraduate studies in the UK and a full-time career job in their home country.

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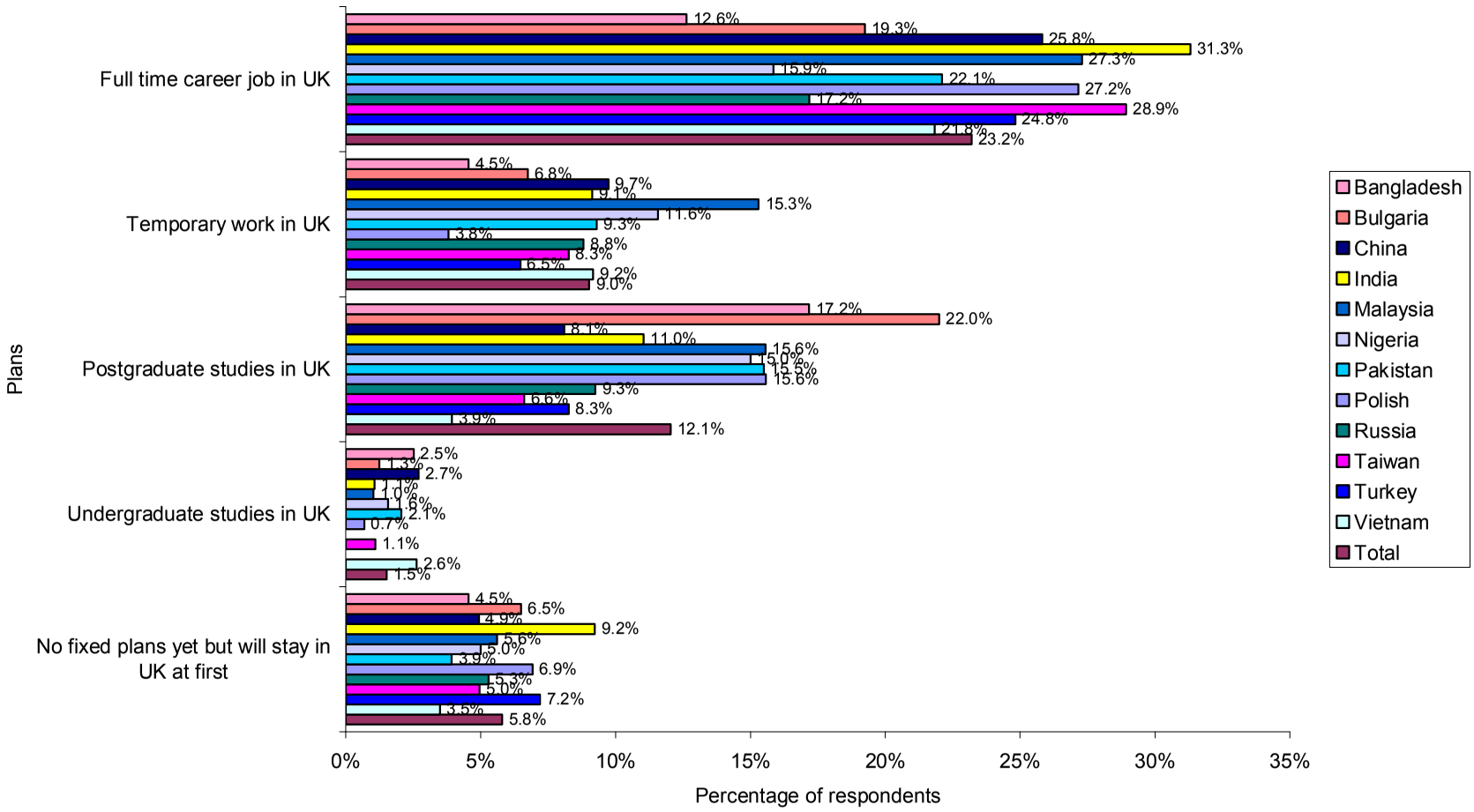
# Studying in the UK: Future plans

Future plans of relevance to UKvisas, by nationality



# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

**Respondent opinions: overview**

To find respondents' opinions on a number of factors related to studying in the UK, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the following statements:

- Education agents offer a good way for me to find out about and gain a place at my institution of choice
- I wouldn't use an agent if I knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly
- I don't understand the process of applying to an institution abroad
- Admissions staff at the university/college that I have communicated with were helpful
- I felt that my application was important to the university/college
- I was provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college I applied to
- If knew that a UK institution I liked offered study in my own country I would prefer to remain there
- A UK Visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows me to do in the UK

The proportion of respondents selecting each rating was assessed (aggregating agree and strongly agree and disagree and strongly disagree), and average (mean) scores were calculated (based on a scale of -2: strongly disagree, -1: disagree, 1: agree, 2: strongly agree). Note that as mean scores are calculated based only on respondents who had an opinion, aggregated results from the tables may differ slightly from the mean scores presented in the graphs.

58.2% of total respondents who answered the question agreed that education agents offered a good way for them to find out about and gain a place at their first choice of institution. 66.7% of respondents, however, said that they wouldn't use an agent if they knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly (40.6% of respondents strongly agreeing this). The majority (56.1%) of respondents understood the process of applying to an institution abroad.

Respondents seemed to have had positive experiences with UK institutions they had dealt with. Over three quarters (76%) of respondents agreed that the admissions staff at the university/college that they had communicated with were helpful, and a similar percentage (74.7%) agreed that they felt their application was important to the university/college. 60.3% of respondents agreed that they were provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college they applied to.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents (41.5%) agreed that they would prefer to remain in their own country if a UK institution offered study there, than those who disagreed with this (35%).

The majority of respondents (55.5%) agreed that a UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows them to do in the UK. Just 9.8% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

A relatively large proportion of respondents selected don't know/not applicable for each of the statements. The most likely reason for this is that they had not yet seriously begun to engage in the study abroad process or felt that they had enough experience of these factors to comment.

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# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Respondents' opinions factors related to studying in the UK

| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Don't know/NA | Base |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education agents offer a good way for me to find out about and gain a place at my institution of choice | 4.4% | 9.7% | 37.0% | 21.2% | 27.5% | 2,937 |
| I wouldn't use an agent if I knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly | 3.8% | 11.5% | 26.1% | 40.6% | 18.0% | 2,944 |
| I don't understand the process of applying to an institution abroad | 26.7% | 29.4% | 18.7% | 10.4% | 14.7% | 2,987 |
| Admissions staff at the university/college that I have communicated with were helpful. | 0.8% | 2.7% | 37.5% | 38.5% | 20.6% | 2,929 |
| I felt that my application was important to the university/college | 1.2% | 3.4% | 37.1% | 37.6% | 20.7% | 2,993 |
| I was provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college I applied to | 2.5% | 6.7% | 32.5% | 27.8% | 30.5% | 3,002 |
| If I knew that a UK institution I liked offered study in my own country I would prefer to remain there | 12.4% | 22.6% | 24.1% | 17.4% | 23.5% | 3,001 |
| A UK Visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows me to do in the UK | 3.4% | 6.4% | 31.9% | 23.6% | 34.6% | 3,028 |

Total respondents' responses are displayed graphically by mean level of agreement below.

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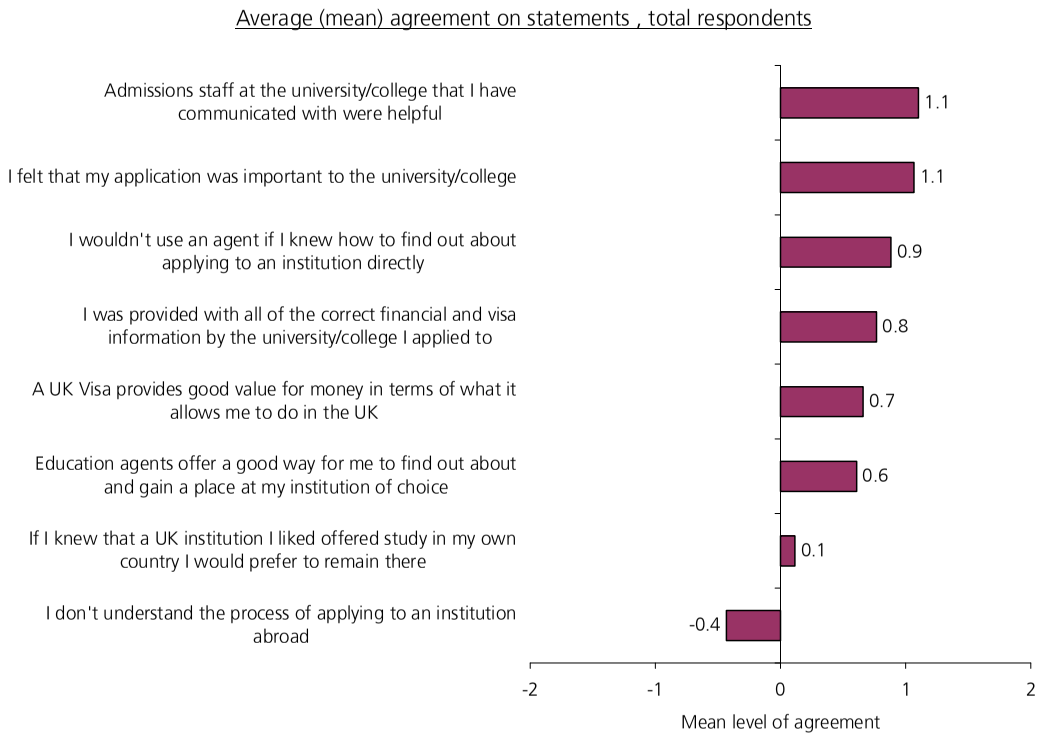
# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

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**Statements of particular interest to UKvisas**

Five of these statements have been deemed to be of particular interest to UKvisas and are looked at in further detail below, by nationality of respondent where sample sizes allowed for this.

***Education agents offer a good way for me to find out about and gain a place at my institution of choice***

As noted above, respondents generally found education agents to be a good way of finding out about and gaining places at their institution of choice, with 58.2% of respondents agreeing with this statement.

Of the nationalities with sample sizes large enough to allow analysis by nationality, Taiwanese (70.8%) and Vietnamese (68.1%) respondents were most likely to agree with this statement.

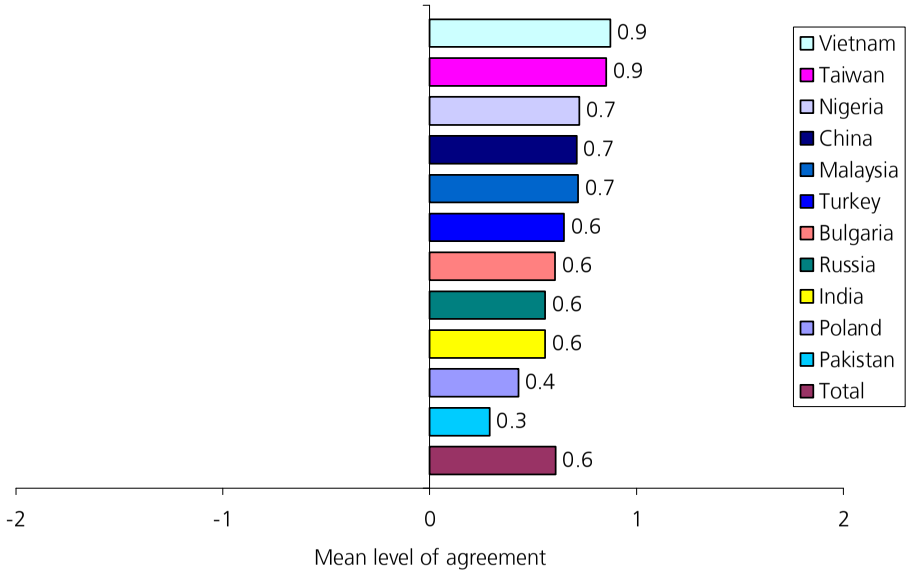
Polish and Pakistani respondents were least likely to agree that education agents offered a good way of finding out about and gaining a place at an institution of their choice. The large proportion of Polish respondents (46.8%), however, who stated that they didn't know or that this statement was non-applicable seems to indicate that education agents were not widely used. This theory is supported by the fact that just 14.5% of Polish respondents stated that they had used an education agent (a possible explanation for which was proposed as the more straightforward nature of choosing/preparing to study in the UK for EU nationals). Pakistani respondents were most likely of any nationality group to disagree that education agents offer them a good way to find out about and gain a place at their institution of choice, with 25.5% of Pakistani respondents disagreeing with this statement.

Respondents who agreed that education agents offer a good way for them to find out about and gain a place at their institution of choice, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 4.5% | 4.0% | 7.2% | 2.7% | 3.8% | 8.2% | 0.8% | 1.6% | 3.8% | 5.8% | 2.1% | 4.4% |
| Disagree | 5.6% | 7.0% | 11.6% | 7.0% | 11.6% | 17.3% | 8.7% | 9.0% | 5.4% | 8.0% | 9.6% | 9.7% |
| Don't know/ NA | 33.1% | 25.6% | 21.2% | 29.9% | 22.2% | 28.1% | 46.8% | 37.7% | 20.0% | 23.4% | 20.2% | 27.5% |
| Agree | 38.2% | 40.8% | 38.3% | 36.9% | 33.4% | 30.1% | 34.2% | 35.2% | 43.2% | 40.9% | 35.1% | 37.0% |
| Strongly agree | 18.5% | 22.6% | 21.7% | 23.5% | 29.0% | 16.3% | 9.5% | 16.4% | 27.6% | 21.9% | 33.0% | 21.2% |
| Base | 178 | 402 | 405 | 187 | 293 | 196 | 263 | 122 | 185 | 137 | 94 | 2,937 |

# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Average (mean) agreement that education agents offer a good way for respondents to find out about and gain a place at their institution of choice

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***I wouldn't use an agent if I knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly***

Two thirds (66.7%) of total respondents agreed that they wouldn't use an agent if they knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly. Of the nationality groups looked at, Nigerian (75.5% having agreed, 53% of them strongly), followed by Pakistani (74.1%) respondents were most likely to agree with this statement.

Polish (54.9%) and Bulgarian (55.1%) respondents were least likely to agree with this statement (a correlation, perhaps with their EU status), and Bulgarian (24.6%), Malaysian (22.8%) and Taiwanese (22.8%) respondents were most likely to disagree which may be taken to mean that they would be more likely than other nationalities to use an education agent even if they knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly.

Respondents who agreed they wouldn't use an agent if they knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 4.2% | 2.1% | 4.0% | 4.9% | 5.1% | 3.7% | 3.5% | 3.8% | 4.8% | 3.2% | 2.0% | 3.8% |
| Disagree | 20.4% | 12.3% | 9.8% | 17.9% | 9.8% | 7.4% | 7.1% | 5.7% | 18.0% | 11.3% | 14.0% | 11.5% |
| Don't know/ NA | 20.4% | 17.7% | 14.4% | 18.5% | 9.5% | 14.8% | 34.4% | 19.0% | 14.4% | 23.4% | 27.0% | 18.0% |
| Agree | 21.6% | 33.6% | 24.4% | 25.5% | 22.5% | 18.1% | 24.8% | 38.1% | 35.3% | 26.6% | 28.0% | 26.1% |
| Strongly agree | 33.5% | 34.4% | 47.4% | 33.2% | 53.0% | 56.0% | 30.1% | 33.3% | 27.5% | 35.5% | 29.0% | 40.6% |
| Base | 167 | 390 | 430 | 184 | 315 | 216 | 282 | 105 | 167 | 124 | 100 | 2,944 |

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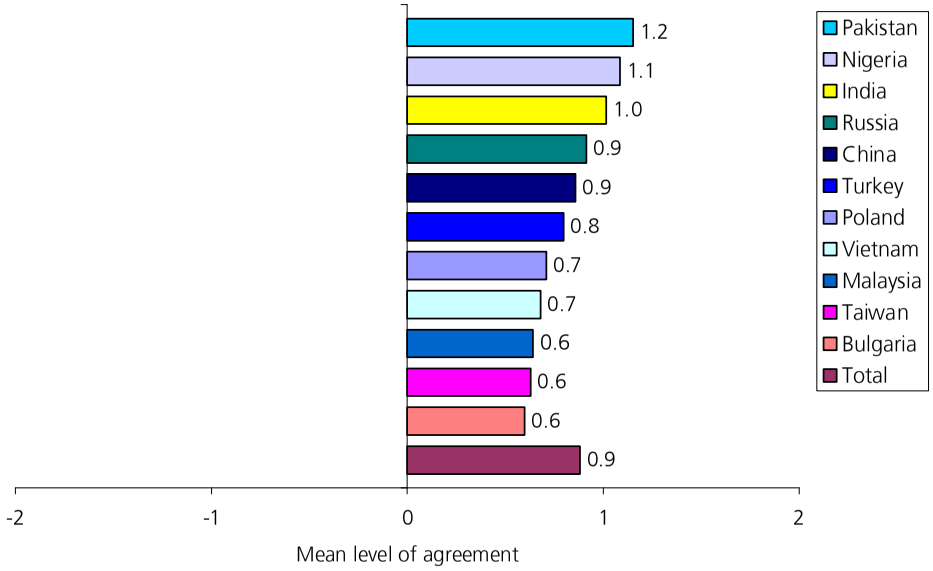
# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Average (mean) agreement that respondents wouldn't use an agent if they knew how to find out about applying to an institution directly

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***I was provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college I applied to***

While it is not possible to separate respondents' views on information provided on visas from their views on information provided on finance, overall 60.3% of total respondents agreed that they were provided with all of the correct information on these topics by the university/college they applied to. In general there was little difference in proportions who agreed with this statement across nationality groups, the only significant variations being a higher proportion of Vietnamese respondents (68.7%) who agreed, and a lower proportion of Turkish respondents (46.6%). With 40.5% of Pakistani respondents strongly agreeing with this statement, Pakistani respondents appeared considerably more satisfied than other nationalities that they were provided with all of the correct information.

Respondents who agreed they were provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college they applied to, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 2.6% | 3.1% | 3.7% | 0.5% | 3.7% | 2.0% | 0.8% | 2.8% | 4.5% | 2.3% | 2.9% | 2.5% |
| Disagree | 4.7% | 6.2% | 6.2% | 7.0% | 9.5% | 3.5% | 7.5% | 7.3% | 6.8% | 7.6% | 8.8% | 6.7% |
| Don't know/ NA | 36.6% | 31.8% | 29.5% | 32.6% | 19.0% | 32.0% | 32.8% | 26.6% | 30.1% | 43.5% | 19.6% | 30.5% |
| Agree | 30.9% | 33.3% | 25.6% | 38.0% | 31.0% | 22.0% | 37.7% | 40.4% | 40.3% | 29.0% | 37.3% | 32.5% |
| Strongly agree | 25.1% | 25.6% | 35.0% | 21.9% | 36.8% | 40.5% | 21.1% | 22.9% | 18.2% | 17.6% | 31.4% | 27.8% |
| Base | 191 | 418 | 403 | 187 | 326 | 200 | 265 | 109 | 176 | 131 | 102 | 3,002 |

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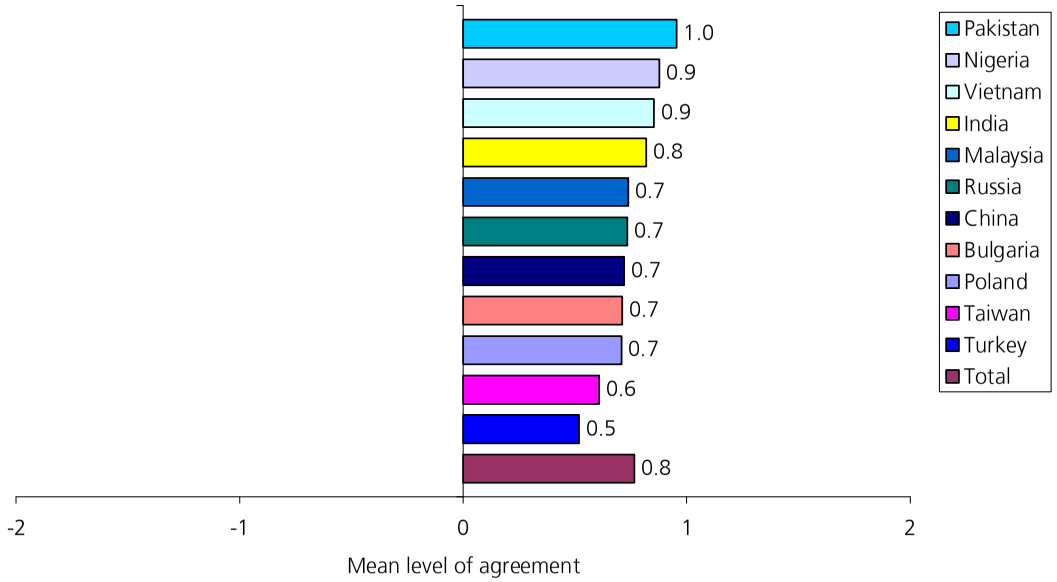
# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Average (mean) agreement that respondents were provided with all of the correct financial and visa information by the university/college they applied to

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***If I knew that a UK institution I liked offered study in my own country I would prefer to remain there***

As previously noted, a slightly higher proportion of total respondents (41.5%) agreed that they would prefer to remain in their own country if a UK institution offered study there, than those who disagreed with this (35%). Institutions are obviously realising this preference and the expansion in transnational education, through collaborative arrangements, branch campuses, distance education or other modes, is likely to make the option of studying in their home country through a UK institution a reality for an increasing number of international students.

The proportion of respondents who agreed with this statement varied considerably from country to country, clearly reflecting, amongst others, relative cost and distance considerations. Of the nationality groups looked at, Vietnamese respondents (63.7%) were considerably more likely than other nationalities to have agreed that they would prefer to remain in their own country to study. Over half (53.4%) of Taiwanese respondents and almost half (49.8%) of Pakistani respondents also agreed with this. Bulgarian (25.2%) and Russian (22.8%) respondents, on the other hand, were least likely to have agreed and most likely to have disagreed with this statement, indicating a preference to study at a UK institution in the UK.

Respondents who agreed that if they knew that a UK institution they liked offered study in their own country they would prefer to remain there, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 20.1% | 9.9% | 15.1% | 17.4% | 12.0% | 4.8% | 17.6% | 19.3% | 7.3% | 14.8% | 3.5% | 12.4% |
| Disagree | 33.2% | 21.8% | 21.4% | 21.2% | 27.1% | 20.6% | 22.9% | 32.5% | 19.2% | 16.4% | 15.0% | 22.6% |
| Don't know/ NA | 21.6% | 23.5% | 23.1% | 28.3% | 17.5% | 24.9% | 23.9% | 25.4% | 20.2% | 30.3% | 17.7% | 23.5% |
| Agree | 14.1% | 26.2% | 23.9% | 20.1% | 23.7% | 26.8% | 23.2% | 13.2% | 34.2% | 18.9% | 36.3% | 24.1% |
| Strongly agree | 11.1% | 18.6% | 16.6% | 13.0% | 19.6% | 23.0% | 12.3% | 9.6% | 19.2% | 19.7% | 27.4% | 17.4% |
| Base | 199 | 404 | 398 | 184 | 291 | 209 | 284 | 114 | 193 | 122 | 113 | 3,001 |

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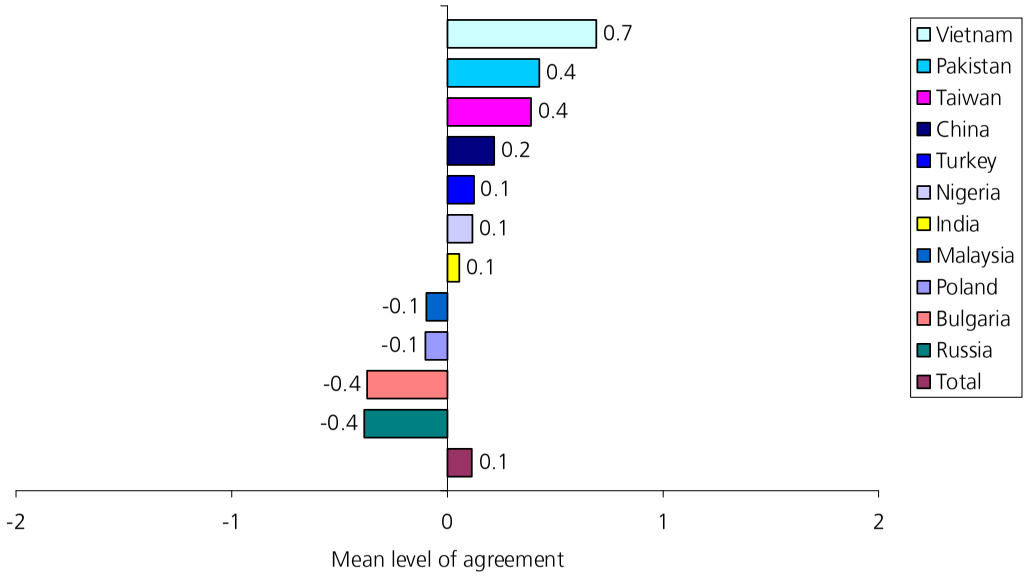
# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Average (mean) agreement that if respondents knew that a UK institution they liked offered study in their own country they would prefer to remain there

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***A UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows me to do in the UK***

Overall, a significantly higher proportion of total respondents (55.5%) agreed that a UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows them to do in the UK than the proportion that disagreed (9.8%). The fact that just over one third of total respondents didn't know or selected not applicable for this statement may reflect that many respondents were not very advanced in their study abroad plans or it may indicate a lack of awareness about the cost and/or benefits of a UK visa.

Of the nationality groups looked at, Nigerian students were most likely to have agreed that a UK visa provides good value for, with 74.5% agreeing, 39.1% agreeing strongly. This was followed by Vietnamese (70.9%), Pakistani (69.3%) and Indian (66.3%) respondents.

As they do not require visas to study in the UK, this question should have been selected as not applicable by respondents from Poland and Bulgaria. Significant proportions of respondents from each of these countries did select this option, but the fact that not all did concurs with earlier survey results which show respondents lack of awareness of their EU status. Alongside these nationalities, for which results to this question may not, therefore, be particularly robust, respondents from Taiwan (44.5%) were less likely to agree that a UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows them to do in the UK.

Taiwanese respondents were also most likely of the nationalities looked at to disagree with this statement, with 18.5% disagreeing, almost double the proportion of any other nationality group.

Respondents who agreed that a UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows them to do in the UK, by nationality

| | Bulgaria | China | India | Malaysia | Nigeria | Pakistan | Poland | Russia | Taiwan | Turkey | Vietnam | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 2.4% | 3.2% | 2.4% | 3.2% | 3.1% | 3.6% | 2.9% | 2.1% | 5.8% | 4.0% | 2.1% | 3.4% |
| Disagree | 7.2% | 7.5% | 4.9% | 6.9% | 5.2% | 5.3% | 4.0% | 8.2% | 12.7% | 6.5% | 4.2% | 6.4% |
| Don't know/ NA | 45.4% | 31.6% | 26.4% | 32.7% | 17.2% | 21.8% | 69.2% | 41.2% | 37.0% | 37.9% | 22.9% | 34.6% |
| Agree | 30.4% | 34.2% | 33.3% | 37.3% | 35.4% | 39.1% | 16.8% | 30.9% | 34.1% | 29.8% | 43.8% | 31.9% |
| Strongly agree | 14.5% | 23.5% | 33.0% | 19.8% | 39.1% | 30.2% | 7.0% | 17.5% | 10.4% | 21.8% | 27.1% | 23.6% |
| Base | 207 | 412 | 409 | 217 | 325 | 225 | 273 | 97 | 173 | 124 | 96 | 3,028 |

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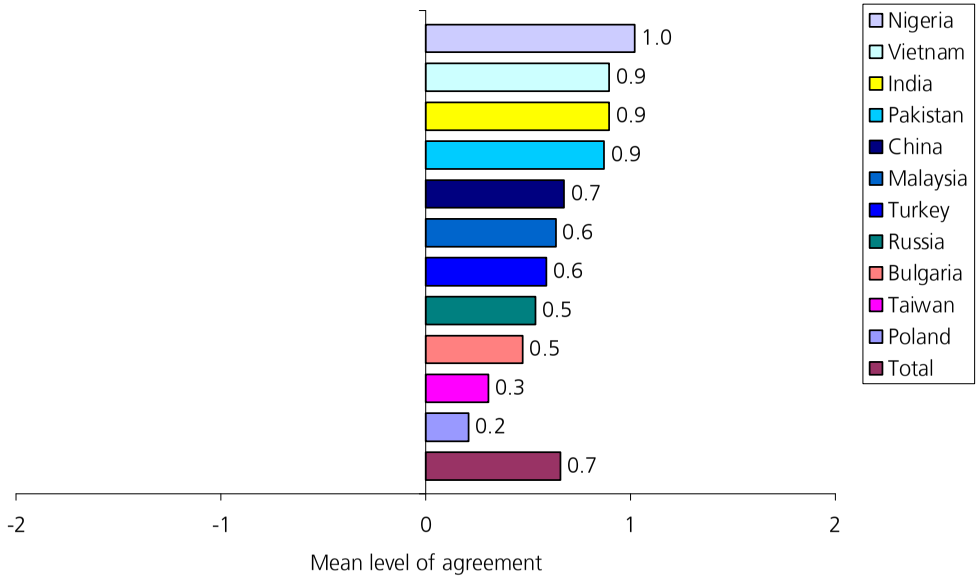
# Studying in the UK: Respondent opinions

Average (mean) agreement that a UK visa provides good value for money in terms of what it allows respondents to do in the UK

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# Appendix 1: Methodology

## Appendix

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# Appendix 1: Methodology

**Building the sample**

To build the data sample, students from Hobsons' and our selected partner databases were invited to take part in the questionnaire via an e-mail that contained a hyperlink to the questionnaire. The e-mail invitation explained the aims of the study and emphasised that participants' anonymity remained guaranteed throughout.

In order to achieve as high a response rate as possible, and to show our appreciation to the students for their willingness to participate, we offered participants the opportunity to enter a prize draw. All students who returned the completed questionnaire could indicate their interest in the prize draw on a separate web page. There was one exception to this, as students held on one of the partner organisations' databases were not included in the prize draw.

To preserve the anonymity of the respondents' answers, a technical device excluded all possibility that survey results could be connected to respondents' personal details.

**Fieldwork partners**

In addition to Hobsons' own student databases we worked with a range of partners who work with potential undergraduate and postgraduate international students throughout our key target countries. Hobsons would like to thank the following partners for their support:

A2 Fairs, Academic Asia Hong Kong, the British Council Kazakhstan, British United Education, BSB Global, Cracow University of Technology, Edexcel, EduAbroad.ru, Education Information Centre (EIC) China, Education Testing Service (ETS), Friends Abroad, Hong Kong Education City, India Education Network, International Education Fairs of Turkey (IEFT), ITEC Russia, Kazakhstan Society of Britain, Newcastle Study Group China, Politechniki Krakowskiej, Quality International Study Abroad Network (QISAN), STA Travel, Studylink Education Advisory Centre Taiwan, UCAS, UK Education Advisory Service (UKEAS) and the Vietnamese Student Association.

**Fieldwork phase**

The field phase of the study ran from 7 June to 10 August 2007.

**Data cleaning**

After the survey was closed, a process of data cleaning took place to ensure that all responses to be included in the survey were valid. To further ensure the reliability of the results, statistical analysis was conducted for charts where the results were surprising or of particular importance. This was to ensure that recommendations using the results are based on reliable, scientific evidence and thus minimise the risk in subsequent decision-making.

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# Appendix 1: Methodology

**Questionnaire**

In order to thoroughly investigate the specific issues that students take into consideration when making decisions about studying abroad, the questionnaire was structured to collect the greatest amount of possible data concerning students' decisions and motivations. The aim was to understand students' country and institution preferences, and unpack the factors that they take into consideration when making their decisions.

The survey was structured as follows:

1. Respondents gave their gender, age, country of residence, nationality, English language ability and academic background in the initial series of questions
2. Respondents were then asked about their interest in studying abroad, the level of study, preferred country of study and the reasons for this choice
3. The next section asked respondents specifically about attitudes to study in the UK and the four main regions of the UK
4. Students who had indicated an interest in UK study were asked about the process of choosing an institution and were questioned about their familiarity with a list of 110 institutions presented to them. From those institutions with which they were familiar they then chose those that were attractive to them and then they were asked to nominate those institutions they found the most desirable in which to study
5. The final part of the questionnaire asked students a range of questions about communications, marketing and advice. Students also answered questions on finance and visa issues. They were also asked specifically about the role of education agents.

Questionnaire length is an important issue in empirical research. There exists considerable potential for conflict between the aims of obtaining as comprehensive an insight as possible into the specific characteristics of the investigated population and the time it takes for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. If the questionnaire is too short it cannot serve as an effective instrument for obtaining the desired information and the investigation does not achieve its purpose. If it is too long the respondent loses interest in answering the questions carefully, leading to a reduction in data quality.

Our quantitative survey experience has enabled us to find a balance that we are convinced guarantees both the quality of the data and the achievement of our aims. An advantage to us in finding this balance was the fact that the form of data collection employed, via the internet, permitted the use of a 'dynamic' or 'adaptive' questionnaire. For instance, only students who said that they are familiar with a particular university were subsequently asked whether or not they find it attractive. Thus, by using complex filtering and rotation systems, we were able to gain a much deeper insight into students' thought processes and obtain more robust research.

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