

Principles for international student recruitment in Wales

- A set of principles agreed by all universities in Wales that recruit internationally.
- Principles focus on two key areas: how we can promote ethical and sustainable recruitment practices and how we can ensure students receive the support they need while studying with us.
- As part of agreeing these principles, all Welsh universities have formally signed up to the [UK Agent Quality Framework](#).

Introduction

International students are valued members of our campuses and communities. Through their contributions in study and research, international students ensure our universities continue to have a global outlook and bring social and economic benefits to communities across Wales. By spending their time in Wales, they enhance the fabric of our society, share their own experiences, and strengthen our bonds to countries all over the world.

While they study with us they get to know Wales, its people and places, and carry that sense of place with them throughout their lives.

Universities in Wales want to make sure that we do everything we can to make sure that those who choose to come and study in Wales feel welcome and valued, and receive the advice, guidance and support they need both before they join us and while they are here.

To this end, we have developed this set of principles which outlines some of the many ways universities will support our international students.

It's important to remember that what is set out here is by no means the full picture of what our universities do. Welsh universities are subject to regulation from HEFCW, have to meet UKVI requirements in recruiting international students, and must all undergo regular quality enhancement reviews.

Beyond this, universities will have in place a broad range of support services, both from the institution and the students' union, that international students can access including well-being support, financial advice and academic support.

Our ambition is to ensure that students are aware of the support available before the need for it arises but, when this is not possible, we also have in place the structures and signposting required to remove obstacles and help students at the point they need it.

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These principles focus on two key areas: how we can promote ethical and sustainable recruitment practices and how we can ensure students receive the support they need while studying with us.

Welsh universities will:

1. Adhere to the [UK Quality Agent Framework including the Good Practice Guide for Providers using Education Agents](#).
2. Commit to only working with agents who have been through appropriate recruitment, approval and onboarding processes. It will be the expectation of Welsh universities that agents also engage with: the BUILA guidance for agents; training, updates and information provided by their partner universities in Wales; and, if appropriate, complete a UK-facing education agent qualification.
3. Ensure all agents have a signed agreement setting out expectations and requirements.
4. Use deposits where doing so will mitigate risk¹. This will constitute just one of the pre-arrival checks that universities will use.
5. Work with partners in communities to ensure that, where international students present with issues but have not accessed university support, they can be referred back to the university in the first instance.

¹ For example, using a risk-based approach for deposits will mean that, in some cases, full fee payment in advance of CAS may be required.

6. Maintain a dialogue with local authorities to help assess demand on public services. We will explore with local authorities the potential to identify named contacts to support this engagement.
7. Ensure information and guidance highlights to international students the support available to them from the university as well as what actions they should undertake before arrival. This will include pre-departure communication to ensure students are aware of the need to arrange accommodation and the associated costs.
8. Provide clear advice and guidance for students on finding and securing accommodation.
9. Keep information and advice systems under review to monitor effectiveness.

Review

These principles have been agreed through the Universities Wales International Network which meets quarterly to share information and practice and discuss international policy issues.

As part of these regular meetings, the effectiveness and appropriateness of these principles will be reviewed with the group on an annual basis, typically in the summer term.

More information

The below provides further context and background on the types of approaches Welsh universities will be taking.

[UK Quality Agent Framework](#)

Jointly led by the British Council, BUILA, UKCISA and UUKI the UK Quality Agent Framework was put in place following extensive research with students, education providers, education advisers and agents.

The framework is designed to enhance the partnership between the UK education sector and agents and counsellors and to recognise and share best practice.

[UK Agent and Counselor Training](#)

The UK agent and counsellor training is a training programme, provided by British Council, for all agents and counsellors who work with UK education providers.

Successful completion of the training programme provides individual agents and counsellors with in-depth knowledge on the UK education system and how to counsel students effectively.