

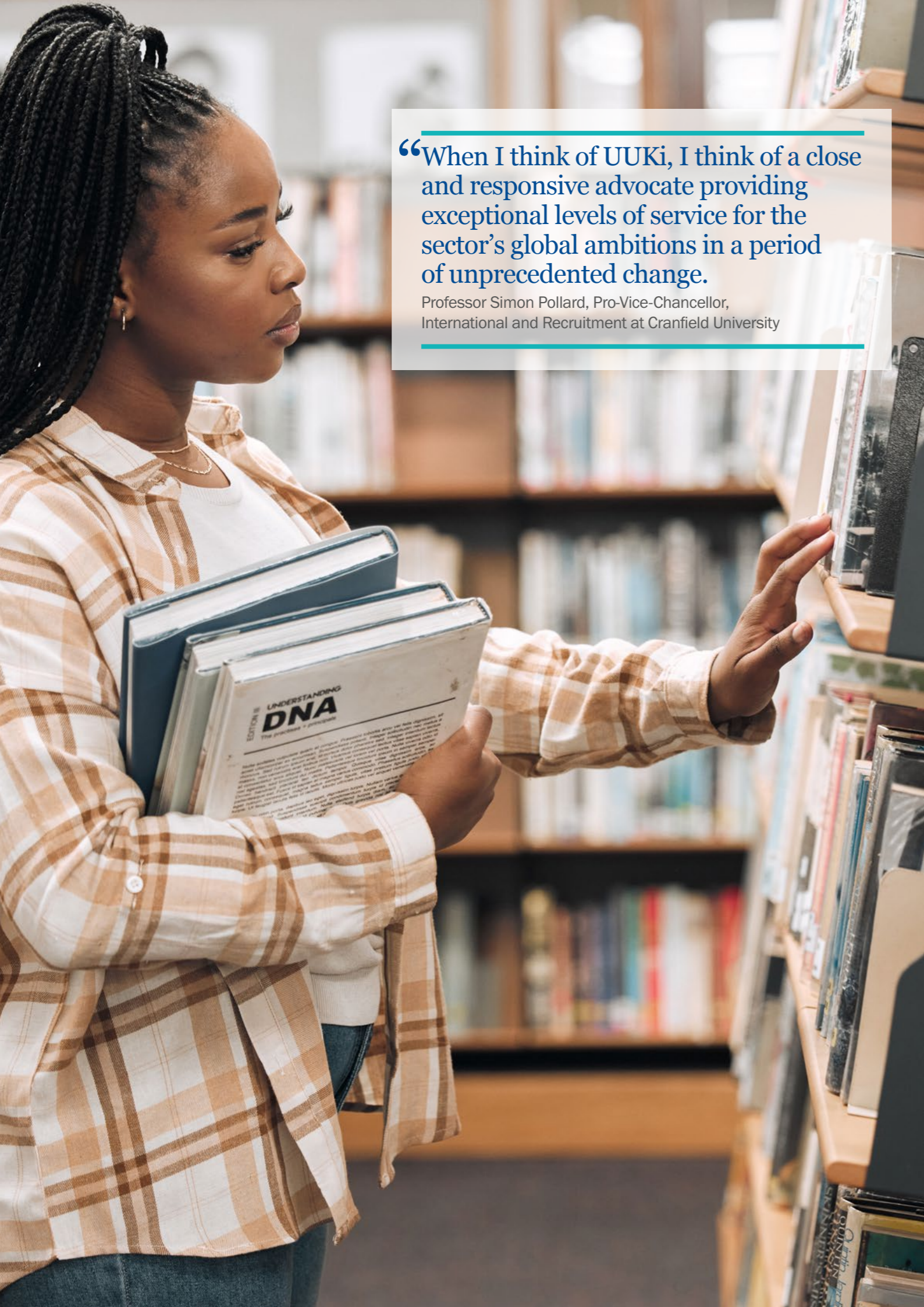


Universities UK
International

Annual Report

2022 - 23





“When I think of UUKi, I think of a close and responsive advocate providing exceptional levels of service for the sector’s global ambitions in a period of unprecedented change.

Professor Simon Pollard, Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
International and Recruitment at Cranfield University



A thank you from our Director

UUKi exists to help our universities reach their full potential around the world. International collaboration and engagement are central to the global success of the UK higher education sector, helping to transform the lives of international students and providing the knowledge, skills, and networks that can have a transformative global impact.

This year, UUKi has played a key role in leading the public and political debate on vital issues such as international students and the immense contribution they make to universities and to wider society; the role universities play in responding to humanitarian crises, notably in response to the war in Ukraine; and continuing to make a robust case for the UK’s full association to Horizon Europe.

Throughout 2022-23, our team has continued to focus on delivering against UUKi’s core strategic objectives. These are:

- To grow and diversify onshore recruitment of international students.
- To enhance the scale and impact of international research collaboration.
- To support the development of sustainable, scalable transnational education.
- To increase the proportion of students with international experience.
- To help our universities develop the capabilities, understanding and resilience to meet new challenges.

We can be incredibly proud of what our universities and sector have achieved this year, in extremely challenging circumstances.

Whether it is in continuing to grow international student numbers, expand TNE provision or sustain our global reputation as a leader in research and innovation, our sector has continued to excel.

After a year in post as Director, I continue to be humbled by the commitment and sense of purpose shared by colleagues working on internationalisation and global engagement across our universities. Your work makes an invaluable contribution to the success of our sector, and underpins the immense positive impact we have, collectively.

At UUKi, we want to continue to provide the best possible service to our membership, acting as one voice on behalf of the sector to create the conditions for UK universities to thrive internationally. We aim to provide the support, insights, advice and guidance that help our universities – and the UK higher education community as a whole – to deliver on our shared ambition to maximise the positive contribution that international engagement makes to the UK, to our partners, and to our students.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support, engagement and challenge. I, and the whole team at UUKi, very much look forward to continuing our work together over the coming year.

Jamie Arrowsmith
Director, UUKi

Views of our members

95%

Agree or strongly agree that UUKi does an excellent job in supporting their universities international aims.

“UUKi’s leadership role and convening power has been invaluable to the sector as a whole...”

Rachel Sandison, Deputy Vice Chancellor - External Engagement and Vice Principal - External Relations at University of Glasgow

97%

Agree or strongly agree UUKi works effectively to positively influence UK policy on higher education and international issues.

“UUKi is an effective coordinating and lobbying organisation working on behalf of UK Higher Education.

Professor Mark Spearing, Vice-President (Research & Enterprise) at the University of Southampton

98%

Agree or strongly agree UUKi represent the interests of their institutions effectively.

“Lobbying and representing sector views to Government, providing insights on merging policy areas – UUKi does this well.

Ian Storey, Director of Global Engagement at University of the Arts London

“UUKi’s work on Ukraine has been outstanding.

Professor Judith Lamie, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for International Engagement at Swansea University

96%

Value or strongly value the crisis resources and support UUKi provides.

“UUKi engages effectively with institutions across the sector.

Professor Alex Hughes, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement and Employability) at the University of Westminster

93%

Agree or strongly agree that UUKi supports its institutions to develop the understanding and resilience needed to meet new and emerging challenges.

“Campaigns have been timely and well run on major issues, and UUKi does a great job influencing government.

Professor Brad Mackay, Vice-Principal (International Strategy and External Relations) at University of St Andrews

Strategic Priority 1:

To grow and diversify onshore recruitment of international student numbers

According to the latest data, the UK hosted more than 679,000 international students in 2021-22 – continuing to deliver on the priorities set out in the UK International Education Strategy.

Throughout 2022-23, UUKi played a key role in leading the debate around the importance of international students. With migration, and in particular growth in international student recruitment, returning to centre stage in political, public, and media discourse, we:

- Commissioned and published research on public perceptions of international students, demonstrating high levels of public support for international students and recognition of their contribution to the UK.
- Co-developed (with our partners HEPI, London Economics and Kaplan International) and published vital research on the economic impact of international students to the UK. This demonstrated that a single cohort of international students is worth more than £41 billion to the UK economy.
- Helped ensure that the government remained committed to the high-level ambitions set out in the International Education Strategy to host at least 600,000 international students, and to reaffirm commitment to the Graduate route visa. Our research, insights and media engagement played a key role in shaping the government response to increased levels of net migration.
- Published advice to universities on approaches to growing and diversifying international student recruitment, based on input and feedback from 60 universities. This has helped develop and disseminate good practice in compliance and diversification.

- Along with our partners UKISCA, BUILA, and London Higher, relaunched the #WeAreInternational campaign, which was supported by more than 70 universities and highlighted the wider social, cultural, and civic contributions of international students to the UK.

UUKi’s work on international students has been covered extensively in the media in both local and national media.

We have also continued to develop leading insights on recruitment patterns, as part of our ongoing series, Why aren’t we second? Our latest report - Europe: the Road to Recover – was developed in collaboration with Studyportals and analysed trends in demand from European students and made recommendations for universities and policy makers.

93% of members agree or strongly agree that UUKi supports their institution to grow and diversify onshore recruitment on international students.



In focus:

Events, networks, and funding opportunities

Conference and events programme

UUKi's conference and events programme has continued to grow – and set the agenda for universities and their international ambitions on key topics such as international student recruitment and transnational education.

More than 6,000 delegates attended over 20 high-level events and forums. This included more than 350 delegates at our flagship annual conference, International Higher Education Forum 2023, which took place in Spring 2023.

In 2024, IHEF will be returning to an in-person event and will be held at the University of London on 1st – 2nd May 2024.

Networks

UUKi convenes a range of thematic, regional, and strategic networks that bring together university leaders and higher education professionals to share insights, expertise and intelligence. Over the academic year 2022-23, more than 500 representatives from 120 universities attended 13 network meetings.

Members representing 109 universities from all nations of the UK attended meetings of the UUKi PVC network, which regularly convenes the strategic leadership of university international activities.

Funding to support international priorities

Over the course of 2022-23, UUKi designed and delivered programmes on behalf of a wide range of partners, both in the UK and overseas – including Research England, DSIT, FCDO and Mitacs, a Canadian funding and partnership organisation.

Our funding programmes have created a range of opportunities, supporting research collaborations with Ukraine, innovative partnerships with Israel, and mobility opportunities to Canada through the Mitacs programme – where UUKi's involvement leveraged almost £1m (\$1.7CAD) in funding that has enabled UK universities to send undergraduate students to Canada for 12-week placements.

In total, UUKi made 45 awards totalling more than £4.76m through the Ukraine and Israel schemes.

98%
of members found
PVCi network meetings
valuable or very valuable.

Strategic Priority 2:

To enhance the scale and impact of international research collaboration

International collaboration and engagement continue to lie at the heart of the UK's world-leading university research and innovation ecosystem. In 2022, almost 62% of the UK's research outputs involved an international co-author.

A priority for UUKi over the past year has been our continued efforts making the case - to both UK and EU stakeholders - that full association to the Horizon Europe programme is in our collective interests. This has included significant media and political engagement, including direct engagements with the European Parliament ITRE working group on Horizon Europe, and meetings with the European Commission*. In parallel, UUKi has, alongside UUK, played a key role in helping to shape the UK government's alternative proposals.

In terms of our work on global research and innovation, we have:

- Developed and promoted opportunities for R&I collaboration, for example through convening bilateral forums on research funding opportunities with important partner countries including Germany, Japan, and Indonesia.
- Promoted the UK as a partner of choice, engaging with senior leaders and delegations and disseminating funding opportunities and insights. This has included webinars with the UKSIN network on UK participation in Horizon, which attracted record attendances for UUKi events and promoting UK R&I at events in Brussels, Singapore, Croatia and Indonesia.

* Full Association to Horizon Europe was secured in September 2023

- Supported the design and delivery of funding schemes to support R&I collaboration and talent attraction. UUKi advised on the design of the Pioneer programme, the newly launched International Science Partnerships Fund and UKRI international funding mechanisms such as the Co-Investigator Policy.
- Worked with sector partners to develop and produce a key report on universities and FDI, which has led to follow on work with Midlands Innovation to develop campaign plans for priority markets for attracting FDI.

We continue to play a leading role in promoting safe, secure, and sustainable collaboration in research and beyond. UUKi works closely with government departments and international peers to develop a shared understanding of the trusted research agenda. For example, we co-developed workshops with FCDO and the Science & Innovation Network on Trusted Research, leading events in Stockholm, Rome, and Paris, and hosting colleagues from Czechia, Poland, Austria, Romania, and Bulgaria in London.

98%
of members value or
strongly value UUKi's work
on international research
and innovation.



In focus: Campaigns

Twin For Hope

In September 2022, UUKi launched an award-winning campaign called, #TwinForHope. This was aimed at raising the profile of the twinning initiative and driving up the number of twinning partnerships. 100+ UK Universities took part in twinning projects with Ukrainian partner institutions, with the campaign reaching almost 7million, and resulted in a 36% uplift in positive public perceptions of UK universities.

Stick to Science

The Stick to Science initiative was set up by the European research community calling for open and barrier-free collaboration among Europe's research and innovation community. The campaign is an active response to the delayed progression of association agreements with Switzerland and the United Kingdom (UK), with the aim to break down political barriers and focus more on science. The campaign has to-date gathered 5,591 signatures from countries, institutions and organisations around the world, including 13 Nobel Prize winners.



Awards and recognition

Best Values-Led Content Marketing for the #TwinForHope campaign
Higher Education Content Marketing Awards, June 2023

Public Sector Campaign of the Year for the #TwinForHope campaign
PR Moments Awards, April 2023

Best Use of Content Marketing in a Campaign award for the #TwinForHope campaign
PRCA Awards, March 2023

We Are International

In May 2022, the #WeAreInternational campaign was relaunched, in partnership with UKISCA, BUILA, and London Higher. With over 70 Universities taking part, the campaign reached over 7 million people. From Autumn 2023 the campaign will continue enhancing the positive understanding of, and sentiment towards, international students in the eyes of the public, politicians, and the media.

“Cross-sector campaigns are very important in maintaining public visibility and the value of international activity undertaken by UK HEIs.

Sir David Bell, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of the University of Sunderland

Strategic Priority 3:

To support the development of sustainable, scalable transnational education

In 2021-22, 558,085 students studied on programmes delivered by 160 UK providers in over 230 countries and territories worldwide. This represented a 9.3% increase compared to the previous academic year.

UK Transnational Education provision continues to grow and is increasingly important to the aspirations and targets of the International Education Strategy. UUKi has been instrumental in developing UK sector understanding of emerging TNE markets such as India, Nigeria and Indonesia, and we have convened our members to inform the development of the regulatory framework in key markets.

Throughout 2022-23, UUKi has:

- Contributed to high-level delegations focusing on transnational education to Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, and hosted senior delegations from Vietnam, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, South Africa, and Greece.
- Facilitated opportunities for peer learning for members, with a focus on understanding and developing new opportunities. This included bespoke sessions on TNE opportunities in Egypt, emerging TNE partnerships in China and TNE operations in Sri Lanka.

- Helped shape overseas regulation that will facilitate TNE partnerships, notably the Indian University Grants Commission guidelines on establishing international branch campuses and the emerging TNE guidelines in Nigeria.
- Convened UUKi's group on monitoring and evaluation tools in TNE to feed into HESA's review of the aggregate offshore record (AOR) and shape the proposals for the individualised TNE student record as well as the revised AOR, including required data items and the categorisation of TNE provision.
- Worked with sector agencies such as HESA and to improve data sets on TNE activity and its important contribution to UK exports, as well as with DBT to promote the importance of TNE and qualification recognition to Free Trade Agreements.

As the domestic regulatory system in England has continued to evolve, UUKi played a central role in supporting the Office for Students in their global engagement efforts, while working with UK sector agencies and international partners to build understanding of the quality and regulatory regimes in place across all nations of the UK.



In focus: Key research, reports, and publications

International Facts & Figures 2023

International Facts and Figures is our annual snapshot of the international dimensions of UK higher education.

- In 2021-22, there were 679,970 international students studying in the UK.
- International students make up 23.8% of the studying population (15.1% of undergraduates and 45.4% of postgraduates).
- 558,805 students studied for UK degree overseas.
- 32% of staff at universities were international staff.
- 61.5% of all UK publications were the result of international research collaborations international staff.
- 26,410 students studied, worked or volunteered overseas.

The costs and benefits of international higher education students to the UK economy.

This study, an update of a 2021 study, published jointly by UUKi, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Kaplan International Pathways in collaboration with London Economics, reveals the growing importance of international students to local economies throughout the UK.

Key findings:

- The total economic benefits have risen from £31.3 billion to £41.9 billion between 2018/19 and 2021/22, an increase of 34%.
- Even when accounting for the impact on public services, the economic benefits of hosting international students significantly outweigh the costs, with a total net benefit of £37.4bn to the UK economy.
- On average, international students make a £58 million net economic contribution per electoral constituency, equivalent to approximately £560 per citizen.

International student recruitment from Europe: the road to recovery

This report, which is a collaboration between UUKi and Studyportals, investigates the current state of European student recruitment to the UK for degree study, utilises student search behaviour data to forecast how these changes will likely be borne out over the coming academic years, and provides recommendations for the UK HE sector and government to protect and develop European student recruitment.

Recommendations:

- To recognise Europe as a target region in any future refresh of the government's International Education Strategy
- To support and promote other education internationalisation activities and initiatives which can provide a cross-cutting benefit to student recruitment, such as focusing on the strategic importance of inward and outward student mobility, and the significant opportunities that exist in UK transnational education provision and online and distance learning
- To address practical barriers to student mobility, including reducing visa costs and addressing restricted visa routes post-Erasmus
- To build the evidence base on international graduate outcomes, including those of European students who are using the Graduate route

Diversification and strengthening international recruitment practices

This report sets out the findings of a survey of UUK's membership and is intended to support the sector's efforts to achieve both sustainable growth and diversity in international student recruitment, alongside high levels of compliance with the immigration rules.

Key findings:

- Many universities are currently diversifying their international student recruitment, including 90% of the respondents to our survey.
- 96% respondents to our survey told us that their university required deposits from at least some international students.
- 67% of respondents told us that their university's deposits for international students were set at a specific monetary amount, and 17% of respondents told us they were set at a percentage of the tuition fee.
- 57% of respondents to our survey told us that their university carried out pre-CAS interviews.
- 55% of respondents to our survey told us that their university uses the UK Agent Quality Framework.
- 55% of respondents to our survey told us that their university worked with agent aggregators or agents who use a subagent model.



98%
found our advice, analysis and
intelligence valuable or very valuable.

Strategic Priority 4:

To increase the proportion of students with international experience, especially those from low participation backgrounds

Across the world, 170 countries and territories hosted UK student mobilities in 2021-22. In total, 26,410 UK students studied, worked or volunteered overseas, representing a significant increase on the previous year when 14,000 undertook mobilities overseas.

UUKi has worked with our membership to support the ongoing recovery of student exchange and mobility after the pandemic and to mitigate the impacts of the UK's exit from the EU. We closely with the DfE and Capita to advocate for improvements to the Turing Scheme and provided support to the membership with the scheme implementation.

During 2022-23, UUKi has:

- Played a key role representing the interests of universities within the Turing scheme as a member of the advisory group, raising and helping address significant operational issues. Our team is recognised as a key interlocutor with government, resulting in a bilateral UUKi-DfE team workshop in March 2023.
- Helped build understanding across government of the practical and strategic challenges – and impact – of mobility funding, coordinating university site visits for the Department for Education Turing Scheme team to meet with global mobility teams and academics to exchange insight and experiences.

- Ensured the views of universities are understood by political stakeholders, contributing to calls for both oral and written evidence to the House of Lords European Affairs Committee, with the findings published in the report The future UK-EU Relationship in May 2023.
- Engaged with European and international stakeholders to promote understanding of the ongoing opportunities for cooperation with UK universities, including through the Turing and Taithe schemes. We have also worked with UK Embassies and Consulates to provide support with visa issues for students going abroad and established a student visa working group as part of our network.
- Produced original research and insights to support university approaches to mobility, including in the management of outward mobility programmes to identify key trends in mobility management and help our members to contextualise and benchmark their approach within that of the wider sector.

UUKi also hosted an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) International Students event in the House of Lords with students and representatives from Higher Education, Further Education, overseas embassies and industry, showcasing the value of short-term study and work exchange opportunities and highlighting areas where development of the UK Turing Scheme and UK immigration system can enhance opportunities for students.



In focus:

Supporting UK universities to respond to the crisis in Ukraine

The UK university community has worked tirelessly to support their peers, students and universities in Ukraine following the invasion.

The UK-Ukraine twinning initiative

The UK-Ukraine twinning initiative, which was set up by UUKi and Cormack Consultancy Group (CCG) shortly after the invasion, continued to grow during 2022-23. With funding support from FCDO, the scheme has led to more than 100 partnerships between UK and Ukrainian higher education institutions. Twinning partnerships include a wide range of activities, including support for critical infrastructure, such as university buildings and resources, staff and student IT and library access, access to support services and training for staff.

“The Ukraine effort has been exemplary.

Professor John Strachan Pro Vice Chancellor at Bath Spa University

Funding for UK-Ukraine R&I partnerships

Building on the success of the twinning initiative, UUKi secured a major award from Research England to deliver a programme of grants to support R&I activities of the partnerships, and research that would help support longer-term strategic engagement and sector capacity to respond to this and future crises. More than £4.4m was awarded through a competitive process to 31 institutions to develop their research and innovation activities through their twinning partnerships.

“I’m delighted that through the twinning programme, Ukrainian universities are able to collaborate with UK universities to develop strong partnerships that will benefit both nations, while addressing global research and innovation challenges.

George Freeman, Minister of State in the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

Twin for Hope

In September 2022, UUKi launched an award winning campaign called, #TwinForHope. This was aimed at raising the profile of the twinning initiative and its positive impact. You can view a short feature film created for this campaign, with voices from both side of twinning partnerships on our website.

“I’ve a feeling that our people have started to breathe again. They’re getting hope.

Professor Tetyana Kaganovska, President, Karazin Kharkiv National University

Looking beyond the conflict

As part of the Research England award, UUKi commissioned a review of evidence to inform the recovery and reconstruction effort in key areas prioritised by the Ukrainian government. The report, by the Universities Policy Engagement Network (UPEN), was published in June and has directly informed government-to-government engagements on the future reconstruction priorities of Ukraine.

The award also was also used by UUKi to support a two-day Ukraine Recovery Conference, organised by the Royal Society. This event brought together delegates from the UK and Ukraine to identify priorities for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction – and the higher education and research contribution to this. The conference also brought together policymakers and sector leaders to discuss transforming recommendations into practical actions.

Strategic Priority 5:

To help UK universities to develop the capabilities, understanding and resilience to meet new challenges

The funding, operating and political context in which universities pursue their international ambitions is dynamic and continues to evolve – and it is important that our members have access to insights, expertise and peer learning opportunities to engage with and respond to new challenges.

UUKi plays an important role in supporting universities to respond to new, emerging, or evolving challenges. In 2022-23, our work focussed on building institutional and sector capability in a number of important areas. Examples of our work includes:

- **Responding to humanitarian crises.** In February 2023, UUKi commissioned The Halpin Partnership to deliver a research report analysing the UK higher education sector response to the invasion of Ukraine. The report, to be published in September 2023, provides an overview of the response, identifies the blockers and enablers of an effective response, and proposes a framework for action to ensure that the sector is effectively prepared for future humanitarian crises. Alongside this, in April 2023, UUKi commissioned Gifted Philanthropy to develop a set of proposals for the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) that will inform the development of a long-term fundraising strategy for the organisation. These cross-sector projects were funded by UKRI/Research England as part of their £5m funding package.
- **Managing risk in internationalisation.** In January 2023, UUKi created two peer learning groups for members of our PVC network, the aim being to provide the opportunity for

members to share experiences and to critically reflect on their approaches to embedding the trusted research agenda locally, while being supported and challenged by peers. These peer learning groups provide an opportunity to build networks of colleagues and mentors to call on once the initial year of meetings has ended. Each group has 4-6 members, and have met 3-4 times, with the group setting the agenda and reporting valuable lessons learnt and ideas shared.

- **Climate change and internationalisation.** In November 2022, we ran a webinar in collaboration with the German Rectors' Conference, Universities Canada and Universities Finland on 'Climate Action and International Strategies' to share thinking on approaches to developing international strategies which take account of the impact of the climate crisis. One member of each member organisation presented a case study followed by discussion.

In June 2023, UUKi also convened a high-level forum for senior leaders, our third annual PVCi forum. This event saw 30 representatives from UUKi member institutions take part in a three day residential conference covering all aspects of global engagement.

100%

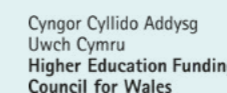
of members found taking part in a working group, task and finish group, advisory group, peer learning group or similar valuable or very valuable.

Our funders and sponsors

The work of UUKi is generously supported by universities, by our core grant funders, and through partnership and sponsorship from a wide range of commercial partners.


Core grant funders

Our thanks go to our core grant funders, whose ongoing support ensures that we are able to continue acting as the authoritative voice on internationalisation for universities in all four nations of the UK.



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