

# The Future for International Students in the UK



Submitted by Foreign Students on Tue 10/05/11 | [international students](#) | [tuition fees](#) | [uk universities uk](#) | [visas](#)



*Universities UK*, the top representative body for higher education in the UK, today moved to dismiss a number of misconceptions about the visa and tuition fee changes being introduced in Britain. *Foreign Students* went to find out more.

The President of *Universities UK*, Professor Steve Smith, was joined by the head of the International and Europe Unit, Dr. Joanna Newman (above), in reassuring international students that they “are an essential part of the UK higher education system” and will remain so.

Indeed, despite the tightening of student visa regulations and the increase in Home/EU student tuitions fees, they fully expect the number of international students coming to the UK to continue rising, just as it has for the last decade. So why are they so sure of this?

## Visa Changes

Professor Smith allayed fears that the changes to visa regulations will prevent international students from studying in the UK, instead suggesting that they will have “little or no consequence on *legitimate* international students”. The tightened rules will simply remove those people currently abusing the system by gaining student visas through fake private colleges.

He argued that for legitimate international students who want to study and then work in the UK, the visa regulations should not affect them for four key reasons:

1. It is a misconception that a cap on the number of international student visas is being introduced. This was proposed at first, but was quickly dropped.
2. Students studying postgraduate courses can still get UK visas for their families during their time of study.
3. Students do not need to return home between courses if they are studying more than one in the UK. For example, you can study an undergraduate degree and then stay in the UK for the summer if you are going on to study a postgraduate course as well.
4. Graduates can still get a visa to work in the UK after their studies finish, if they find a job within 4 months of finishing their course.

## Tuition Fee Increases

Tuition fees for UK and EU students are increasing to up to £9,000 per year from 2012 onwards, but Professor Smith does not expect this to affect international fees in any way. Despite cuts in university funding, the increase in Home/EU fees will more than cover the financial loss to universities. This means that there is no need to increase international student fees in the same way that Home/EU fees have been.

Similarly, despite the increases to fees for EU students, Professor Smith does not expect them to be put off studying in the UK for two reasons. Firstly, EU students can get loans to pay for the fees, just as UK students can, and secondly, it is expected that only 30% of students will actually pay back the full fees, thanks to scholarships and the fact the debt is wiped out after 30 years.

## “International Understanding”

*Universities UK*'s expectation that these changes will not affect the number of international students applying to study in the UK, is matched by their desire for those student numbers to continue increasing. Dr. Joanna Newman emphasised how “we benefit academically, we benefit culturally and we benefit economically” from overseas students.

Equally, Professor Smith added that:

“In today's world more than ever there is a need for more international understanding”.

And what better way is there to achieve this than through the continued welcoming of international students to UK universities.