

UK HIGHER EDUCATION & VISA UPDATES EVENT SUMMARY

– ADAPTING TO THE CHANGING MARKET



China-Britain Business Council (CBBC) hosted a UK Higher Education & Visa Updates session with our UK higher education members on Thursday 29th July 2021 in partnership with UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) and sponsors Downing Students and Index Education. Over 30 UK member organisations participated in this Updates session.

In the face of ongoing COVID-19 uncertainty for growing numbers of Chinese students seeking higher education and post-graduate opportunities in the UK, the hybrid event brought together experts on the UK education landscape, accommodation, and visa policies to provide updates and insights for the university representatives, who are striving to support their international students in unprecedented circumstances. As COVID-19 rapidly changes the market environment for mainland Chinese students entering UK higher education institutions in both China and the UK, understanding the new market environment and adapting to these changes has become more important than ever.

Kickstarting the update session, David Cai from Sower International Education Group outlined the importance of monitoring information flows, especially during the pandemic, for universities' online presence. In particular, he pointed out Douyin as a rising potential platform for university promotion, advising audience members on key aspects that contribute to high online awareness for universities, notably the breadth and well-roundedness of their degree offerings.

David shared his experience in running a Douyin account. In order to get high online awareness from students and their parents, universities should understand Douyin's ecosystem and the logic behind establishing a successful official Douyin account. David shared his observations and insights on Douyin's operation ecosystem and summarised eight dimensions that need to be considered before filming a short video, including the positioning, presentation, and operation system.

 Suggestions for operating Douyin ecosystem
SOWER INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION



Sower International Education's analysis on the operation model of a Douyin account

Jerry Zheng from Downing Students followed with a presentation on accommodation for UK university students. Starting with the standard options open to international students studying abroad in the UK, Mr Zheng gave a comprehensive overview of the social distancing and quarantine support available in student accommodation, as well as what Chinese students can expect for living in the UK regarding test and tracing and vaccination policies, as summarised below:

- The UK has a world-leading test and trace system. All residents have access to free and regular COVID-19 testing.
- Every public area in the UK has test and trace. Individuals must check-in via the NHS app when entering areas such as shops, restaurants, or travel on public transport. This allows Public Health to contact them if they need to isolate after having been in an area where someone has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Students will have access to at-home testing kits. These are free and mean students can do a test at home rather than visiting a testing centre near their accommodation.

Regarding quarantine for students arriving from China, there were detailed requirements for students to be aware of and comply with, including requirements before and during travel, as well as on arrival in the UK.

QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS ARRIVING FROM CHINA

Before travelling to the UK students need to:

- Have a negative covid-19 test before travelling to the UK
- Book and pay for a covid-19 test which will take place on day 2 and day 8 of arriving in the UK
- Students can find a test provider on the UK's government website: <https://www.gov.uk/find-travel-test-provider>
- Complete a passenger locator form. It can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>.

During travel:

- Wear a face mask over nose and mouth whilst travelling on planes, buses and other public transport

On arrival in the UK:

- Quarantine in your student accommodation for 10 days
- Take covid test on day 2 and day 8 of quarantine

Requirements for Chinese students before travelling, during travel, and upon arrival in the UK

Finally, Jaymee Gonzalez from UK Visas and Immigration, gave an in-depth guide on visa policy updates, offering a government perspective on the pandemic situation for international students. She outlined the pathways on offer to Chinese students including the Student Route and newly reinstated Graduate Route, demonstrating the streamlined and simplified ways that the government has accommodated international students with COVID-19 in mind.



During the event, with many university representatives bringing forward the unique concerns that their international students have faced in this period, Jaymee promptly responded to these questions. We have shared the full list of questions and answers in the **link** below for greater awareness for our readers.

Below is the Questions and Answers:

1. Hi Jaymee, thanks a lot for your update. One of the FAQs from our applicants was: the start date on the offer for example is 20 Sept, but obviously they now need to self-isolate for 10 days on arrival, so will the visa officer take this into consideration and the start date on their visas will leave enough days for self-isolation? - Dr Julia Wang, Liverpool John Moores University

If your application is successful you will be issued a visa valid for 90-days. The dates on the visa are based on the travel date stated on the application form – however the visa start date can't be more than 1 month from the course start date. You can travel to the UK any time within the 90-days.

As a student you will also receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) letter which contains information regarding the full length of your residence permit which, based on the dates on the CAS. Student will need to collect their physical BRP card once they've completed their self-isolation period as this confirms your immigration status and any conditions of your stay (including duration of permission to stay based on the dates on the CAS) in the UK.

2. It is not possible for students to collect their BRP cards within 10 days on arrival, as they will be in self isolation for 10 days. I assume it is okay to collect it after they are released from self-isolation? Thanks. - Dr Julia Wang, Liverpool John Moores University

Yes, students may collect their BRP after they are released from self-isolation. When you arrive in the UK you will not be penalised for being unable to collect your BRP in time while coronavirus measures are in place. Please note that the post office will only keep the card for 90 days so don't wait too long to collect the BRP.

3. Thank you for sharing. May I ask if the corporations that students worked for need any qualification in order that students can apply for PSW visa? Or any corporations are fine? - Anonymous Attendee

Individuals applying to the Graduate Route do not need a sponsor. More details on eligibility can be found on our website: www.gov.uk/graduate-visa

4. For late arrivals due to covid, will they be granted entry on border, as long as they explain the reason why? Or, our university admissions team would need to put a note in their CAS to note the reason of late

arrival, to avoid the students from being denied entry on border? Sorry for all the questions. – Dr Julia Wang, Liverpool John Moores University.

You will only be granted entry into the UK if the visa is valid. If your 90 day vignette has expired, you will need to apply for a replacement by completing the online form. The cost of replacing an expired 90 day vignette is £154 and you will need to make an appointment to resubmit your biometric information.

We strongly advise that you only apply for a new visa, or apply to replace an expired vignette, when you are confident you can travel to the UK.

Specifically for students, if your 90 day visa vignette has expired and you either:

- have been unable to travel due to coronavirus, but have been undertaking your studies remotely from overseas and intend to travel to study the same course in the UK
- have completed an eligible course by distance learning under coronavirus concessions and are coming to the UK by the relevant date to apply under the Graduate route. Read [the guidance](#) for further information

You will need to make a paid application for a [vignette transfer](#) by completing the [online form](#). The cost of replacing an expired 90 day vignette is £154 and you will need to make an appointment to resubmit your biometric information.

If your 90 day visa vignette has expired and you either:

- have deferred your course start date due to coronavirus but have been unable to undertake your studies remotely, meaning that your course cannot be completed during your existing visa period, and you now intend to travel to the UK
- can still complete your course within the dates covered by your existing visa period, but your course end date has changed, and you would like a new visa with a revised end date

You will need to submit a new paid student visa application with a new Certificate of Acceptance of Study (CAS) to cover the revised dates of your course. You will also need to make an appointment to resubmit your biometric information.

5. Thank you for your update. May I ask that when you are issuing a student visa, will you take the 10 days quarantine time into consideration and make sure the visa start date is at least 10 days before the semester start? Given that most of the Chinese students will need to quarantine. We are worrying that if the visa start date won't cover that 10 days period, students might miss some of the face to face courses. – Qiwen FANG, Liverpool John Moores University

If your application is successful you will be issued a visa valid for 90-days. The dates on the visa are based on the travel date stated on the application form – however the visa start date can't be more than 1 month from the course start date. You can travel to the UK any time within the 90-days.



Students will also receive a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) letter which contains information regarding the full length of your residence permit which, based on the dates on the CAS. Student will need to collect their physical BRP card once they've completed their self-isolation period as this confirms your immigration status and any conditions of your stay (including duration of permission to stay based on the dates on the CAS) in the UK.

6. Hi Jaymee, may I please ask how students would get visa which could cover their whole study period? For example, PGT student need visa for 12 months? MEng students need visa for 4 years? Many thanks. - Anonymous Attendee

Please don't confuse the 90 days entry visa (the vignette in the passport) with the Biometric Residence permit which has your immigration status and any conditions of your stay (including duration of permission to stay based on the dates on the CAS) in the UK.

If your application is successful you will be issued a visa valid for 90-days. The dates on the visa are based on the travel date stated on the application form – however the visa start date can't be more than 1 month from the course start date. You can travel to the UK any time within the 90-days.

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7. Thanks Jaymee, But it seems now the students will only get 90 days visa? - Anonymous Attendee

The 90-day validity on the vignette is the time you have to enter the UK. The full extent of your leave in the UK will be written on your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) and will typically cover the duration of your study/course.

8. Noticed that at the very beginning of your slides, students are allowed to continue their study in UK for any level program. May I get your suggestion for example whether the student can apply for Bachelor degree majoring in another program after he graduates with a master degree? - Anonymous Attendee

Please check the link below regarding extending your stay as a student in the UK www.gov.uk/student-visa/extend-your-visa.