

# THE NATIONAL CODE OF ETHICAL PRACTICE FOR UK EDUCATION AGENTS 2021



# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose

The National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents (referred to as 'the National Code') sets out the standards and best practice that education agents and agent aggregators, brokers and marketplaces (Digital Agent Networks), representing UK educational institutions are expected to adhere to. Born out of the London Statement (2012) and the British Council Good Practice Guide for Education Agents (2013), it is endorsed by many of the UK's education peak and promotional organisations. Education Agents have contributed to the National Code's development and UK educational institutions have committed to imbedding the National Code into their education agent contracts and quality management practices. It is not in of itself a legal document.

## Definitions

### Education Agent

A person or organisation that deals directly with prospective international students on behalf of educational institutions. They are contracted directly or indirectly to deliver a range of services to potential students and the educational institutions. To a student, these services would ordinarily include education counselling, such as course and institution matching, and assistance with academic and visa applications.

To an educational institution, services usually include marketing and promotion services and support in

### Digital Agent Networks

Contracted directly by educational institutions, a digital agent network (agent aggregators, brokers and marketplaces) (sometimes referred to as a B2B Agent, Master Agent or an Outsourced Agent Management Service) facilitates the delivery of education agent services to students via a network of education agents (service delivery partners) and providing a one-to-many relationship between an educational institution and education agents. This is achieved through a technology platform and/or a sub-contracting-type arrangement. Digital agent networks

### Qualified Student

A student who intends to enter the country (UK) for academic purposes at the selected educational institution or package of institutions e.g., foundation college to university, as described in their application

### Student Client

A prospective student who agrees (signed agreement) to engage the services of an education agent in support of their academic and visa applications and any ancillary services as per their agreement.

### Educational Institution

A recognised UK education provider of a course or courses of study that international students may enrol in, not limited to schools, colleges, English schools, foundation providers, universities and institutes.

## Ethical Framework

The National Code is based on the underlying ethical framework of the London Statement that requires

# 1. ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Education agents and digital agent networks commit to professional business governance and practices. You conduct yourselves with due regard to the regulatory conditions in the market(s) in which you operate. You are committed to the highest standards of professional conduct and to the highest standards of service to your clients, to your institution partners and of the UK education sector as a reliable and trustworthy provider of high-quality education and training.

Expected Practice	Suggested Evidence
1.1. Act professionally, honestly and responsibly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff handbook</li> </ul>
1.2. Avoid or declare conflicts of interest and comply with relevant laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff/education agency certification – British Council Education Agent Training Programme</li> </ul>
2.1. Provide clear and accurate information to partners and student clients and providing clear protocols for managing these relationships (including with sub-agents/managed agents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archives of client records and agreements for previous 2 years</li> </ul>

# 2. ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICE

Education agents and digital agent networks maintain the highest standards of ethical business practices. You promote yourselves and your educational institution partners fairly and without recourse to unfavourable or negative comparisons with other educational institutions. You do not employ unfair or unprofessional practice to damage the interests of other agents or educational institutions. You are honest in communicating information about yourselves, your educational institution partners and your student clients in published, oral or in any other form.

Expected Practice	Suggested Evidence
2.1 Ensure all staff have read and understand the National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents and the associated business practices of your organisation including being open about commercial relationships (not financial detail) with student clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff handbook</li> <li>• Staff/education agency certification – British Council Education Agent Training Programme</li> </ul>
2.2 Be transparent about which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ten/digitancagreem clidintweead 4n</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Note it is not expected that the amount of commission is disclosed; this is commercially sensitive.

Education agents and digital agent networks provide accurate advice and guidance tailored to the student clients' needs, wants and capabilities. You shall not knowingly or by a failure of professional standards provide or disseminate false, incomplete or misleading information.

# 4. STUDENT-CENTRED PRACTICE

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Expected Practice	Suggested Evidence
4.1 Provide realistic and appropriate information that is tailored to the individual student client's circumstances, particularly in relation to language skills, capacity to pay and level of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of student client and family feedback</li> <li>• Spot check audit documents of counselling interactions</li> <li>• Staff handbook</li> <li>• Company equality and diversity policy (for staff and students) or equivalent document</li> </ul>
4.2 Support student clients' enrolment journey without prejudice or discrimination, including in relation to their nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, marital or maternity status	
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4.4 Proactively and accurately advise student clients of non-genuine educational institutions and areas of sector concern to help them make informed decisions	
4.5 Provide pastoral care and student wellbeing support in line with the education agent's duty of care – for all student clients, but in particular for those under 18 years of age	
4.6 Specify the rights and responsibilities of the student client in the destination country including complaints and appeals processes and visa stipulations such as part time work rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed written/digital agreements between education agents and student clients tha tha tha tha th2oLbd</li> </ul>

# 5. ORGANISATIONAL COMPETENCE

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Expected Practice	Suggested Evidence
5.1 All UK focussed staff understand relevant legislation and regulations relating to recruiting students to UK educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff/education agency certification – British Council Education Agent Training Programme</li> </ul>
5.2 All UK focused education agent counselling staff have completed UK education agent training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Record of staff having completed advanced professional development units from the British Council Education Agent Training suite</li> </ul>
) " · 5h`YUgicbYI ? ZWgYXYXi Whcb U YbhWi bgY`]b[ `gU `dYf` c Wlc`Uj YWa d`YXh Y6f]hg` 7ci bW`9Xi Whcb`5[ Ybh Training Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education agent's/digital agent network's in-house training records demonstrating that their staff and service delivery partners regularly participate in continuing professional development activities that maintain their up-to-date knowledge</li> </ul>
) (" · 5`I ? ZWgYXgU `dUf]WdUf]b fY[i `UfUj]b] Zca I ? ` educational institution partners	
) " · ? Yd`fWfXgcZgU gI ? YXi Whcb ZWgYXfUj]b] ` (including dates and type)	
Desirable Practice	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple UK focused education agent counselling staff per office to have completed the British Council Education Agent Training Programme</li> <li>All senior counselling staff have completed the British Council</li> </ul>	