

3 September 2018

## **About UAL**

University of the Arts London is a world-leading university for art and design offering courses in art, design, fashion, communication and performing arts. UAL's graduates go on to work in and shape the world's leading creative industries. UAL is ranked sixth in the world for Art and Design in the 2018 QS World University Rankings®.

UAL is a global university in curriculum and outlook with a large proportion of our staff and students from overseas. UAL is committed to securing our international partnerships beyond Brexit, and to emphasising our commitment to international collaboration. As part of this we have launched the Creative Unions campaign with leading figures from across the creative industries to underline the importance of borderless creativity.<sup>1</sup> The campaign is making the case that the UK's future depends on being a place where creative people come together, a place where they can share ideas to shape the world around them and improve lives.

UAL is a top quartile university by turnover, the largest specialist creative university in Europe, and the seventh largest of all of London's higher education institutes. According to a 2017 report by Regeneris Consulting, UAL supported a total of 6,800 FTE jobs and £550m in GVA for London. We play an important role as the talent pipeline for the £91.8bn UK creative industries. Our graduates make an annual productivity contribution equivalent to £10m in GVA for London and £13m for the UK.

## **UAL's international students**

International students from 144 countries form 47% of our undergraduate body. This is a key reason for the success of our alumni on the international stage and our strength in graduate employment across all student groups. UAL has agreements with over 250 international institutions under which students come to study with us through our exchange, study abroad, or government sponsorship programmes. UAL was chosen as the only UK destination institution for art and design scholarships awarded by the Beijing Government.

Our funding model is dependent on the subsidy to domestic students from international fees – the cost of provision of specialist creative courses would not be met by domestic fees alone. Of UAL's £281.4m annual income in 2017, 35% (£98.1m) came from international students' fees; 41% comes from EU and UK students; 11% from grants and external contracts and 13% from other income (e.g. halls, catering, retail).<sup>2</sup>

## **What are the educational opportunities and challenges of welcoming international students into our schools, colleges and universities?**

*Answers could include: impact on all students' cultural understanding, global perspectives, impact on breadth of courses, additional resources needed, integrating UK and international students, impact and cost of immigration compliance.*

1. International students at UAL create invaluable opportunities for students from the UK and around the world to learn about other cultures, ways of learning and the formation of global networks. UAL strives to be recognised as world-leading in transnational and cross-cultural

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/press-office/creative-unions>

<sup>2</sup> [UAL financial statement 2016-17](#)

working in all that it does – evidently a high proportion of international students is vital to that work.

2. The UK ranks first among its global competitors for international students' overall satisfaction with 'support services and overall living experience at their UK university'<sup>3</sup>. In turn, international students bring perspectives that help home students to understand new perspectives and appreciate that there are many ways to approach creative education. At our university this is underpinned by UAL's Creative Attributes Framework which promotes student behaviours such as curiosity and enthusiasm to seek out new perspectives. For all our students this supports self-awareness, critical thinking, more open and tolerant appreciation of different cultures and intercultural communication skills and collaboration.
3. International students are the foundation of UAL's global networks, allowing our alumni and the UK's creative industries to flourish all over the world. UAL has students from more than 144 countries. These students, our staff, alumni and entrepreneurs all go on to make a contribution through culture, digital and education to the UK's soft power. The UK ranked first in the 2018 Global Soft Power Index and we believe that UAL's networks help to support the UK's wider diplomatic, cultural and international development aims.<sup>4</sup>
4. Providing courses to appeal to international students has a positive impact on the breadth of courses we offer. In order to compete globally, UAL must ensure that we are providing a broad range of courses that are relevant to students applying from all over the world, strengthening our offer for all students. At postgraduate level, many of our courses remain viable mainly because of demand from international students. This demand allows us to continue to offer these courses, and is therefore a benefit to Home students.
5. The critical threshold for viability is considered to be around 50% of international students in the course cohort: at undergraduate level 12% of courses are above the critical threshold and a further 30% are near it. At postgraduate level, 44% of courses are above the critical threshold. These courses depend on international students; some of these courses are seen as being of strategic importance to creative education in the UK.
6. UAL invests resources in supporting international students. Alongside most universities, we have well-developed student services, including academic support, for international students and home students. We provide language classes ahead of the start of term (we usually charge for this) and we offer language support throughout a student's studies. But international students do not divert resources from domestic students, in fact the benefits of the investments can be seen in the contribution that international students make to our university, local communities and the wider creative economy. For example, international students generate £25.8bn output for the UK economy through on and off campus spending and their visitors.
7. Ensuring that international students fully integrate is a challenge and UAL works to support integration of students from different backgrounds at every level. We recognise that students gravitate to those from similar cultures, backgrounds and languages, but we are constantly

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<sup>3</sup> [Universities UK - International student barometer, November 2017](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Soft Power Index 2018](#)

reviewing how we can encourage integration. Where we can UAL organises students into mixed groups for study and other activities.

**What are the challenges and opportunities of integrating international students and their dependants into local communities? Do international students differ from other migrant or visitor communities in this regard?**

*Answers could include: impact on school education, transport, and housing; facilitating cultural diversity and international dialogue in the local community; co-production of social initiatives between community and education institutions; perception of international students as migrants by the community.*

8. UAL actively encourages students to take part in voluntary projects in local communities and local communities see the value of their participation and civic engagement. In our experience, international students take a strong interest in making connections beyond the student community. However, UAL is a non-campus university based in a global city with a diverse population. We do not imagine that we face the same challenges in terms of integration between international students and local communities as other universities.

**According to a recent report by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) there are over three times as many higher education international students London and the South East than any other region of the UK. Is this regional tilt similar for international students in other levels of education and if so, what would be the challenges and opportunities of achieving a greater balance of international students in regions across the UK?**

**What are the costs and benefits of international students participating in the regional and national labour market and how could we ensure they have a sustainable role in supporting and building local or skilled industry post-study?**

*Answers could include: impact of UK-wide approach to immigration, working during study, work experience and internships, entrepreneurship and starting businesses in the UK and greater post study work visa options.*

9. UAL would like to see more options for international students who wish to continue to work in the UK post-study. Students who know that that they will have to leave the UK when they finish their studies may be deterred from focusing on skills that are in high demand in the UK's creative industries but less so elsewhere. UAL has consistently argued that students should not be included in the overall immigration figures.
10. The Equality Act 2010 protects students from discrimination on grounds of nationality and will apply to EU students on leaving the Single Market. This means that UK higher education institutions must charge EU students the international tuition fee from them. At UAL, this would be an overnight 91% increase to £17,230/a for incoming EU students. This change will make the UK's Higher Education institutions distinctively uncompetitive to EU students. An EU student will be reluctant to pay £17,000 a year in the UK when they can attend universities in Germany, Denmark and Greece for free. UAL has already seen a notable decline in EU students taking up their places and the sector has experienced a decline in applications from the EU. We are concerned that this will only get worse if tighter immigration controls are introduced.

11. If we do not introduce an adequate immigration system for students coming in from outside the UK, we risk giving our EU neighbours the competitive edge (who see Brexit as a commercial opportunity) and inadvertently damaging a key economic growth area in the UK - the Higher Education sector. We believe that the threat to EU student numbers and the UK's HE sector could be mitigated if the Government introduces a system that is more competitive and open – through i) fee flexibility and ii) the removal of international students from net migration target/ the introduction of student quotas as part of future trade agreements.
12. We welcome the Government's efforts, particularly the commitment that EU students starting courses in the 2017/2018 academic year will be eligible for student loans and grants, but recommend that they go one step further, allowing UK HE institutions to vary fee levels in order to attract international students and remain competitive in the market.
13. We also recommend that the Government removes international students from net migration target as this would be the most effective way to protect the UK's HE sector. Alternatively, student migration numbers – quotas – should be negotiated as part of future trade agreements. This could be based on the Home Office's existing differentiation arrangements for low-risk applicants for Tier 4 visas.

**What role do international students play in increasing global research capabilities, trade links and soft power for the UK and what strategies could be implemented to support this further?**

14. Almost 2 million people are now employed in the UK's creative organisations, with a wider number making up the creative economy which also includes creative roles in non-creative organisations. The sector is continuing to outperform other sectors in terms of employment, having already grown 300,000 jobs between 2011 and 2015. The creative industries contributed a record £91.8bn to the UK economy in 2016, according to official statistics. The contribution of the UK creative industries - as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA) - rose by 7.6 per cent in 2016, or more than twice as fast as the average 3.5 per cent growth rate in this measure across the UK economy.<sup>5</sup>
15. The global creative industries employ some 57m people and is worth over a trillion dollars a year – a strong, worldwide network of leaders in the creative industries educated in the UK is vital to the UK creative industries' global reach.
16. As well as supporting the UK's creative industries, and increasing the influence of the UK's soft power through cultural exchange, our global partnerships support international development goals in developing countries. Our partnerships internationally, lead to sustainable ventures that support cultural, economic and social development globally. Current projects and partner organisations include Lebanese American University (LAU), Istanbul Moda Academy (IMA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) IFS (International Fashion Showcase).

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<sup>5</sup> [Creative Industries Federation - latest data](#)