

Powering the UK Agent Quality Framework with eNetEnterprise



Setting the Scene

British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities, engaging with millions globally each year. This is achieved through working with an international network of partners comprised of international student recruitment agencies and school counsellors.

The Challenge

Recognising the need to enhance transparency and quality among agents and counsellors, British Council collaborated with BUILA, UKCISA, and UUKI to establish a standard that

would not only train but also continuously engage agents and counsellors through an accessible digital platform.

To this end, British Council and its partners developed the Agent Quality Framework (AQF) - an initiative designed to ensure that agents and counsellors provide reliable and ethical support to UK-bound international students, maintaining the UK's status as a preferred study destination. In support of this, they needed a digital learning and assessment partner to develop the agent and counsellor Training and Engagement hub, and commissioned eCom Learning Solutions to achieve this.

The Solution

The first of its kind, the Hub is aimed at improving expertise of agents and counsellors globally, to enhance the pre-enrolment experience of UK-bound international students, and consists of:

- a national ethical code of conduct for agents
- a free online training course aimed to ensure that agents have the most up to date information to enable them to fully support prospective students
- a database of certified agents who have signed up to the code and completed the training course, who



students can trust to provide ethical and informed support

Developed for a global audience by eCom Learning Solutions, the Hub - the first of its kind – is a market disruptive model that ensures all agents and counsellors working with the UK have access to complimentary learning and certification about studying and living in the UK.

This device-agnostic, highly secure, cloud-based solution is powered by our eNetEnterprise learning and assessment platform. The self-service, fully accessible training and assessment suite has accelerated the qualification and certification process. Agents and counsellors new to the industry can upskill through training before taking an assessment, while those with more experience can proceed

directly to the assessment stage to quickly become certified.

On successful completion, agents and counsellors must commit to the UK AQF and National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents, before being added to British Council's publicly searchable database of Certified Agents. Leveraging eCom technology, the database helps international students quickly check their chosen agent is certified. The AQF Pledge means that the majority of UK universities now only partner with agents and counsellors who are UK certified and listed on the database.

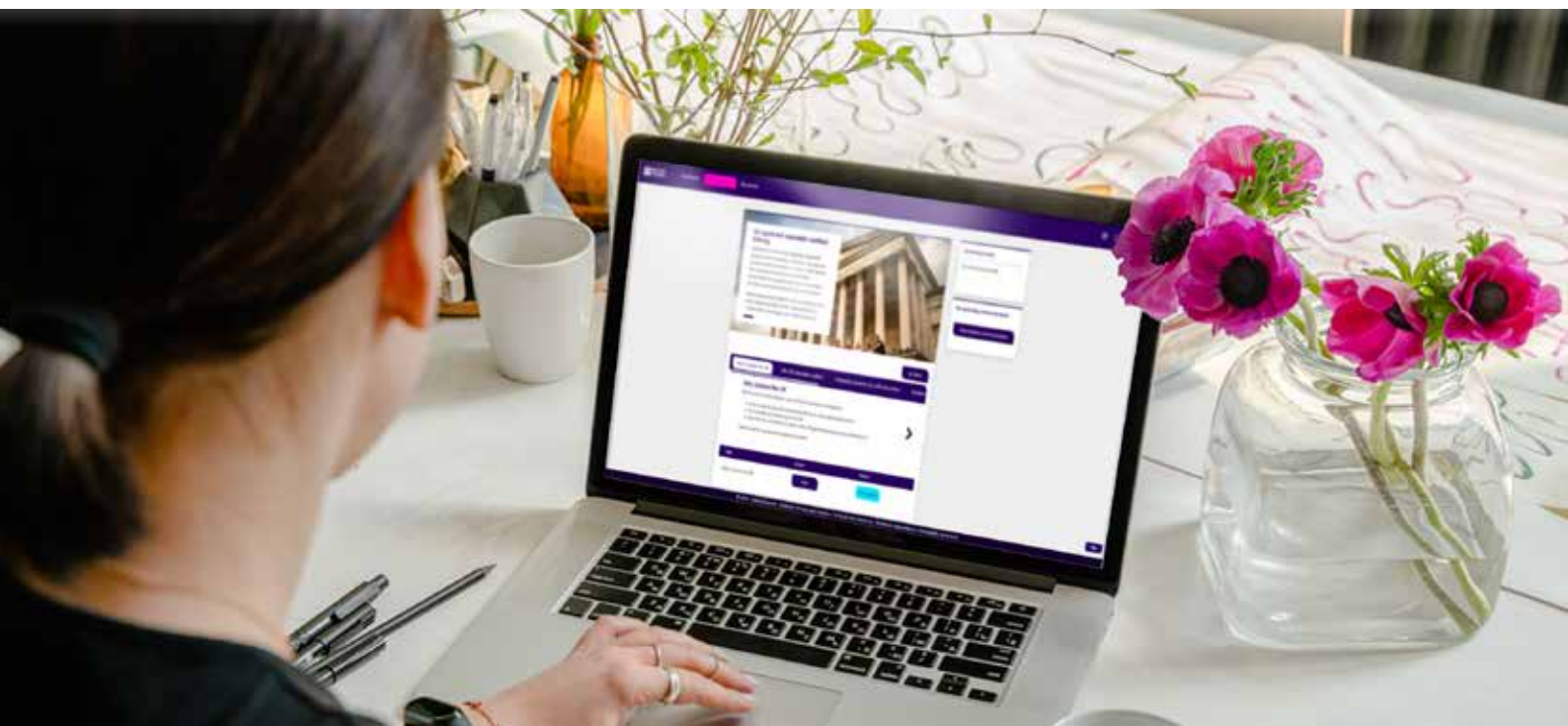
The Benefits

Officially launched in December 2022, and following rapid adoption of the AQF in 2023/24, the free, open-access, hub now

has more than 30,000 active users from 129 countries, including over 10,000 certified agents and counsellors, all working to elevate the global student experience.

The Hub, free for all agents and counsellors, enables them to study at their own pace, in their own time, move freely between modules, and use their preferred device, effectively removing the barriers preventing learning and certification.

Being listed on British Council's publicly searchable database not only enhances the credibility of agents and counsellors but also ensures that international students and their families have swift access to timely and effective support, from qualified professionals they can fully trust.





As a result of the recent UK Higher Education sector commitment to the UK AQF and the National Code of Ethical Practice, UK Universities will now only work with agents and counsellors who are certified, positioning the Hub as an essential resource. This has broadened the availability of quality advice for international students considering the UK as a study destination, and increased usage.

The engagement hub is a powerful incentive to return to the platform, showing upcoming events, UK Government updates and information specific to areas of the UK with devolved government.

To make it easier for agents and counsellors to showcase their credentials, digital badges will shortly be introduced, complimenting the certificates. Easily shared across the web and social media, it is anticipated this will boost the Hub's usage, as professionals can more easily highlight their certified status and commitment to providing trusted advice on studying in the UK.

The following are education sector endorsements...

“This empowers students to make informed choices in identifying well-qualified agents to support them on their pathway to study in the UK.”

Charley Robinson, Head of Global Mobility Policy, Universities UK International

“These resources help set the standard for all institutions recruiting international students.”

Emma Meredith, Director of Global Engagement, Interim Director of Skills Policy Association of Colleges

“It's great to be working with eCom, as they truly understand our important mission to ensure transparent and ethical practices in the international student recruitment ecosystem.

In deploying eNetEnterprise to power the Hub, eCom have made it possible to expedite the certification of agents and counsellors, ensuring students have access to agents who possess the required knowledge and awareness to help them make informed choices about their UK education journey.”

Jacqui Jenkins, Global Programme Lead-International Student Mobility at the British Council.



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