

The UK Agent Quality Framework: Agent Engagement

Education agents and counsellors play a critical role in marketing UK education and supporting international students on their journey to the UK to ensure that they have an outstanding international student experience. The Agent Quality Framework (AQF) is a set of tools to enhance the experience of international students working with education agents and counsellors to apply to study in the UK. The AQF is designed to ensure agents and counsellors have the right knowledge of the UK as a study destination and understand the integrity of the UK visa and immigration system, in order to uphold the UK's reputation as a world-class study destination. The AQF promotes four key principles:

- empowering student choice and enabling informed decision making
- ensuring good agent governance and professionalism
- promoting ethical agent practices, professional knowledge and competency
- increasing transparency and accountability.

The AQF was established after extensive [research](#) with students, education providers, education counsellors and agents. It was produced in collaboration with sector partners: the [British Universities' International Liaison Association](#) (BUILA), [Universities UK International](#) (UUKi), the [British Council](#), and the [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKCISA).

The AQF applies to UK education providers on the [register of licensed student sponsors](#) who partner with agents in their international recruitment, as well as to agencies themselves.

Education providers on the register of licensed student sponsors will be required to adhere to the AQF and will include clauses in their agent contracts requiring all partner agents to agree to adhere to the principles of [the National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents](#) and to complete the British Council [UK agent and counsellor training](#).

Agencies are encouraged to engage with their partner education providers to ensure they understand their AQF responsibilities in accordance with their agent provider contract.

The British Council has a '[I am a UK certified counsellor](#)' database listing all counsellors who have completed the training. This public-facing database exists so that

international students, their parents, and education providers can check that their chosen counsellor is certified.

It is important to note that the AQF and the British Council's UK agent and counsellor training **does not** endorse or formally recognise agencies or counsellors but through the training, certifies **individual counsellors** for their knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination.

Communicating and demonstrating your commitment to the AQF

- Agencies partnering with UK education providers on the register of licensed student sponsors commit to the principles of the AQF, in particular the National Code, through their agent provider contracts. Commitment to the AQF can be demonstrated through continued engagement with partner education providers to ensure the highest standards of student support are delivered.
- Agencies are encouraged to use the AQF [Good Practice Guide for UK Education Agents Partnering for Quality](#) to adopt sector-wide best practices.
- Agencies should ensure their counsellors serving UK-bound students complete the British Council's UK agent and counsellor training and hold the certificate and 'I am a UK certified counsellor' digital badge.
- Agencies should not state that they, as an organisation, are British Council or AQF 'certified/ validated/ accredited' or have completed the UK agent and counsellor training. The training **only certifies individual counsellors** for their knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination. Individual certified counsellors can use the certificate and 'I am a UK Certified Counsellor' digital badge to demonstrate this.
- Agencies are encouraged to share the AQF [Student and Parent Guide to Choosing an Education Agent](#) with students and parents to promote transparency.

Demonstrating your commitment to the UK Agent Quality Framework (AQF) Statement

We, [Agency name], are committed to the principles of the AQF, as set out in the [National Code of Ethical Practice for UK Education Agents](#) and the requirements for UK education providers on the [register of licensed student sponsors](#). This commitment to the AQF can be demonstrated through our agent provider contracts and our continued engagement with education providers to ensure the UKVI Student Sponsor Licence responsibilities are met.

We will ensure that all our counsellors serving UK-bound students complete the British Council's UK agent and counsellor training and are individually certified for their knowledge and awareness of the UK as a study destination.

We will use the AQF [Good Practice Guide for UK Education Agents Partnering for Quality](#) to adopt sector-wide best practices and share the AQF [Student and parent guide to choosing an education agent](#) with our students to promote transparency and knowledge.