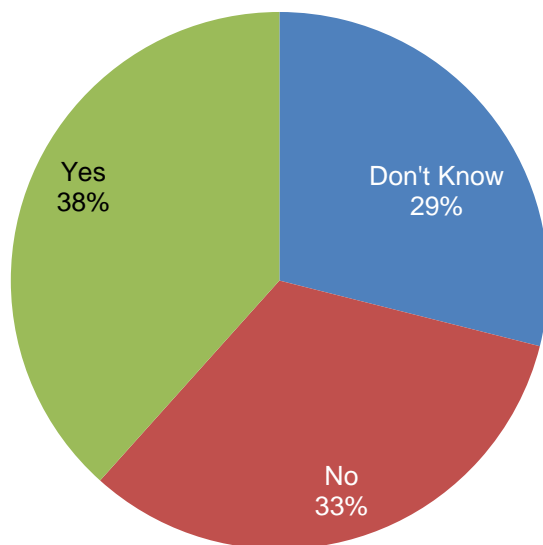


Agents in Nepal: What do students think?

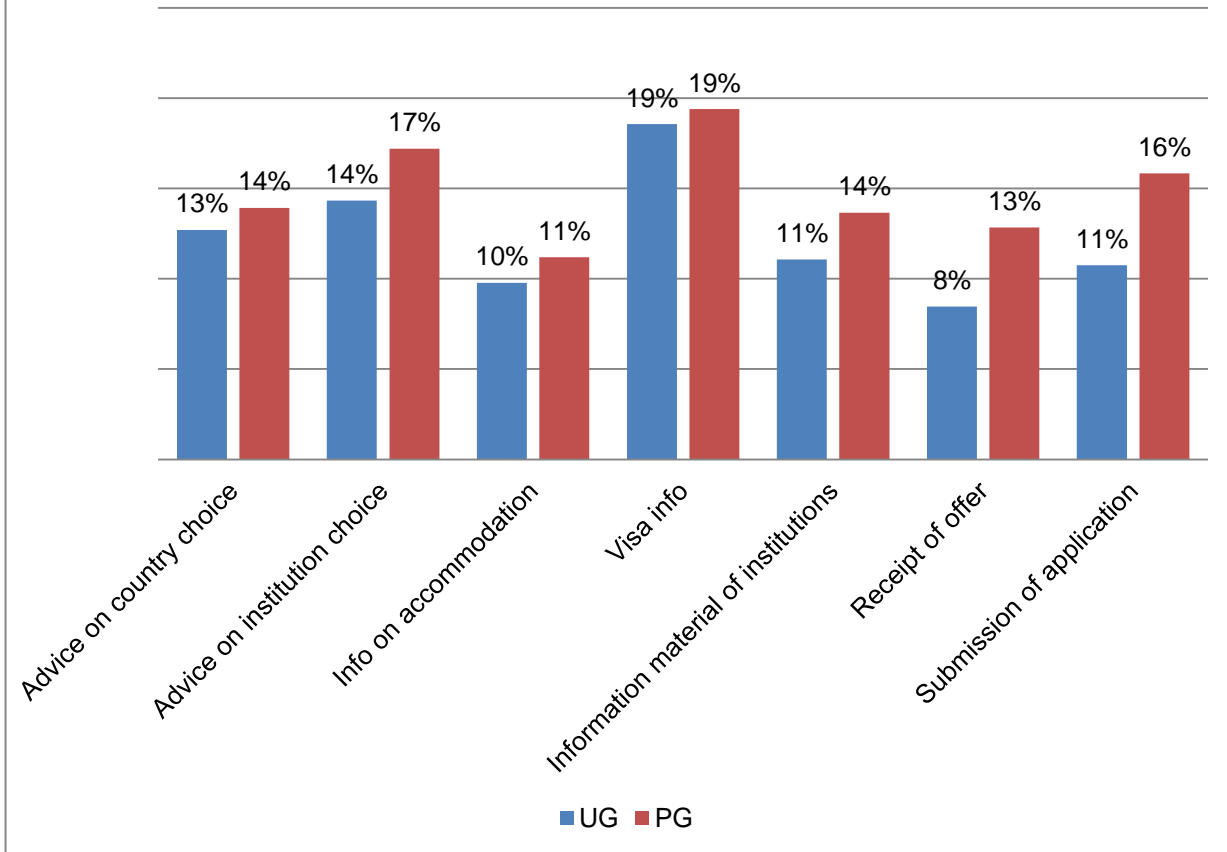
On an average over 20000 prospective students leave Nepal to pursue their higher education in foreign countries. In the absence of in-country offices of foreign universities in Nepal the market has largely been agent driven. But how willing are Nepalese students to use agents and what services do they expect from them? Latest data from the Student Insight Survey reveals some interesting findings about the students' point of view.

Willingness to use agents services in Nepal



Our survey reveals that 38% of prospective students in Nepal are willing to use agents' services. At 38%, students in Nepal were also the most open to using agent services amongst prospective students across South Asia. The large amount of fence sitters can be attributed to the fact that the survey respondents mostly constituted prospective students in early stages of decision making. This is further corroborated by the fact that only 11% of the respondents mentioned education agents as a source of information.

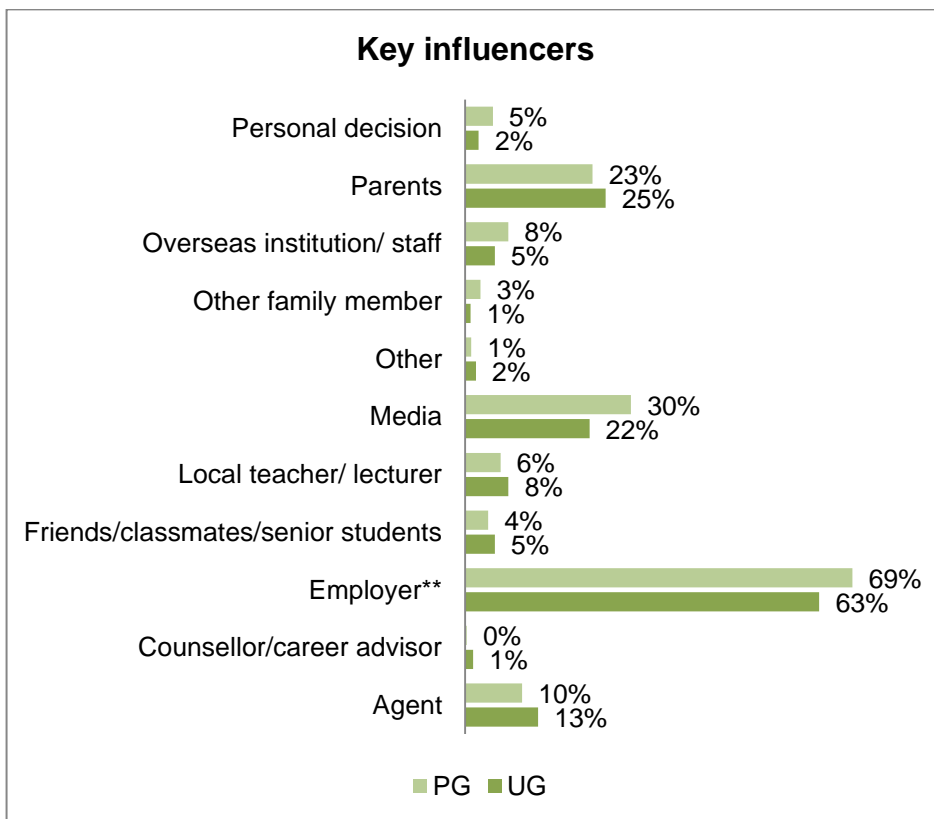
Key information & services students expect from agents



In terms of services expected, visa information was the top service that prospective students expected from agents. The bright spot for the UK though is the UK's visa processes were deemed to be less complicated than the US and Australia visa systems.

It is interesting to find in the survey only 10% prospective PG students and 13% prospective UG students mentioned agents as a key influencer. This information combined with the fact that only 11% prospective students mentioned agents as a source of information points to the fact that students are approaching agents at a very late stage in their decision making process. Hence the challenge for Nepalese education agents will be to play a greater role in guiding the decision making of students from the early stages of information seeking to application.

The chart below gives further information about the key influencers which play a role in the decision making process of students.



**While about 30% of the respondents were currently employed the high percentage of employer influence can be attributed to students making decisions based on their anticipation of employment prospects.

For UK universities this presents a challenging situation in terms of their strategy for engaging with agents. It is estimated that there are around 1500 education agents in Nepal thus making it a very fragmented market.

For universities looking to expand their footprint into Nepal through agents there are a few key pointers:

- Always evaluate multiple options before settling on a partner agency.
- Visiting Nepal and meeting agencies at their premises is extremely important so as to gauge facilities, size of operations and quality of human resources
- Evaluate how agents fit into your overall strategy for student recruitment from Nepal.
- Have well-defined evaluation criteria for selection of agent(s) but be prepared to work with them intensively through the early phases of the relationship. Training will be essential.

The British Council Nepal recognises the important role that agents play in Nepal and we make an effort to engage with agents on a regular basis. We launched our agent training program on the 1st of December and we expect the first batch of agents to graduate by the 2nd week of February, 2015. Agents that pass our training will be listed on the [Global Agents List](#) and can be viewed by students and influencers. We can also assist UK Universities in finding agents in Nepal. Please contact Abhinav Shakya who heads SIEM services in Nepal for further information.

Email: abhinav.shakya@britishcouncil.org.np

Phone: +977-1-4410798 (ext: 3154)