

Education UK Exhibition

Sofia, Bulgaria 11 Nov 2012

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1. Event fact file

Sofia

Venue	Sheraton Hotel, Sofia
Date	11 November 2012
Opening hours	1100–1800
Stand costs	Education UK exhibition costs: £667.00 (£801.00 Inc VAT)
Unique feature to give added value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no other exhibition in Bulgaria which promotes UK education only • Local event registration website (with information about exhibitors) remains live throughout the year • Information about funding opportunities for Bulgarian applicants in each institution highlighted on local event registration website • Networking day on the day before the exhibition for meeting representatives of Bulgarian educational agents and Bulgarian universities. • Stand assistants/interpreters were made available at no extra costs • Promotional materials left over from the exhibition are distributed through British Council's reference section for a year after the exhibition at no extra charge. • Free events and video-conferencing venue at the British Council office in Bulgaria for one event organised by a participating UK university

2. Key statistics

Attendance	Sofia	
	March 2012	Nov 2012
Sun 11 November		
Total number of visitors	1,000	1,200
Further Education	2+1 examination board	No
Higher Education	24	16
UCAS	videoconference	no
Visa	No	No
Total number of exhibitors	27	16*


*A full list of exhibitors can be found in Appendix.

Visitors' primary market objectives	Sofia	
	March 2012	Nov 2012
Undergraduate	34%	45%
Postgraduate	27%	37%
University foundation	11%	11%
Diploma	24%	9%
Distance learning	9%	6%
Demographics of visitors	Sofia	
	March 2012	Nov 2012
Male	39%	34%
Female	58%	64%

3. Impact of marketing plan

Given the extremely competitive environment in Bulgaria (with many well-known and established international education fairs) the communications campaign for the Education UK exhibition was focused on a combination of targeted marketing activities and general awareness raising activities.

- 1,000 posters were produced – $\frac{1}{3}$ of them were distributed directly to over 100 schools and all 40 universities and faculties in the city. Most of the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ of the posters were used for mass distribution around busy public spots around student campuses.
- This was combined with a high-visible, two-week campaign in the underground of Sofia (ads on the tube stations close to schools, campuses and universities).
- A very targeted Facebook advertising campaign (Facebook ads) was run for 3 weeks, resulting in more than 54,000 unique visitors to the pre-event registration website and over 720 online registrations.
- A targeted online promotion campaign was run on the most popular free web-based email service in the country
- There was a special issue of the British Council monthly newsletter that was sent to 10,000+ contacts.

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- Based on the visitors' questionnaires submitted during the event and from the online registration form, the top five ways visitors have found out about the exhibition are (in order of popularity):
 - (1) Facebook
 - (2) Recommendation from a friend
 - (3) BC website and newsletters
 - (4) Other online advertising
 - (5) Billboards and posters.
 - Handouts on IELTS and the UK Education system were also made available at the front of the exhibition hall which was branded with GREAT campaign banners.

* A full media plan can be found in Appendix 4

4. Conclusions and follow up

4.1 Key recommendations for institutions

4.1.1 Feedback from the visitor questionnaires:

- Most visitors were looking for information on funding opportunities.
- Some visitors were interested in information about student loans.
- There were comments from some parents that they needed more Bulgarian speakers at the stands together with the UK representatives.
- Some visitors were looking for art schools, conservatoires, as well as universities from the whole of the UK not just England, but we have no control over this factor.

4.1.2. An organisational recommendation from British Council Bulgaria

Exhibitors are kindly asked to ensure that the accommodation booking form provided in the handbook is used to book accommodation at the venue of the exhibition, therefore no accommodation will be secured if this form is not returned by the deadline given.

4.2 Key recommendations for the British Council

4.2.1 Feedback from exhibitor questionnaires

- Several exhibitors specifically praised the wall, which was used to advertise Britain as a **GREAT destination**.

ACTION: British Council team to discuss using similar branding for future exhibitions.

- Several exhibitors suggested that the opening hours should be until 1700.

ACTION: British Council team to discuss the hours of the next exhibition.



- There was a comment that a pre-registration system would be helpful where every exhibitor would receive a list of the visitors who want to see them.

ACTION: British Council team to explore and consider different options presently available with other global exhibitions..

- Providing individual packed lunches was considered to be a very convenient arrangement, because delegates who did not manage to leave the hall until late in the afternoon still had a lunch waiting for them.

ACTION: British Council team to arrange with hotel again.

- It was suggested to extend the exhibition to other university cities in Bulgaria.

ACTION: British Council team to consider resources for increasing the number of venues for future exhibitions.

- It was suggested that the British Council exhibition was too close to the exhibition organised by a private local agent.

COMMENT: Traditionally, exhibitions in Bulgaria take place in October and November as this is the best time from the perspective of potential undergraduate applicants.

- It was felt by an exhibitor that in the networking meetings with Bulgarian universities, that their representatives had very little information about what they were looking for.

ACTION: If networking meetings are held, Bulgarian representatives will be asked to send their questions in advance, to allow UK universities to prepare accordingly.

4.2.2. Feedback from visitor questionnaires

- Some visitors complained that they had to queue for a long time at some of the exhibitor stands.

COMMENT: The exhibition was very well attended and it was impossible to prevent queues from forming.

- Some visitors have suggested that more assistants at the entrance would prevent queuing.

ACTION: British Council team to reconsider staffing at the entrance, but hope with the introduction of a registration system, this may have a positive impact of the number of staff required at the entrance.



Appendix 1: List of participating institutions

	INSTITUTION
1	Cardiff University
2	London Metropolitan University
3	London School of Business & Finance
4	Northumbria University
5	Sheffield Hallam University
6	The University of Reading
7	The University of Sheffield (International Faculty), CITY College
8	University of Bedfordshire
9	University of Bradford
10	University of Derby
11	University of East Anglia
12	University of Essex
13	University of Hull
14	University of Kent
15	University of the West of England
16	WMG, University of Warwick

Appendix 2: Visitors' survey results

Statistics extracted from 240 visitor questionnaires filled at the exhibition venue.

Are you a		
school	52%	130
Undergraduate student	19%	48
Postgraduate student	16%	41
Parent of	0%	
Primary	5%	12
School	4%	11
Other	3%	7
Employee	12%	30
Employer		
Total responses:		279

How old are you?		
12-19	53%	133
20-23	19%	48
24-35	18%	44
over 35	10%	26
Total responses:		251

Are you male or female?		
Male	34%	85
Female	64%	161
Total responses:		246

If you are student or a parent of a school student, what type of school does your child attend now?		
Local public	57%	143
Local private	17%	43
Total responses:		186

What programme of study are you interested in?		
A level	2%	6
Diploma	9%	22
Foundation programme	2%	5
University Foundation	11%	28
Undergraduate	45%	113
Postgraduate	37%	92
Distance Learning	6%	15
English language course	4%	10
Short English courses	2%	5
Others	1%	2
Total responses:		298

What subject are you interested in studying?

Business & administrative studies	32%	79
Social studies	1%	3
Computer science	9%	22
Engineering & technology	1%	3
Biological sciences	4%	11
Law	4%	10
Creative arts & design	16%	40
Mass communications and documentation	7%	18
Physical sciences	1%	2
Languages	5%	13
Historical and philosophical studies	4%	10
Architecture, building & planning	2%	4
Medicine & dentistry	5%	13
Subjects allied to medicine	2%	6
Education	1%	3
Mathematical sciences	2%	4
International relations	4%	11
Tourism	3%	8
Journalism	6%	15
Humanities	5%	12
Geography	0%	1
Total responses:		288

Did you find out what you wanted?

yes	84%	210
no	15%	37

Will you be making an application to the UK now?

yes	48%	119
no	43%	108

How did you find out about this exhibition?

British Council website	16%	40
British Council email newsletter	12%	29
Facebook	33%	83
Billboard	5%	13
Poster/Flyer	5%	13
Radio/TV	4%	9
Newspaper	1%	2
Online adv	13%	32
Recommendation / friend / family	17%	43
Other	4%	9
Total responses:		273

Have you ever taken part in any of the following activities organised by the British Council in the last 12 months? (You can choose more than one)

English language course	7%	18
Event organised by British Council	10%	25
IELTS	5%	13
Other exam	9%	22
Others	3%	7
No	61%	152
Total number of responses:		237

How would you rate the quality of the service/s you have received?

Excellent	45%	113
Good	46%	114
Average	2%	5
Bad	0%	1
Very bad	0%	1
Total number of responses:		234

Appendix 3: Exhibitors' survey results

Statistics extracted from 12 exhibitor questionnaires that were filled out.

Has your institution attended before?	
Yes	58%
No	42%

What were your objectives for coming	
Recruitment	8%
Profile raising	0%
Both	92%

What is your primary market interest in this event?	
Undergraduate	92%
Postgraduate taught	92%
Postgraduate research	33%
Higher national diploma and equivalent	0%
Pre-university foundation courses	8%
Foundation	8%
post-16 a-level	0%
Pre-sessional English	8%

What is your assessment of the visitors	
Good numbers and good quality	92%
Good quality only	8%
Good numbers only	0%
Disappointing	0%

How do you rate the exhibition venue	
Unsatisfactory	0%
Satisfactory	8%
Good	42%
Very good	50%



What market developments have you noticed

- “Very good level of English of students. Very happy with enquiries received.”
- “As it was my first attendance, I have not noted much change. However, the increase in enquiries is good.”
- “My first visit, so can't really comment but most students are focused on availability of scholarships and bursaries”
- “The time of year of the exhibition this time is better for UG rather than PG recruitment”
- “Undergraduate/Postgraduate mix still and many enquiries from 10th, 11th grade students. Plan early. Interests: computer science, business, politics, psychology, etc”
- “Students asking more about ranking tables”
- “Lots of interest in Journalism which was unexpected”
- “All are interested in funding/scholarship opportunities”
- “No new trends”
- “Increasing interest in Postgraduate”

Have you developed new links or built upon existing feeder or agent relationships by coming

yes	67%
no	17%

How do you rate the support to your business needs from British Council Bulgaria before and during the event

Unsatisfactory	0%
Satisfactory	8%
Good	25%
Very good	58%



“Great help!”

“Diana via email very quick to reply & helpful”

“The event is always well organised & marketed with good communication from Diana”

Please give your assessment of the exhibition in terms of innovation, promotion of Education UK brand, presentation and overall impact.

“Superb! Felt like a little British party!”

“I think the brand is quickly developing a presence in Bulgaria. I was pleased with the volume of enquiries.”

“Better event this time, more students etc.”

“Seems very good by the number of attendees.”

“Very good - I really like the branding for 'Great' Britain promoting studying in the UK, etc.”

“Great graphics advertising the UK as a destination.”

“Generally good numbers and quality of students”

“The British Council has a reputable name in the market. Branding is very important.”

Overall assessment compared to previous year

Good exhibition consistent with previous year's event	58%
Not as good as last year's event	8%
Better event than last year	25%
Worse event than last year	0%

Finally, will you be attending this event this time next year?

Yes	58%
No	0%
Undecided	33%

Additional comments and suggestions

“Lots of media”

“The event was very good. Not so good in November for postgraduate recruitment but was still relatively successful. Individual packed lunches was a very good idea. University and agent meetings on Saturday was a good initiative.”



"Too close to Integral fair at the same city and same hotel. Pre-registering visitor details would help us save time on the stand. Better lunch as no choice if didn't like meats, etc. Those who requested meetings needed to be better prepared as came with minimal info on what they were seeking. We had to ask all the questions - could they email us prior to the meeting with some info so that we could research and be better prepared?"

"Finish at 5 as last hour very quiet and students more informed about bursaries and scholarships offered."

"One minor point - I was unaware that the majority of my meetings would be with agents and they all seemed to think that I wanted to meet agents when our policy is not to use agents in Europe. I would be more interested in discussing potential Erasmus exchanges with universities. Thank you :-)! Really great event."

"A short break where the exhibition is closed would be welcome, especially for exhibitors on their own"

"Thanks for all your help!"

"1100-1700 would be ok"

"I would like to see similar exhibitions in other university centres in Bulgaria"

"Provide hot water for tea throughout the day"


Appendix 4: Data from online registrations

Statistics extracted from the online 728 registrations done via the exhibition website prior to the exhibition.

Are you a		
Secondary school student	30%	219
University student	26%	190
Employee	37%	271
Unemployed	5%	34
Total responses:		714

How old are you?		
12-19	33%	243
20-23	21%	154
24-35	31%	227
over 35	14%	104
Total responses:		728

What subject are you interested in studying?		
Business & administrative studies	38%	277
Agriculture	2%	14
Computer science	16%	120
Engineering & technology	11%	77
Biological sciences	24%	175
Law	14%	104
Creative arts & design	25%	185
Mass communications and documentation	16%	119
Physical sciences	5%	38
Languages	7%	53
Historical and philosophical studies	8%	58
Architecture, building & planning	9%	64
Medicine & dentistry and subjects allied to medicine	22%	158
Education	12%	84
Mathematical sciences	6%	45
Humanities	22%	158
Science	19%	139
Combined	10%	71
Social science	20%	149
Total responses:		2088


What programme of study are you interested in?

Undergraduate	41%	296
Postgraduate	52%	377
Distance Learning	25%	180
English language course	18%	130
Professional qualification	29%	214
Others		
Total responses:		1197

How did you find out about this exhibition?

British Council website	13%	98
British Embassy website	3%	25
Facebook	52%	378
Billboard	4%	27
Poster/Flyer	4%	29
Media	7%	52
Email	11%	77
Online adv	5%	36
Recommendation / friend / family	22%	161
Education&Specialisation magazine	2%	13
Total responses:		896

Appendix 5: Advertising and promotion plan (media plan)

Education UK exhibition in Sofia 11 November 2012						
Marketing Plan						
	Activity		Media/ Marketing Channel/ Company	Timing		
	Type	Details		week commencing 22 October	week commencing 29 October	week commencing 5 November
1	ONLINE	event registration website live and accepting registrations	Website	x	x	x
2	OUTDOOR	Tube station billboards	Metroreklama		x	x
3	OUTDOOR	Posters (500 copies) - focused distribution - at and around 120 schools and 40 universities and faculties	BG Plakat / British Council		x	
4	OUTDOOR	Posters (500 copies) - mass distribution - student campuses	BG Plakat		x	x
6	ONLINE	web banner at abv.bg - Bulgaria's most popular free web-based email service	NET INFO Company	x	x	x
7	PRINT	Exhibition catalogue/leaflet	British Council			x
8	ONLINE	Facebook ad	Facebook	x	x	x
9	ONLINE	Google ads	Google	x	x	x
10	DIRECT MAILING	Special newsletter (BC mailing list - 10,000+ contacts)	Newsletter		x	
11	DIRECT MAILING	REMINDER: Special newsletter (BC mailing list - 10,000+ contacts)	Newsletter			x
12	DIRECT MAILING	BC teacher contacts	Email		x	
13	PRESS	Press release sent to the media	Press			x
14	PRINT	Study Abroad Magazine ad (media partnership)	Study Abroad Magazine	x	x	x
15	ONLINE	Study Abroad Magazine web banner and news item (media partnership)	Study Abroad Magazine		x	x
16	ONLINE	Series of Education UK stories on the British Council Bulgaria blog	British Council	x	x	x