

Post-event report for Study UK: IECA London Tour

2 – 8 March 2019

INTRODUCTION

In March 2019, the British Council exclusively designed and offered a London Tour for members of the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA). Within a 7-day tour, the British Council arranged visits to showcase 11 UK Higher Education institutions in London, and hosted a networking event with 19 additional opportunities for IECA members to learn more about undergraduate programmes for international students. It also offered them the chance to experience London's surrounding and lifestyle.

Participants received a brief introduction to the tour, its schedule and trip details on a webinar session recorded live on Thursday, 21 February, and a copy of our pre-departure handbook with further details was also distributed to participants before arriving in the UK. Participants also took part in a pre-departure webinar hosted by UCAS so that they were familiar with the basics of the application process. The tour included half-day visits to the universities' campuses, meals hosted by different universities, time to explore the most iconic sites in London, such as a cruise on the River Thames, and walking tours in a couple of different neighbourhoods.

Based on the feedback provided by participants, we confirmed that they would be more likely to recommend universities in the UK to students as a result of the tour.

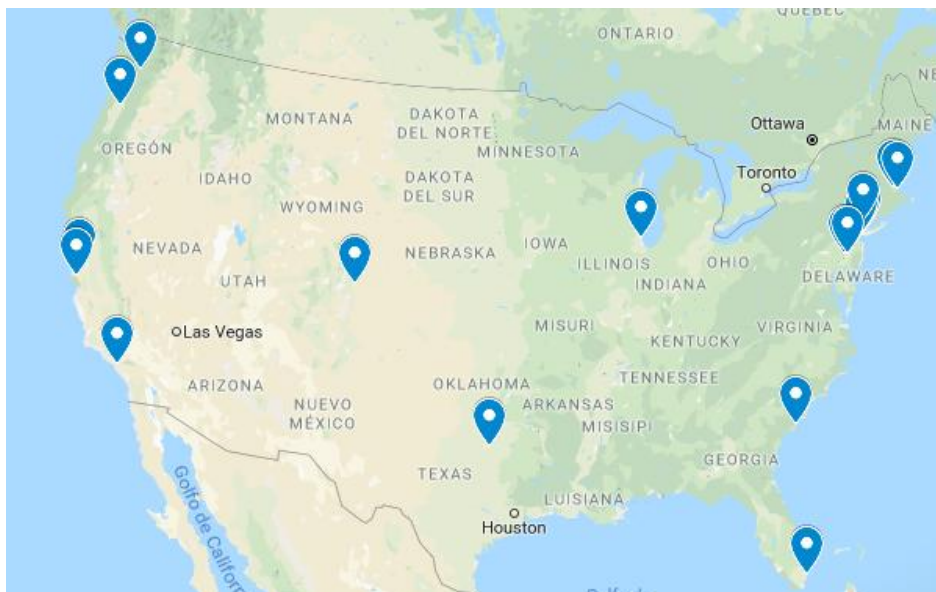
The British Council greatly appreciates your support, whether partnering on tours which showcase the diversity of the UK HE offer or other targeted activities during the year. We look forward to more opportunities to partner on our international education services in the near future!

Jenna Hartsell | Education Manager, USA

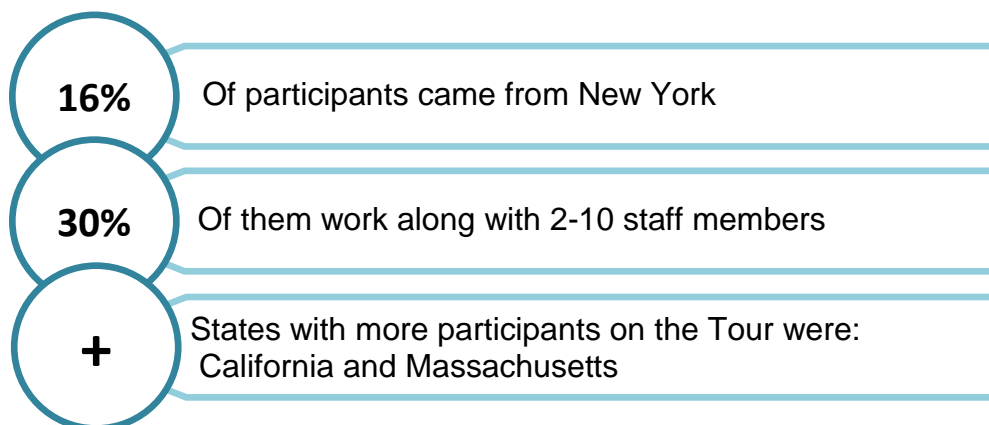
PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE

The tour was promoted to counsellors and independent consultants through IECA, United State's largest and most recognized organization of IECs with over 1,900 members found in 30 countries and nearly every state. This year's tour had 20 participants representing twelve states and four participants from countries outside of the US (from China, Dubai and India). Four participants on the tour were returning IECA members from last in the South West, that see themselves as champions for the UK.

On average, the independent consultants who participated work with between 30 to 60+ students each year. Some of them, spread among high school students, university applications and graduate school applicants.



Geographical spread of participants in the US



PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Participating institutions on this tour were:

- University of West London
- University of Roehampton
- King's College London
- Regent's University London
- University of Westminster
- University of the Arts London
- University of Greenwich, London
- St. Mary's University, Twickenham London
- Richmond the American International University in London
- City, University of London
- New College of the Humanities

MARKETING

The tour was promoted through the British Council's counsellor e-mail list in three e-shots, from November 2018 to January 2019, and promoted within IECA. As a suggestion for future tours, the British Council could specifically target regions where there is a strong interest from students and consultants to learn more and experience the UK.

We sent a feedback survey to capture quantitative and qualitative data to the participants two weeks after the tour. We received 20 responses to the survey.

The feedback provided confirms that 85% of participants strongly agree they have increased knowledge of higher education options and boosted their confidence to advise students on applying to universities in the UK, as a result of this tour.

PARTICIPANT'S FEEDBACK

What did you gain from your participation on this tour?

"I learnt about different types of universities in the UK, so I am better informed as a consultant who can guide students navigate the UK system..."

"I loved everything about it. I loved being in London, I loved taking public transportation (...) the universities we visited, and I loved learning about all that the UK has to offer..."

“I feel like I have a better feel for what student life will be like in the London area. I liked the range of different colleges and their individual uniqueness. I enjoyed learning about the UCAS system and all of the support the students receive from the professors.”

Participants also shared their suggestions for future tours. In their responses, they agreed this was a high quality tour based on the experiences and the knowledge obtained, and that they also felt well-prepared with the pre-departure communications provided by the British Council.

They also emphasised the value of networking events and having time to experience student's lifestyle and their surrounding area in the programme. The participants also responded that they would have liked to be provided with coach services during the tour and to include an afternoon off within the programme.

Strengths

- Networking events
- Variety
- Well-organized

Opportunities

- Less time on public transportation.
- More free time.

Regarding the event held on Saturday, March 2nd participants consider that it was indeed useful, especially the UCAS presentation, and recommend to re-evaluate its placement in the schedule and venue. Finally, 93% of participants responded that is very likely that they would recommend a British Council tour to a friend or colleague.

OUTCOMES

100% agreed or strongly agreed: “As a result of this tour, I have increased knowledge of Higher Education options in the UK.”

**100% agreed or strongly agreed:
“As a result of this tour, I have increased confidence in advising students on applying to universities in the UK.”**

100% agreed or strongly agreed: “As a result of this tour, I am more likely to recommend universities in the UK to my students.”

FUTURE STEPS

There are several areas that both the British Council and the UK institutions can work on to improve the overall arrangement and outcomes of a future tour. Our main findings and recommended next steps are outlined below:

→ **British Council**

- Aim to announce the dates and open the tour for recruitment six months before the tour.
- Provide participants and visit details in advance of the tour.
- Build in more rest time for participants.
- Provide coach service for more of the tour.

→ **UK Institutions**

- Build in more time for counsellors to meet with students so that they can share stories of their life in the UK and answer questions.
- Share more admissions data with participants such as the number of current US students on UGT and PGT programmes, number of applications and acceptances from US students and “acceptance rates” for popular courses.

We will share individual feedback with each institution on the tour.

Overall, participants rated our tour as successful and enjoyable which has raised the profile, and increased understanding of UK higher education in London.

Strengths

- Campus Tours
- Interactive Sessions
- Admissions Information
- Friendly Staff

Opportunities

- More rest time.
- Earlier announcement of the tour details.
- More activities to hear from US student’s experiences.
- Make more admissions data available.

PHOTOS



King's College London visit, walking between the Strand and Waterloo campuses.



Dinner at University of Westminster



City, University of London visit

<https://education-services.britishcouncil.org>



Regent's University London visit



University of West London visit



Central St. Martin's visit



St. Mary's University, Twickenham visit