

Post-event report for Study UK: Northern England Counselor Tour

24 February – 2 March 2019

INTRODUCTION

In February 2019, the British Council, and nine UK Universities offered a seven-day tour to showcase Northern England's higher education opportunities for 26 counsellors and independent education consultants with a focus on full-degree undergraduate programmes.

Participants received a thorough introduction to academic programmes and student life during half-day visits to the universities' campuses. The tour included presentations from faculty and staff, workshops, meetings with students, sample lectures, networking opportunities, welcome drinks in Newcastle, meals hosted by universities, a visit to the Whitworth Art Gallery, a drive through the Peak District, a stay at the Hard Day's Night Hotel and finished with a weekend in London.

Counsellors were invited to participate in a series of webinars, prior to the tour, which introduced them to UK higher education, the UCAS and admission processes and provided useful pre-departure information.

Based on the feedback survey, participants confirmed that they have increased their confidence in advising students on applying to universities in the UK 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

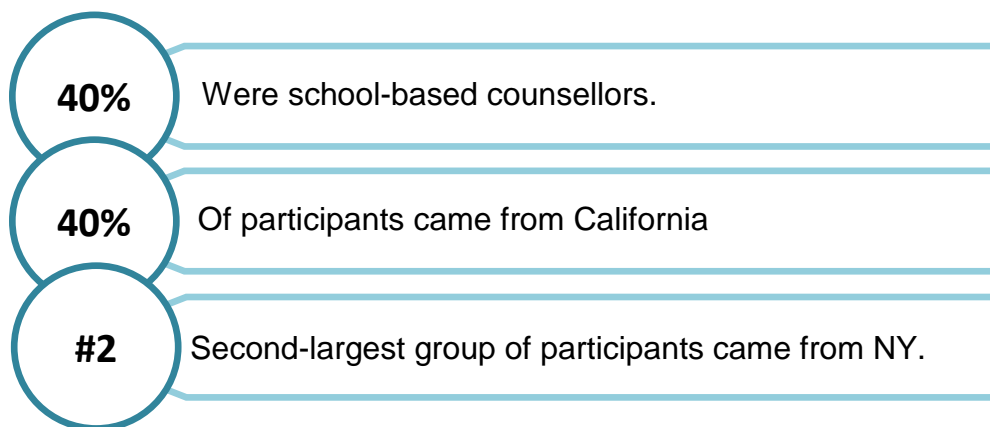
PARTICIPANT'S PROFILE

This tour was promoted to counsellors and independent consultants in the United States. This year 60 per cent of participants were independent education consultants, while the other 40 per cent were school-based counsellors from different states across the US, and five additional participants from Canada, Qatar, Greece and China.

On average, the participants work with 30-50+ college bound students per year, from middle to upper class families in a range of academic interests and qualifications. Some of the independents consultants advise students on both undergraduate and graduate applications.



Google maps of participants' locations.



MARKETING

This opportunity was advertised through the British Council's counsellor e-mail list in three e-shots, from November 2018 to January 2019, and promoted through professionals associations such as the NACAC Exchange list-serv.

Looking ahead to future tours, we will explore how we can make the participant fee more accessible for school based counsellors. For example, we may consider to budget in scholarships to the tour cost and to ensure that tours are promoted as early as possible to give participants time to find more economical flights.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Participating institutions included:

- Newcastle University
- Northumbria University, Newcastle
- Durham University
- University of Leeds
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of Sheffield
- The University of Manchester
- University of Chester
- Liverpool John Moores University

PARTICIPANT'S FEEDBACK

"I learned lots of studying in the UK and I really feel empowered now to discuss these options with my US-based students (...) The various planned events at each campus, including lovely meals, were another highlight of the trip."

"I had no clue how to help my students interested in studying in UK. I didn't even know where to begin. I feel much better prepared."

“I gained a much better understanding of universities and their offerings as well as a sense of the geography and character of Northern England (...) It was very helpful and gave me more confidence in helping guide my students in their applications. Thank you again!”

More than 90 per cent of participants strongly agreed that they felt well-prepared by the British Council’s team pre-trip communications, “far better than most I have attended” according to one participant. Moreover, feedback from 90 per cent of participants confirms that they consider that this was a high quality tour and 95 per cent would recommend a British Council tour to a friend or colleague.

According to feedback provided by 23 participants through a post-trip survey, 98 per cent of them strongly agree that, as a result of this tour, they increased their knowledge of Higher Education options in the UK and 91 per cent suggested that they’re more likely to recommend UK universities to their students. Some of their positive outcomes noted in the feedback survey included:

- Gaining a better understanding of how the UK education system works,
- To be better informed about UK schools in general,
- To have a better sense of university life in the UK,
- To get a clear understanding of the variety of programmes, and
- Feeling empowered to discuss wider options of studying in the UK with students.

Participants also shared their suggestions for improvements of future tours.

Strengths

- Campus tours
- Experienced students tour guides
- Informative sessions
- Well-organized

Opportunities

- Include more meetings with students
- Include an afternoon or day off
- Showcase student’s accommodation
- Explore universities’ surroundings

On the last day of the tour, the British Council hosted a networking event in London with 19 additional institutions for participants to learn more about the variety of undergraduate programmes available for international students. Participants considered this event useful, especially the UCAS presentation, but recommended that the British Council re-evaluate the venue and its placement in the schedule.

FUTURE STEPS

Outlined below are some areas that both the British Council and the UK institutions can work on to improve participants' experience and the outcomes of future tours:

→ **British Council**

- Consider ways of lowering the participant fee to make the tour more accessible.
- Announce the dates for recruitment, at least, six months before the tour.
- Gather more information from the universities to share with participants ahead of time.
- Circulate the tour schedule, expectations from participants and planned activities earlier.
- Build in more free time and more time to explore surrounding area.

→ **UK Institutions**

- Include more activities with students and more interactive sessions with faculty and staff
- 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 course.
- Ensure that any student tour guides are experienced.

Overall, participants commended the tour as a valuable opportunity to learn more about UK education and they appreciated a wide variety of institutions and exploring Northern England

APPENDIX

Photos



Visit to University of Newcastle



Visit to University of Durham



Visit to Northumbria University



Visit to Sheffield Hallam University



Visit to The University of Manchester



Visit to University of Chester

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