

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Below are some frequently asked questions which would help eliminate whatever confusions you might have?

### 1. Why should I hire an education Consultant?

Different people may seek us out for different reasons. But a good college consultant can do the following.

- Pay attention to each student's needs
- Alleviate stress for both student and parent
- Give the student a competitive edge
- Eliminate the confusion
- Save money

College selection and application is a very time-consuming process. Counseling—of all types—requires time and energy from a professional. But school guidance counselors are overworked and have less time than perhaps they once did to give personalized college counseling hence the need for an external consultant.

Good guidance in selecting the right schools and in completing the application can make the difference between acceptance and rejection. An education consultant/counselor can help your son or daughter develop an appropriate college selection and admissions strategy to give them the best possible chance of reaching their educational goals.

While we can never guarantee a particular outcome, we have a strong record of helping families reduce the overall cost of a college education by carefully selecting the right colleges to which to apply. Even families that do not expect any financial aid often find that working with us can save them tens of thousands of pounds in tuition bills.

So while hiring an educational consultant may seem like a hefty cost, many families are surprised at how much money and time they can *save* by hiring an experienced educational consultant.

### 2. Why should I study in the UK/Abroad?

Each year, more and more international students from over 180 different countries are choosing to pursue their higher education in a UK university or college or abroad. Some of the reasons are;

**Excellent international reputation:** The quality of UK education is internationally recognized by employers, universities and governments, making it a popular choice for many international students. The UK is also renowned for the excellence of its research and teaching.

**Good quality of education:** The quality of a university's or college's teaching and its general facilities are assessed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Research

standards are examined by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which publishes its findings every five years.

The results of all these assessments are freely available on the internet. Information on quality assurance and assessments is also available from the Higher Education Funding Councils.

**International tradition:** The UK has always welcomed students from all over the world. In 2006/2007, there were 239,210 international students in the UK at undergraduate and postgraduate level. UK universities are used to looking after the welfare of non-UK students and have well-developed support services and social networks on campus.

**Choice of courses:** Higher education institutions in the UK offer a broad range of courses. Therefore, you are sure to find one that caters for your interests and career goals. You can search over 50,000 courses on the UCAS website to find the right one for you.

**Business language:** Studying in the UK offers a great opportunity to improve your knowledge of the English language – speaking English fluently is a vital skill to have if you are considering entering the international business world. As the UK is a member of the EU, studying here can give you a valuable insight to how the European market operates.

**Culture and people:** The UK is full of many different cultures and people, another reason why international students are interested in coming to study here. With big cities, rural towns and villages, modern and historical architecture, the UK is a diverse and exciting place to explore.

**Value for money:** Undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the UK are generally much shorter than those abroad, which helps to reduce the amount of money you will end up paying in tuition fees and living costs. Most undergraduate courses take three years to complete, although in Scotland it would be typically four years. A postgraduate Masters course will normally only take 1 year, whereas PhD will take 3 or 4 years.

### **3. What are the benefits of a boarding school?**

Making the decision to go to boarding school is a huge choice for both parents and children to make. Boarding schools may not suit all children, and you have to ensure that your kids are behind the decision and not push them into it.

Another key thing for parents to consider is that education at a private boarding school is a lot more expensive than education at a day school, and there are very few state maintained boarding schools in the UK. But academic and extracurricular offerings at boarding schools can often outstrip their day-school options and provide a very fulfilling education. Here's a look at the key benefits.

**Personal Attention:** Boarding schools often have smaller class numbers than day schools, and this, together with the fact that boarding school staff will spend much more time with their students, can help teachers to engage and encourage each individual in the classroom.

**Staff:** Since boarding schools charge more for fees, they can often afford to pay staff higher salaries and therefore employ more qualified teachers and other members of staff faculty. These teachers may have advanced degrees in their subject or extra teaching qualifications that can help them to help student development.

**Better Resources:** Just as staff investment may be higher; this is true too of facilities and resources. Boarding schools are often set in the countryside amidst expansive grounds, with top class facilities such as the well-stocked libraries, sports fields and equipment and science laboratories. These may be available to students outside of the school day too, so they can enjoy personal hobbies in their own time.

**Encouraging Personal Responsibility:** Boarding schools often claim that their schooling methods help pupils to become independent and mature individuals. Students are away from the shelter of home life, and have to make their own choices about day to day decisions but also bigger choices such as organizing one's time. At the same time, boarding schools offer supportive pastoral staff, which will usually include medical doctors and nurses, counseling services and advice.

**Making Strong Friendships:** Boarding school students often say they have been able to make very intense friendships with fellow boarders as they gain the closeness of living together from a young age. The fellow boarders may become a support network for each student, and may also come from a wide range of backgrounds, including students from abroad, and from different racial and social backgrounds. Friends made at boarding schools will often become friends for life, with whom boarders share childhood memories.

**On Hand Advice:** The boarding school setting means that expert members of the faculty are available for much longer than they would be for day school students. Pupils will be exposed to staff and teachers in settings outside of the classroom, such as on the playing field, in extracurricular group activities, in pastoral situations as advisors and as academic help providers. If a child has a problem with homework, for example, a subject expert will normally be on hand to answer them - which may not be the case at home.

#### 4. What is the difference between a full boarding school and an independent sixth form college?

<b>Boarding</b>	<b>Sixth form (Non-residential)</b>
Students may be required to wear school uniform	Student don't wear school uniform
Focus not solely on academics but on: sports, music etc	Focus usually very strong academically

Sometimes called public schools	Called sixth form colleges or independent sixth form colleges
Offer mostly: A'levels and IB	Offer mostly A'levels and foundation
Because it is boarding- students reside within the college without the need to leave school.	Even where they have boarding facilities- it is rarely in the same compound- so students would be required to walk or take a bus to school or stay with host families
The very top boarding schools are very selective- will only take top students	Some top sixth form colleges can be selective. But the others tend to be quite flexible
Focus on activities like school excursions and field trips	Limited
Results tend to vary from average to excellent	In many cases very strong results because of the strong academic focus
Usually required to take some kind of entrance test (some schools may pass on this)	No entrance test is often required
Application fee to every boarding school a must pay before they consider application	No application fee required
Do not call teachers by first names...it's – Mrs. Jane monk	Teachers are called by first name E.g: Jane
Recommended for students of 16 or under	Recommended for students 16 and above

### 5. Can I get into a UK University directly without A' levels, IB, or foundation?

The answer is NO you cannot. Once you have completed your GCSE/ IGCSE/WAEC/NECO programmes, you will be ideally placed to progress to A-level or its equivalent. After which you would start your first year in the University which would last for 3 years depending on the course of study

### 6. What are A' Levels?

A' levels are studied typically between the ages of 16 -18 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, although mature students are also encouraged. They remain the most popular route into UK higher education institutions.

### 7. How many subjects do I take?

To gain entry to a top UK university you'll need 3 or 4 good A Level grades, although if you are exceptionally talented you can take 5 Subjects.

## 8. What should influence my choice of A'level subjects?

**Careers advice** - speak to your head of sixth form or college tutors, especially if you already have an idea of what career you'd like to pursue.

This is very important, as some students reach the end of their A levels only to discover they haven't done the correct subjects for what they want to study at university.

Sort this out and make sure you're doing the right subjects from the start so it doesn't become a major problem later on. If you don't have a career in mind, do some research at your local library to give yourself some ideas of what you might want to do.

**Enjoyment** - it's important to choose subjects you enjoy doing. Even if you are good at a certain subject, you might not actually enjoy it all that much.

There's no point going through sixth form or college and never looking forward to lessons because you don't like them. This in turn may make you feel you can't cope with the work and make you feel stressed in the long-term.

If you look forward to lessons, chances are you will approach them confidently and do well in them.

**Research** - look carefully at the syllabuses for new subjects your sixth form or college are offering that were not available at GCSE, e.g. sociology, media studies.

Some students find that they take these courses without looking into them properly first, and are then disappointed when it's not what they were expecting.

Find out what exam board your school/college does for these subjects, and download the syllabus from their website to read more about what it involves. Try to talk to students who are already on the course, and the teacher(s) that runs it.

**Strengths** - read through the syllabuses for subjects you are considering doing to see whether they play to your strengths. For example, if you excel at creative writing, then an English Language A level would be a better option than English Literature.

Talk to your subject teachers about your strengths and weaknesses to assess your potential, allowing you to make more informed decisions about which A levels you choose.

## 9. What do A' levels consist of?

Each A' level consists of 6 units which are studied in two stages;

Stage 1 -Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level: You will study 3 modules and upon completion be awarded an AS Level.

Stage 2 -A2 level: You will study the second set of 3 units which will take your AS level to a full A'Level.

Please note: When you have completed the A2 Level, your AS Level grade is transferred to one A Level grade. If you decide not to continue to A2 Level, you can keep your AS Level grade. This can still be used as part of your application to university.

### 10. What is foundation?

Foundation programmes-Generally tailored to international students.

A student may or will usually have completed secondary education in their home country (e.g. Nigeria) and the qualifications obtained may not meet UK University or college entry requirements. The student will therefore need to bring his or her qualifications up to the standard required for degree-level courses.

Foundation courses serve as an alternative route into UK universities or colleges and as a bridge between previous qualification(s) and entry to a degree course.

### 11. What is the difference between A'levels and Foundation?

A'levels	Foundation
Normally a 2year Programme (also available for an 18months programme and one year)	9 months to 12 months programme
Required for competitive universities (Cambridge, Oxford, London School of Economics, Imperial etc-In short the top 10 UK universities	Most average/ low ranking universities will accept this
Required for Medical, Dentistry courses and Law at the top 10 universities in the UK.	You can't proceed unto a Medical, dentistry programmes and law at the top schools with foundation
Internationally recognized	Only accepted in a number of UK universities-not accepted outside the UK
External exam-examination is set and marked by examination boards like (Cambridge etc)	Internal exam-marked and certified by current school and teacher. Just like an end of term exam
Employers require A' levels to assess evidence of progress from secondary school to graduation at university	Foundation not recognized
More challenging	Not as challenging
For the hard working student and those committed to putting all their energies	Suitable for students' not strongly academically gifted

### 12. What are the required documents needed for an application to a UK school?

- Passport photo x 2

- Recent school transcript (SS2, SS3 School Report) or Mock Result (Please note that students who have already taken the IGCSE or Cambridge exams can use this for the purpose of applying to schools)
- Representative Completed Application Form(s)
- Personal statement: This should involve your values, interests, skills, past leadership positions (if any) and future ambition.
- Supporting letter from school (letter of recommendation from Principal or a Former Teacher is required by a number of schools but not ALL schools)- Optional
- Photocopy of International Passport – (Data page only).

### **13. When is the right time to start the application process for my Pre-University program?**

The right time to start is NOW!

Nigerian Students and Parents miss out on Scholarships, bursaries, top schools due to late application. A very few people are enlightened about the need to start early. Starting early puts you under NO pressure and makes the process seamless. The other benefits you stand to enjoy with an early application are; Writing personal statements at your convenience if you have to, adequate preparation for Skype interviews, preferred accommodation choice is gotten; preferred school choice is gotten (probably after applying to several schools); writing of English language tests (if required); adequate preparation for Visa (Canadian Visa takes 4-5months to process; US takes about 1-2months while the UK takes about 10- 15 working days and sometimes more etc)

### **14. Where is the best place to study my dream course e.g. Medicine, Engineering, law etc.?**

You need to research the best places to study your dream course before taking the leap. This can be done by using an education consultant/career planning expert or the internet.

Students thinking of studying Medicine for instance and who wouldn't want to stay so long in school would be better off in places like UK, Hungary or even Nigeria where you do not need a 1<sup>st</sup> degree before studying Medicine. In places like Canada and the US and even Ghana, you need a 1<sup>st</sup> degree in another course (probably related) before proceeding to study Medicine. Again you must understand that for certain places like the UK, the A'level pathway program is compulsory for Medical students and the grades must be A\* with additional personal qualities or experiences to stand you out.

For law, certain countries also require a 1<sup>st</sup> degree before the commencement of the Law program. For the UK, it is not so and this is probably a better place for Nigerians to study Law because the British Law is practiced in Nigeria for those who would love to come home to practice.

### **15. What should I take note of while planning for my student visa application?**

The list of required documents can be given on request. Please adhere strictly to them and supply all original copies.

Forms to be completed by the Child Student are:

- Child Student: Points Based System (Appendix 9)
- Personal details form (VAF9)

Forms to be completed by the General/Adult student are:

- General Student: Points based System (Appendix 8)
- Personal details form (VAF9)

For the Child Student, (the category of application would be stated on the CAS letter), Financial Bank statement of Parents can be used alongside the birth certificate of the child indicating both names of Parents. For those going into residential boarding houses, living expenses has been calculated with the boarding fees.

For the adult student, an account must be opened in the name of the student and the financial statement must be used for application.

For all students, the total money needed for one year must be put in the account. Please note the following;

- Money must be held in cash (Not bond, shares, pension funds etc.)
- Money must be held 28 days prior to date of application
- Money must cover course fee for the first year of study and living cost for maximum of 9 months.
- Living expenses for students studying within London - £9,000
- Living expenses for students studying without London - £7,200

**For further consultation and more information, contact us or visit the UKBA website.**

**NOTE: ALL INFORMATION WERE SOURCED FROM THE INTERNET AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME**