

Easy apply for UK unis

Applying to study at a university in the UK was made easier in June last year with the launch of a new web-based application system, known as "International Apply".

Students using "International Apply" can access applications to UK higher education from any Internet access point anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, and apply to up to six different courses in one application. While it is difficult to tell how popular the new service is, due to its implementation very late in the 2003 applications cycle, Lucy Baldwin from Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) believes it will be good for international students.

"The biggest advantage is the speed at which the form can be submitted to Ucas," she said. "The form is easy to complete with plenty of help screens available and when it is complete it can be submitted immediately to Ucas. Within two days, copy forms will be sent from Ucas to the universities/colleges."

Birute Svagzdiene from Kaunus Travel Agency in Lithuania said that their company is planning to use the web-based system for student applications to UK universities in the future. "It is an easy and very comfortable application system," she said.

For universities in the UK too, the "International Apply" system has benefits over other application methods. "The system is faster," said Nick Clark from the University of Brighton. "The information and data are more

verifiable. From a student perspective, it provides another option in the application process."

As well as "International Apply", international students can apply to universities in the UK by filling out a paper Ucas application form, visiting their local British Council or school – as long as it is registered with Ucas – to use an electronic Ucas application system, or, alternatively, apply directly to individual institutions.

Some universities, however, do not accept direct enrolments from undergraduate students and most agents advise their students to apply through Ucas. Situan Gao, from Helen & Stan Consulting in China, said that the central Ucas system makes applying for UK universities easier than applying to universities in other study destinations. "[For students applying to universities in the] USA or Australia, you must apply one by one," he explained. "For the UK you [can] apply [to many institutions just] once."

Students applying to study in the UK are advised to start their application process up to one year in advance. While they can apply any time between 1 September and 30 June, most students – including those from the UK – apply well before this and universities are not obliged to consider applications received after 15 January.

Tim Sellar from the International Liaison Office at Imperial College in London said, "We advise all students to apply by 15 January for entry in the following October."