

UK tertiary sector

English language learning in the UK's university sector attracts a slightly different range of student nationalities, compared with the private sector. And many of the students at these institutions choose their language school because a friend or relative has previously studied there.

UK feedback at a glance

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Total number of students: | female 96, male 52 (unknown 1) | 149 |
| Average age in years: | | 24.2 |
| Average length of programme in weeks: | | 17.3 |
| Average number of students per class: | | 5 |
| Average number of hours of language tuition per week: | | 16.7 |
| % of students who found their course through an agent: | | 22 |
| % of students who booked through an agent or adviser: | | 15 |
| % of students who had been on another language programme: | | 14 |
| % of students who would recommend their school: | | 86 |

Student nationality

The nationality mix of students studying English in the UK university sector is similar to the overall student nationality profile recorded in our UK Feedback survey last year, which covered both public and private language centres (see *Language Travel Magazine*, June 2003, pages 14-15). Chinese students were in number-one position, accounting for just over one-third of all students, followed by Japanese, Spanish and Korean students. However, Russian, Turkish and Saudi Arabian students were all represented this

year and these did not feature in last year's top nationalities, indicating that there may be some subtle differences between intake in the public and private sectors.

Student motivation

Understandably, further academic studies in the UK was one of the main motivating factors among students studying English, given that one-third of students intended to continue their studies in that country. However, this figure is no different from our survey last year, indicating that the choice of a study institution within a univer-

sity may not be purely because of the onward learning opportunities offered. Indeed, when asked if they would continue their studies at the same institution, only just over half of the students who responded said that this was the case.

Student enrolment

One factor that did change radically compared with our previous survey was the percentage of students using agencies. Only 22 per cent of students first found out about their school through an agency, and even fewer – 15 per cent – actually booked via

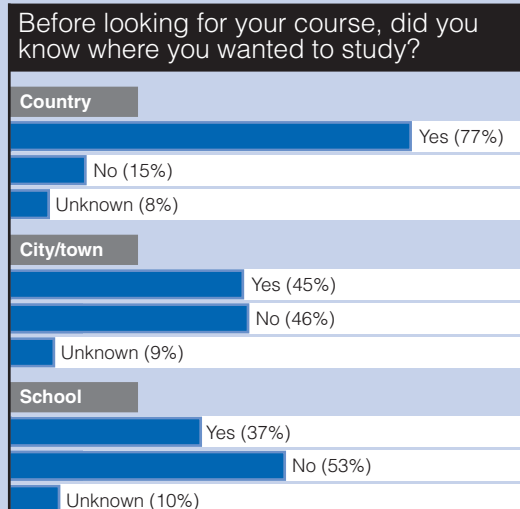
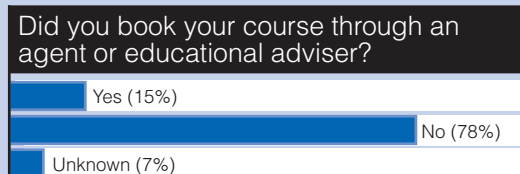
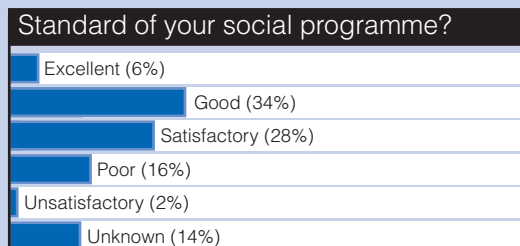
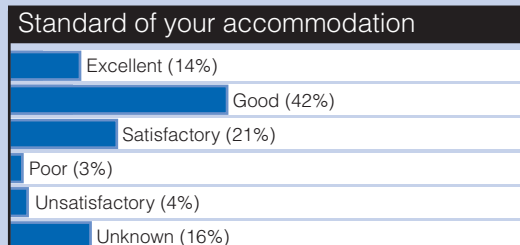
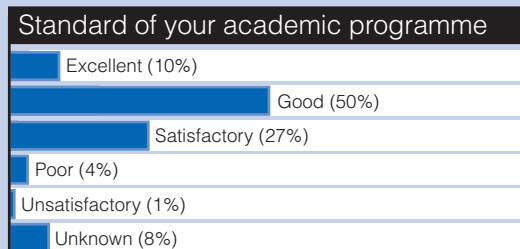
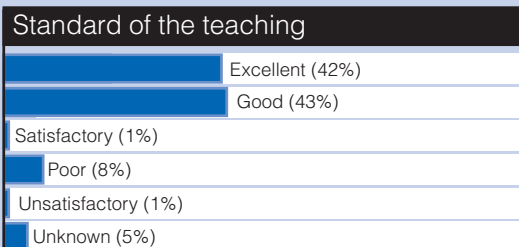
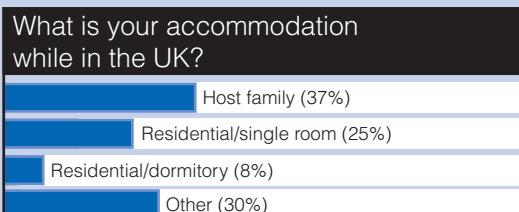
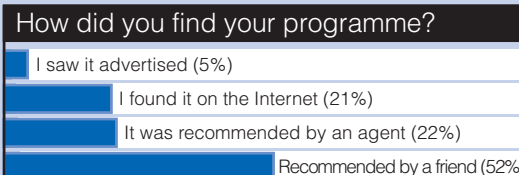
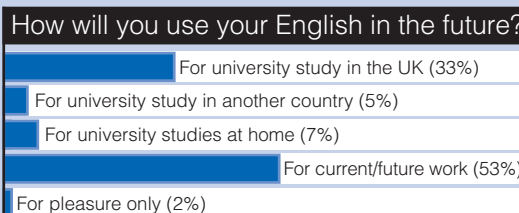
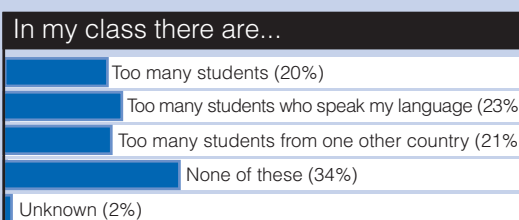
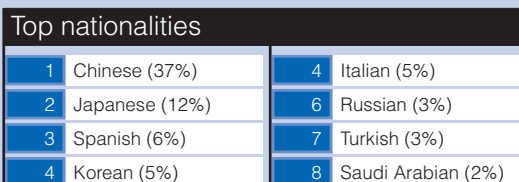
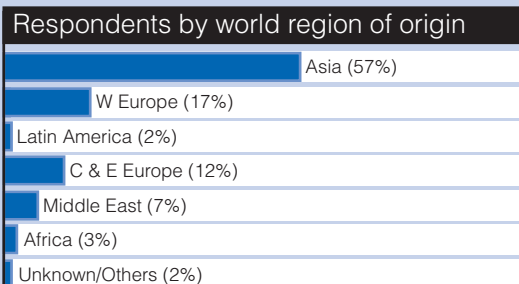
an agency (although seven per cent did not answer this question). When giving reasons about why they chose their schools, a number of students said their university at home organised the course, indicating that links between universities may be one source of bookings. Many others followed the recommendation of a friend or relative, so there is potential for university language centres to build more business with agents.

Standard of the schools

The majority of students felt there was a good mix of nationalities in their class and that class sizes were good – indeed, the average class size was just five students. In other areas, students' feelings were more mediocre. While teachers were rated as excellent or good by 85 per cent of students and the academic programme was similarly rated by 60 per cent of students, the social programme and accommodation achieved more muted success, with more students deeming these categories satisfactory, as opposed to good or excellent. However, a high number of students also declined to answer these last two questions.

Living in the UK

Most students were studying for between seven and 18 weeks and host family accommodation was a popular choice, as was rented accommodation. Only one-third of students canvassed were staying in university residences. For 81 per cent, it was their first study trip overseas. Overwhelmingly, the UK was found to be an expensive place to study, with 85 per cent of students voicing this opinion.



Thank you to the following schools for participating in our survey:

New College Nottingham, Nottingham; Norwich Institute for Language Education (NILE), Norwich; Oxford College of Further Education, Oxford; Peterborough Regional College, Peterborough; Stevenson College, Edinburgh; University of Exeter English Language Centre, Exeter; University of Sheffield English Language Teaching Centre, Sheffield; University of Wolverhampton International Office, Wolverhampton; Weymouth College, Weymouth.