

UK private sector

Our Feedback survey of students studying in the UK's private English language teaching sector reveals a higher overall agent usage among students compared with our survey of the UK's tertiary sector.

UK private sector feedback at a glance

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|---|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Total number of students: | female 100, male 73 (unknown 3) | 176 |
| Average age in years: | | 22.8 |
| Average length of programme in weeks: | | 18.4 |
| Average number of students per class: | | 8 |
| Average number of hours of language tuition per week: | | 21.5 |
| % of students who found their course through an agent: | | 51 |
| % of students who booked through an agent or adviser: | | 68 |
| % of students who had been on another language programme: | | 24 |
| % of students who would recommend their school: | | 86 |

Student nationality

The Asian bias across all student nationalities was less than that recorded in our previous Feedback survey of the UK university language teaching sector (see *Language Travel Magazine*, April 2004, page 15), with only 43 per cent of students coming from Asia, compared with 57 per cent in the previous survey. However, the top three nationalities in this survey were all Asian, comprising Korean, Chinese and Japanese students. Overall, 37 different student nationalities were represented in our survey.

Student motivation

Work and college study in the UK remained the top two reasons given for studying English, but both reasons were chosen by fewer students compared with our previous survey. College study in other countries or in the students' home countries were also popular motivations for learning English overseas. In terms of what motivated a student to choose a particular school, students gave a range of explanations. Aside from the recommendation from a friend or agent, which featured highly, other reasons in-

cluded the lack of fellow nationals at that school; the school's location – for example, in London, in the countryside or by the sea; internship opportunities available; a focus on speaking skills; price; and the school's size.

Student enrolment

A majority of students said that in their home countries, they were university or college students. Therefore it follows that most students – 40 per cent – were in the 20-to-25 year old age range. Twenty-eight per cent of students were aged from 16 to 19, while 16 per cent

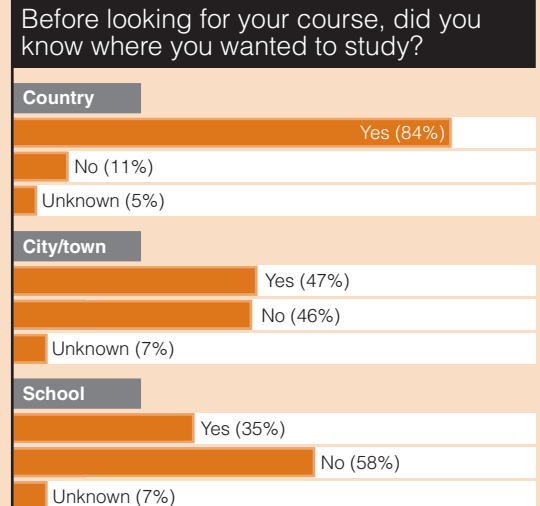
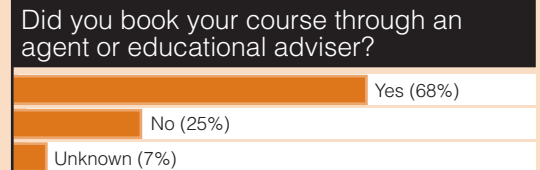
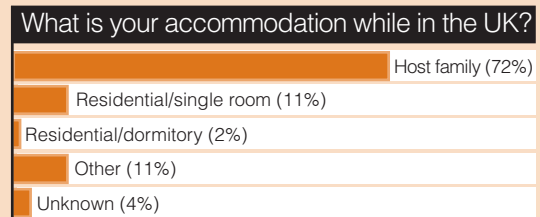
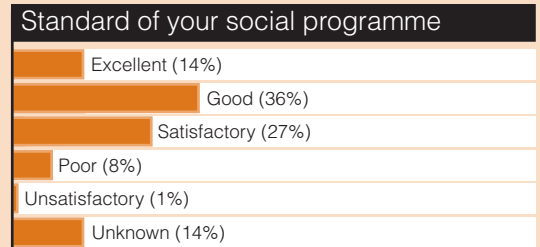
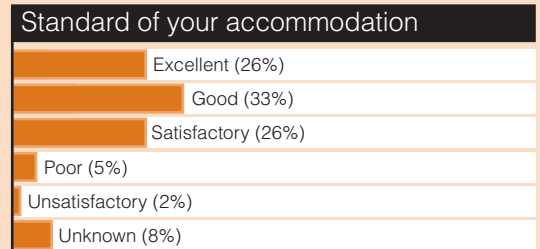
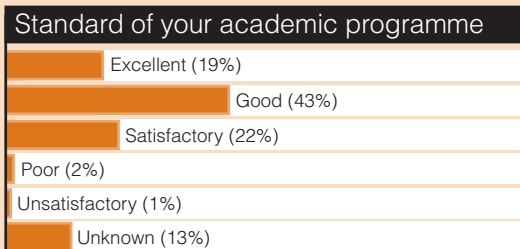
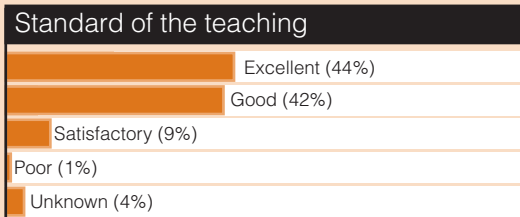
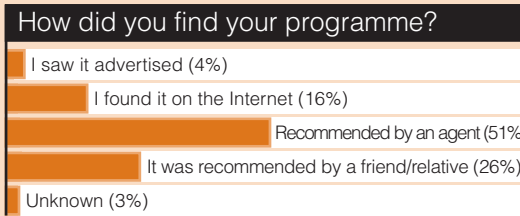
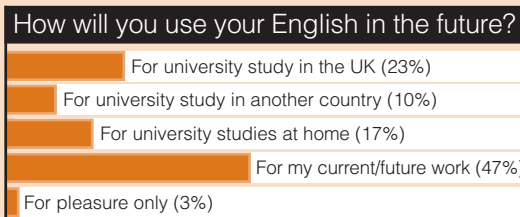
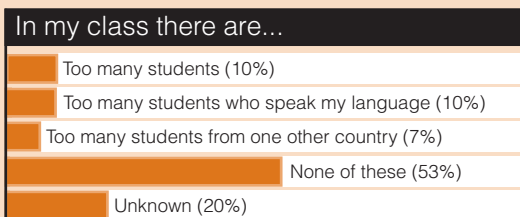
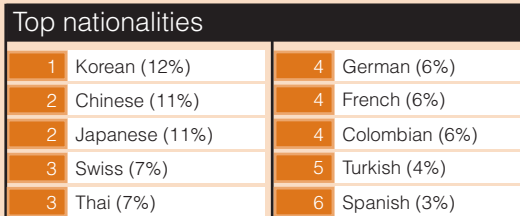
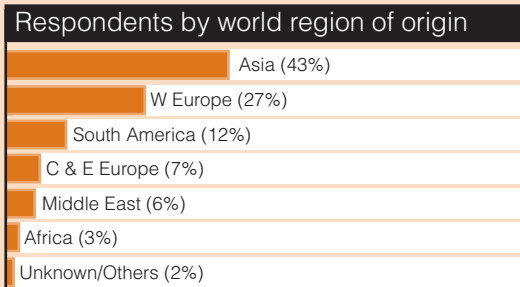
were aged between 26 and 30. One clear shift in booking trends is the use of agencies in this sector. Sixty-eight per cent of students said they booked through an agent, compared with 15 per cent of tertiary sector students.

Standard of the schools

Standards overall were very similar to our previous survey's trends and the satisfaction rates registered last year (see *Language Travel Magazine*, June 2003, pages 14-15). Teachers received the highest rating, with 86 per cent of students deeming them excellent or good. Eighty-six per cent of students – or 91 per cent of those who replied – said they would recommend their school to others. Accommodation choice differed across the two sectors. In our survey on university providers, residential accommodation was chosen by 33 per cent of students, compared with 13 per cent in this survey. In the private sector, host families were the preferred choice, as dictated by 72 per cent of respondents (four per cent did not specify).

Living in the UK

As usual, most students – 80 per cent – found the UK to be more expensive than at home. The average spend per week for tuition and accommodation was US\$451. Of the 13 per cent who found the cost of living comparable to their home countries, this included 50 per cent of Swiss and 58 per cent of Japanese students. Seven per cent found the cost of living to be lower than usual. Food was voted as the least appealing aspect of the UK for the second time running this year.



Thank you to the following schools for participating in our survey: Anglo Continental, Bournemouth; Anglophiles Academic, Peterborough; Aspect ILA, London; British Study Centres, Brighton; Churchill House School, Ramsgate; EF Language Schools, various; English in Chester, Chester; Frances King School of English, London; Geos English Academy, London; Harrogate Tutorial College, Harrogate; Hastings English Language Centre, Hastings; International House Torquay, Torquay; Intuition Languages, London; Living Learning English, Bristol; LSI, Cambridge; Manchester Language School, Manchester; OISE Intensive Language School, Bristol; Regent Language Centre, London; Scarborough International School of English, Scarborough; Torquay International School, Torquay.