

**Barbados National Council of Parent-Teacher Associations Inc
St Michael School 31 October 2013**

Thank you – to President Rhonda Blackman and Ren-a Headley for the opportunity to speak this evening and to your Council members.

Presentation

This presentation has been sourced from the UCAS website – www.ucas.com – which has much more useful information and should be the first port of call.

I would like to talk about the wide variety of educational establishments in the UK.

- UK universities and colleges are diverse, multicultural, creative and welcoming.
- Top quality teaching, improved English language skills and great career prospects.
- Over 430,000 international students study in the UK every year, from over 180 countries. Approx 300 Barbadians every year.

Whether you want to study at undergraduate or postgraduate level, UK courses can offer a fantastic range of benefits:

- valuable skills
- diverse culture
- innovative industries
- academic excellence

A great international reputation

1. The quality of UK education is recognised by employers, universities and governments worldwide.
2. The UK is a popular destination for international students, and well respected for world-class standards of teaching – four of the top six universities in the world are in the UK ([2012 QS World University Rankings](#)).
3. UK research is 'world leading' and 'internationally excellent' – according the most recent [Research Assessment Exercise in 2008](#), which produces quality profiles for course providers by assessing research activity against agreed quality standards.

An interesting place to live

1. The UK is really diverse and full of different cultures – for example schoolchildren in London speak over 300 languages between them.
2. A mix of cosmopolitan cities and rural villages, with strong transport links, exciting sporting events and both historical structures and modern architecture.

3. You can develop a range of skills needed in today's global workforce, meeting up with new friends and in lectures and seminars.

A range of useful benefits

1. Courses in the UK are generally shorter than many other countries, helping to reduce tuition fees and accommodation costs.
2. Students might be able to work while you study – find further information at the [UK Border Agency \(UKBA\)](#) and [The UK Council for International Student Affairs \(UKCISA\)](#) on working during and after studies.
3. There is a lot of support for international students in the UK. Many course providers have international offices and student societies, activities and academic guidance, plus counsellors and advisers to help students feel welcome and supported throughout their time in UK higher education.

Choosing a course

Students can study at undergraduate and postgraduate level – including academic courses, training programmes and performing arts.

How to choose a course

There is an enormous range of subjects and courses, so there will be something to suit each individual's career goals and interests.

1. Look around the UCAS site to see what courses are most suitable.
2. Check that employers or professional organisations in Barbados will accept the chosen qualification.
3. Make sure the course covers the subjects the student wants to study to help you in his or her chosen career.

How to choose a course provider

There are hundreds of universities and colleges around the UK – try to visit them on an [open day](#) or contact them to ask questions. Many course providers make open day podcasts you can listen to as well.

1. Ask as many questions as possible to decide which course provider is right for the individual.
2. Check how many other international students or students from Barbados or the Caribbean are studying there.

3. Find out if the course provider has cultural or social clubs you would like to join.
4. Ask what type of accommodation, transport, support and sports facilities are available.

You could also check reviews of different course providers and areas of expertise. Check rankings – there are no official government rankings, but there are a number of league tables like The Guardian, The Times or The Complete University Guide – just check the criteria they use to see if it suits your priorities.

Use the [Unistats](#) website to see student satisfaction ratings and compare subjects and course providers.

Read reports on the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#) website.

Entry requirements and application deadlines

1. Look at the course entry requirements to see what qualifications or tests are needed to get a place on the course.
2. Check the application deadlines. Many courses starting in September or October allow you to apply as late as 30 June, or later if you apply through [Clearing](#), but some courses have stricter deadlines up to a year in advance.
3. You can find entry requirements and application deadlines in the UCAS search tool as well as extra international details on each course provider's website.

How to get a place on a course

Getting a place on a course can involve a combination of meeting entry requirements and conditions, taking English Language tests and attending interviews.

Check entry requirements in the UCAS search tool, and discuss international applications with course providers you are interested in.

What you need to do

1. **Check the entry requirements** – usually previous qualifications (or international equivalents) you should have, as well as whether you are suitable for the course.
2. **Demonstrate your English language skills** – proof you will be able to study in the UK ([this is also required for some visa applications](#)).

3. **Possibly have an interview, audition or provide a portfolio** – some course providers like to speak to you in person before deciding whether to make you an offer.
4. **Meet any conditions of an offer** – if you are still studying for a qualification you need in order to get on a UK higher education course, the course provider might make you a conditional offer.
5. **Apply to a range of courses with different requirements** – this way if your results are better or worse than expected, you will have more than one choice.
[Remember you might need to arrange a student visa](#) too, as well as accommodation with the course provider.

Previous qualifications needed

Courses usually ask you to have gained particular qualifications or subjects earlier in your education already. For international students this can involve alternative, equivalent qualifications, as well as checking the different policies course providers have for which qualifications they accept.

It is advisable to look for courses in the UCAS search tool, then click through to the course provider's website to find their specific information for international students. If you are not sure whether they accept your qualifications or not, contact them to find out more.

You can get a statement about how your qualifications compare to UK equivalents from [UK NARIC](#) (the UK's National Recognition Information Centre) – this will be recognised by course providers and employers throughout the country.

Contact the UCAS Qualifications Hotline You will be able to can check details on offers, interviews and conditions within the different application areas – [undergraduate](#), [performing arts](#), [postgraduate](#), and [teacher training](#).

Scholarships

For details of scholarships in the UK go to

<http://www.educationuk.org/global/articles/scholarships-financial-support/>

Chevening Scholarship from the FCO

These are offered to the 'leaders of tomorrow' for those who aspire to positions of leadership in any sphere, for those who wish to work for the benefit of the region. They are post graduate scholarships at any UK university in any discipline, though

you will find more detail about preferred areas of study on the website www.chevening.org . Full support is provided for air fares, course fees, residential costs, dissertation costs and an arrival allowance. The current Chevening application period is open until 8 November 2013.

UK-funded Commonwealth Scholarships via the Ministry of Education

Commonwealth Scholarships are offered to Barbados on an annual basis by the United Kingdom and Canada between August and September, and by New Zealand between March and April each year.

Applicants need at least an upper second class honours degree to qualify for the United Kingdom and Canada awards and at least a Lower Second Class Hons. Degree to qualify for New Zealand.

The scholarships are fully funded by the awarding countries and include payment of tuition fees, living allowances, accommodation, books and airfare.

Candidates selected for nomination by the National Scholarship Committee are considered based on their academic achievements, relevance of area of study, and community involvement/awareness.

Individual universities

Some universities have scholarships for high calibre students. One or two offer up to 50% of tuition fees. The rules vary from university to university: some look at all their applicants and pick out the best for scholarships, others ask for formal applications, sometimes involving an essay, but usually the student has to make the university their first choice through the UCAS system and apply by a deadline from April onwards.

Applicants do need to make alternative provision about funding, especially as undergraduate scholarships, though they can be very valuable, are normally no more than 25% of the fees needed. Nottingham offers a scholarship worth 50% of tuition fees for each year of the course (subject to satisfactory progress) in any subject except Medicine and Vet Science to anyone awarded a Barbados Scholarship or Exhibition. It has usually been the Exhibition winners who have needed to take advantage of this, and it makes a huge difference to the overall cost of a first degree.

British High Commission

The High Commission does not have an education service, as there is a widespread use of web-based information. Some printed materials from UK universities are available from the Tertiary division at the Ministry of Education.

Any student going to study in the UK will need to contact the High Commission if not in possession of a British or European passport. Visas are issued via a points-based system with online application. Points are derived from the university's offer letter (the CAS statement) and from confirmation of sufficient funds for the course and for living expenses. A short interview is held and biometrics are taken at the BHC office.

There is a briefing and reception for all students departing for the UK each year offered by the High Commission.

USEFUL CONTACT POINTS

- UCAS www.ucas.com
- UKCISA www.ukcisa.org.uk UK Council for International Student Affairs
- British Council www.britishcouncil.org
- Education UK www.educationuk.org/global/articles/scholarships-financial-support/ for details of scholarships in the UK
- UCAS Qualifications Hotline 011 44 871 468 0472 qualsenquiries@ucas.ac.uk
- UKESC Prof Jeff and Mrs Jenny Atherton, www.ukesc.co.uk
skype: ukesc-uk. Represent a number of UK universities in Barbados.
- Chevening www.chevening.org
- UK NARIC www.ecctis.co.uk/naric/
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
www.qaa.ac.uk/

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