

Why should you study abroad?

Statistics show that 15,000 Cypriot students study abroad every year. This is the time when young people from Cyprus make their final decisions about the future. A large number of them pursue their higher education in Britain and America. Global S&C Educational Services is an educational establishment that helps students to realise and achieve their ambition. The company's director, Chris Sofroniou, answers questions on benefits of studying abroad

What do Cypriot students study these days?

Traditionally there is a strong demand for studies related to management, law, computer science and accounting. In recent years young people have become increasingly interested in degrees within the fields of environmental studies and geology due to the latest developments concerning natural gas in Cyprus. Cypriot students also study a wide range of courses in Psychology and Art & Design.

In which foreign countries do Cypriot students mostly study?

Due to the current instability in Greece marked by frequent strikes and violence, the number of students has decreased dramatically. Currently, most students choose to go to Britain and there are now

about 4,000 Cypriots currently studying in the UK and other European countries including France, Germany, Italy, Hungary and the Czech Republic. North American destinations have become less popular among Cypriot youth since Cyprus entered the EU in 2004. These countries however offer generous scholarships to Cypriot students to attract them.

British degrees remain widely recognised in Cyprus which makes the UK a number one choice for many students on the island. The global nature of English, the existence of large Greek communities as well as strong historical ties between Cyprus and Britain, contributes to the high interest in British education.

Do you believe that the increase in fees will affect student numbers studying in the UK?

Firstly, I must say that a lot of parents panicked unnecessarily last year when they heard about the increase in fees. They did not have a clear and full picture, however, and things are not as bad as they initially thought. The reasons being that all EU students are eligible for the UK student loan, which will cover tuition fees for the three years and is repaid by the student when they receive an income of over £21,000. To add to this the interest rate for the repayment of this student loan remains low.

In essence, the student does

not need to budget for tuition fees during his studies but these are repayable once the student graduates and begins to earn a satisfactory income. Once our consultants explain this to parents and students in detail they are pleasantly surprised and take a full advantage of this excellent financial opportunity instead of attending the local private universities which require tuition fees payable each year.



What does your service offer to students going to study abroad?

We represent a range of British and American institutions. These universities have special characteristics such as campus accommodation and offer a great variety of degree choices. We represent universities in big cities but also in green rural areas, universities with strict admission criteria but also

those with more flexible entry requirements. We try to match every student with the courses they intend to follow, or we might suggest innovative and exciting degrees at the most suitable university considering student's qualifications, degree course and the location.

What advantages does the student have using your services?

We employ fully qualified counselors with suitable qualifications, advanced skills and

wide experience in education. Most importantly concerning the UK, we are an official UCAS centre, professionally trained to administer application procedures. Another great advantage is that with the professional links established over the years at universities, we can ensure admissions to a university in the shortest possible time. In this respect, we act essentially as an application processing of-

vice to many of the universities we represent. In addition to this, we can arrange accommodation at the university hall of residence, which are less expensive and more secure places. We even arrange for our students to be met by university staff at the airport and taken to their places of residence. Before their departure, we bring together students who are going to study in the same university. It is our experience that students value this initial acquaintance, which can be very useful, at least in the initial stages of the university life.

What particular problems do Cypriot students face?

The most basic problem is the right choice of the university for the chosen degree programme. Secondly, our experience shows that the university location is very important for the vigorous student life. We provide students and parents with reliable information that guides them to make the best decision based on their needs.

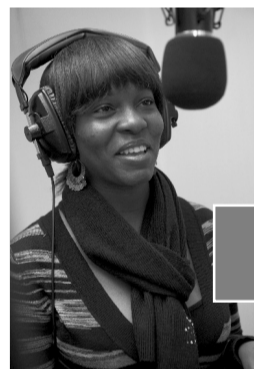
What are the additional questions that may arise during your counseling session?

Many students and parents are aware of the university rankings that appear each year in the press and are sometimes very focused on these statistics. What they must understand is that not all students can get into the top league universi-

ties. In addition, although the universities that appear in the top 20 of the list are considered the "first division" this assessment is based primarily on the research activities of the particular university. This does not do justice to newer universities which focus mainly on the quality of teaching. Although we know that entry requirements reflect ranking positions, one has to clarify that all universities are equal they are all governmental institutions and the degree that students will receive is of high quality.

What are the benefits of studying abroad?

Students ought to acknowledge that there are relatively good new universities in Cyprus which however have a long way to go to reach the level of the well-established universities abroad. Many students and parents believe that studying abroad in internationally recognised universities, both at undergraduate and post-graduate level, will give them an important comparative advantage and a wider experience, not only in their chosen subject, but also from a social, linguistic and cultural point of view. The fact that so many students study abroad is almost necessary for the social and the economic advancement of the student themselves as well as for the future development of Cyprus in an increasingly competitive world.



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