

Top 10 Tips for Supporting International Students

Recent years have seen an increase in international student numbers and a greater focus on the international student experience. Education institutions are beginning to recognise the unique perspective which this heterogenous group of students bring, as well as a focus on how they can thrive in the UK education environment. The following tips suggest ways to effectively support your international students through personal tutoring. Connect to our [International Students Special Interest Group](#) for more ways to support international students.

INSTIL A SENSE OF BELONGING

Help international students feel like they belong in your community by pronouncing their names correctly, learning to say 'hello' in their own language and displaying their national flag. Small gestures like these help them feel welcome.

TAILORED RESOURCES

Help international students by signposting them to academic resources in their own language or specifically created for international students e.g. The Study Skills Handbook (Simplified Chinese Language Edition) or Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students.

ARTICULATE YOUR ROLE AND SET GROUND RULES

International students may be with the role of personal tutor - clearly explain what you do and how they can make effective use of this support. Those from high power-distance cultures may be reluctant to ask for support; repeat assurances to advise and guide them.

PROVIDE SOLUTIONS INITIALLY

International students face many challenges in adjusting to the UK academic system. Offer solutions to common issues they encounter in their studies. Encourage peer collaboration as a way to share notes, recommendations and reading. .

BUILD RAPPORT

Build rapport and treat students as individuals by asking them to identify their hometown on a map, discussing their hobbies, reasons for study or coming to the UK and their travel interests. This is also useful for helping you remember individual students.

USE EXEMPLARS

Use examples from past international students to guide academic, personal and career development, and raise international students' aspirations. Refer to past dissertations, assignments or reflective assignments written by international students..

CLEAR COMMUNICATION

International students may initially struggle with listening and speaking, or display different interpersonal communication skills. Show respect, empathy, curiosity and be non-judgemental. Use simpler language, avoid a strong accent and colloquialisms in your own speech.

ENHANCING GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY

Engage students in a skills audit to help them create their CV. Promote confidence by recognising that they possess adaptable, intercultural, bilingual or multilingual competencies. Encourage them to engage in voluntary work to develop skills and connect them to alumni.

ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO ACCLIMATISE

International students are often keen to meet other students from the UK and elsewhere but need the courage to do this. A good start is to encourage them to join one academic and a fun/social student union society, a local sports club, language exchange programme or international office activities.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

International students may see you as trusted confidante for issues they do not want to share with family or peers. Don't worry about providing an instantaneous answer, signpost to support services, or consult other tutors as to the most effective response.