



ACCREDITATION SERVICE
for
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS,
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

ASIC response to COVID-19: FAQs

Last update 19/06/2020

We hope that our [full statement](#) has provided some reassurance and that the answers provided below are helpful. The following FAQs are not exhaustive, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with our customer service team if you have any further questions; e-mail your usual point of contact or info@asic.org.uk. Or, if you would like to speak directly to a member of the ASIC team, our phone lines are open as usual between 09:00 and 17:00 BST, please call us at +44 (0)1740 617 920.

For any questions relating to the virus itself, and advice on keeping your staff and students safe, please refer to all official advice, guidance, and laws in your home country. We cannot offer any better help or assistance than that being provided by the organisations and people tasked with protecting you.

The following links may be of help:

UK:

[UK Government](#) latest updates and advice.

UK Government [Guidance for Tier 4 sponsors, migrants and short-term students on temporary concessions in response to the outbreak of coronavirus](#). Last update 16/06/20.

Latest health advice from [National Health Service](#).

Latest health advice from [Public Health Wales](#).

Latest health advice from [Northern Ireland](#).

Latest health advice from [Health Protection Scotland](#).

Advice for international students from [UKCISA](#).

Mental health support from [Student Minds](#).

The Department for Education (DfE) has a dedicated helpline for questions about COVID-19 related to education. The helpline is open from 08:00 to 18:00 BST (Mon-Fri).

Phone: **0800 046 8687**

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Global:

Latest from the [WHO](#).

Response and resources from [UNESCO](#).



Institution FAQs

1) We were due an inspection, will it go ahead remotely?

We will try in every way we can to continue to provide our services remotely. We have contacted every institution due to be visited by ASIC inspectors via e-mail and have advised each institution on the appropriate next steps. If you appear to have not received an e-mail, please e-mail your usual point of contact or info@asic.org.uk.

2) We are due to have our Stage 3 Inspection/Re-accreditation Inspection visit; can we request an extension on our current accreditation?

If we are unable to conduct your inspection remotely you may be granted an extension (if appropriate to your institution's current situation); this will be assessed for each institution on an individual basis. Please note that you must be up to date with the payment of your annual accreditation fee/any other fee requirements. If you have not received an e-mail regarding your current status of accreditation, or you have any further questions, please e-mail your usual point of contact.

3) Are ASIC still accrediting institutions at this time?

Yes, although we are unable to currently carry out physical inspections, we will be undertaking our accreditations remotely and will consolidate the accreditation with a physical visit as soon as we are able. Please contact info@asic.org.uk, with your institution's details, to receive further information.

4) We want to put our lecture notes online for our students, are there other ASIC institutions, or partners, willing to allow us to use their platform or can help us set this up?

Yes, please e-mail info@asic.org.uk and put your request in writing and we will do our best to match you with institutions/organisations who can help.

5) We need to close our institution; can you help with our insurance claim? Can you write us a letter saying we must close due to government guidance so we can make applications/claims for business support?

We are happy to provide a letter explaining who we are and your accreditation status. We cannot provide comment on government guidance or policy. In the first instance, we would direct you to official government guidance in your country. For any further assistance, we would advise you to contact business support/advocacy organisations or seek legal counsel.

6) How will closing my institution affect our accreditation?

Your accreditation should continue as normal but, as per the terms of your accreditation outlined in the ASIC Handbook, you must continue to keep us informed of your institution's operating status.



7) Students who were due to study at our institution/have had their study interrupted are requesting refunds, what do we do?

If it is possible, offer alternative provision through blended/online learning, which would enable the student to continue or complete their studies. Or, perhaps offer to keep their place at your institution for when they are able to return at a later date. If alternative arrangements are not possible, you should refer to your institution's refund policy. Remember that, whilst as a business, you are facing severe disruption and worrying times, so too are your current and prospective students. As always, our advice is to be patient and be kind. Further [advice from the OIA can be found here](#).

8) We have students with visas that are due to expire, and they cannot travel to their country due to closed borders, what do they do?

UKCISA provide the following advice for international students in the UK: [Coronavirus Covid-19 info for international students](#). The UK government have guidance for [Tier 4 sponsors, migrants and short-term students here](#). The [Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre](#) has been set up to help with immigration queries related to Covid-19. If you are from outside the UK, please look to your in-country Ministry of Education/government advice and guidance.

9) Are ASIC providing any other services to assist their institutions at this time?

Yes, we have developed the ASIC Internationalisation Index to show students and parents how well equipped an institution is to care for international students. For more information, please contact mauriced@asic.org.uk. Institutions can also use this time to prepare for when international recruitment can begin in earnest again, once the pandemic is over, by developing their agent network through our sister company [QISAN](#), please e-mail liesleh@qisan.com for further information.

10) We want to become an ASIC institution but don't feel we can complete all the requirements at this particular time, can you help us?

Yes, we have a Membership option. Please contact flow@asic.org.uk for further information.

We know that for all of our institutions, in the UK and worldwide, this is a worrying time. We will do all that we can to help so please don't hesitate to reach out to us and, if something is beyond our expertise, we will guide you to those better placed to help you.

Once again, we encourage you to look to official public health advice regarding the pandemic and protect yourself, your staff and students, and your communities. Caring for one another during this crisis is how we will all make it through.



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Student FAQs

Important please read:

The useful links provided at the top of this document may contain the information you are looking for – please read them first.

The following information will mostly be of relevance to students studying at ASIC UK institutions. If you are a student studying one of our international institutions you will need to contact your institution/Ministry of Education/government for advice on who is best placed to help you with your query in the your home country/country you are studying in. Please bear in mind when you call us that we will do our best to help you, but we will be unable to help you directly with questions that fall outside of our remit and expertise; instead, our staff will do everything they can to point you towards people who can help.

1) I have a visa/immigration question.

UKCISA provide the following advice for international students in the UK: [Coronavirus Covid-19 info for international students](#).

The UK government have guidance for [Tier 4 sponsors, migrants and short-term students here](#).
Last update 16/06/20.

The Home Office Coronavirus Immigration Help Centre has been set up to answer immigration enquiries related only to Coronavirus. The Help Centre is open Monday to Friday, 09:00 till 17:00 BST. Calls are free of charge.

Telephone: **0800 678 1767**
Email: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

You can also call the UKCISA Student Advice Line for advice and support between 13:00 and 16:00 BST, Monday to Friday. Before calling UKCISA they ask that you check the [Questions we can answer](#) and [Questions we can not answer yet](#) sections on their website.

Telephone: **+4420 7788 9214**

General information for international students studying in the UK can be found [here](#).

If you studying at one of our institutions outside the UK, please contact your institution in the first instance and look to country specific Ministry of Education/government advice and guidance.

2) I am student and I am worried about my accommodation options.

The UK government has issued [guidance on isolation for residential educational settings](#) as well as [guidance](#) on self-isolation and social distancing for students living in university/college halls of residence.



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If you have any questions relating to accommodation or travel please use the DfE helpline available between 08:00 to 18:00 BST, Monday to Friday.

Phone: **0800 046 8687**

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

3) I have a complaint to make about my education provider. What do I do?

If your complaint is about an ASIC accredited institution (UK and International), please follow the process outlined below. *If your complaint is about a non-ASIC institution we are, unfortunately, unable to help and advise you to contact their accrediting body.*

Important: please read the following before you contact us regarding any complaint you wish to make.

Points to consider:

- Before you lodge a complaint with ASIC, please speak to your institution about the problem you have encountered. As you find yourself in a difficult and confusing situation, so too does your education provider and they are tasked with protecting each and every one of their students, as well as their staff. Consider the language and tone you are using.
- Communication may be slower than usual, or it may take waiting for someone (other than the first point of contact made available to you) to get back to you.
- Please be patient. Remember that another person sits at the other end of your e-mail/at the end of the phone and that they will be trying to do their best to help you
- Be as flexible as you can, and keep in mind that solutions may be imperfect for both you and your institution. For example, in order to continue your studies, ideally you would be able to return to complete your course in person - but it may be that an online learning solution is the best way forward, as there is currently no fixed date in sight for a return to normal provision.

However, if the above is taken into account, and you feel your institution is not handling the situation satisfactorily, you will need to follow the steps outlined here:

- 1) If you contact ASIC to make a complaint about an institution, you will be advised to contact the institution directly in the first instance, You must ensure that you have tried to resolve the matter according the institution's own complaints or grievance's procedure.
- 2) If you have tried to do this, but you believe the institution has not complied with their policies and procedures, then you will be asked to forward all evidence relating to the complaint or grievance to info@asic.org.uk or the [ASIC office postal address](#). Your evidence must fulfil the following conditions:
 - i. In your evidence, you must show that you have tried to comply with the institution's complaints procedure - in full. If you have not done so, you will need to go back to step 1.



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- ii. All your correspondence with the institution must be provided to us in full, with no omissions of communication and/or other evidence. It is important that we have the full picture to arrive at a fair decision. If we find gaps in your submission, and you are unable to provide us with all the evidence required, we will be unable to pursue your complaint further.
- 3) If the evidence you have supplied is believed to require further investigation, ASIC will contact the institution directly to try and resolve the matter. The reason for ASIC involvement is to ensure the institution is complying with their procedures in a fair manner. In an extreme or serious situation, the ASIC Accreditation Committee may become involved with the possibility of ASIC accreditation being withdrawn from the institution.

Further information regarding the complaints process can be found in the [ASIC Accreditation Handbook](#).

Trading Standards

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute supplies support services for government, local authorities, businesses and individual trading standards professionals. For more information, please see the Trading Standards website at <https://www.tradingstandards.uk/consumers/support-advice>.

If you are not satisfied with the service your institution has offered for example, still refusing a refund of course fees and if you have followed all the correct procedures to be eligible to receive a refund, you may wish to make a complaint to Trading Standards.

The Trading Standards services are delivered by your local authority, and all concerns should be reported to the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on **0808 223 1133**.

If you are based in Scotland this service is provided by the Scottish Government funded Advice Direct Scotland on **0808 164 6000**.

Should you decide to contact Trading Standards, please ensure you have comprehensive evidence that you have tried to follow the complaint procedure of your institution beforehand as Trading Standards may not be able to help you if you do not.

If you decide to contact Trading Standards, ASIC would not be able to mediate or investigate the complaint for you, but we would be able to assist with the enquiry if asked to by Trading Standards.

If anything contained in this document is unclear, please don't hesitate to get in touch and one of our team will try to help. If we are unable to provide assistance directly, we will help guide you to those who can. Most importantly, please follow official government and public health advice regarding the pandemic, this guidance is in place to keep you safe.