

### Who We Worked With

Member institutions, representing over £200m in buying power across the UK HE sector; along with other sector consortia, travel management companies and the Business Travel Association.

### The Situation

British universities have been increasingly reliant on overseas travel in the last 30 years as internationalisation has boomed in both research collaboration and student recruitment. The global Covid-19 pandemic has stopped this trend in its tracks, with international travel all but shut down. During the initial stages of the pandemic, there was a direct impact on individuals who were on a trip and caught up in the race to get home. As the crisis continued, travel disruption, HE funding models and the needs of international students caused further issues for our members.

### What Happened

The first thing the Travel Management Companies (TMCs) did was to locate passengers who were currently travelling and make arrangements for bringing them back to the UK. They also worked with universities and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to repatriate travellers who were stranded by border closures and airline cancellations. In the face of ongoing uncertainty about whether booked travel would go ahead or be subject to last-minute cancellations, the TMCs provided expert advice on the best course of action for university travellers.



SUPC worked with Clive Wratten, the CEO of the Business Travel Association (BTA), to raise with the government the unique position of the HE sector in relation to the need for cash refunds, not travel vouchers. This relationship with the BTA also helped us to share up-to-date information with our members about the current travel environment.

The issue of bringing international students to the UK also created problems as time went on. SUPC worked with the TMCs and UUK International to develop a collaborative,

innovative solution which addressed legislative and risk concerns, enabling universities to charter flights in order to bring their students to campus.

### The Difference it Made

In a fast-changing travel landscape, our relationships with the TMCs, the BTA and UUK International helped us to keep up-to-date with the latest picture and share that information with our members. This not only kept them informed, but also meant that the TMCs were not facing multiple queries with the same questions.

**‘SUPC’s expertise brought a range of benefits to our members, helping the sector to understand and navigate a number of very complex issues through the pandemic.’**

*JAMIE ARROWSMITH, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,  
POLICY AT UNIVERSITIES UK INTERNATIONAL*

## Travel Requirements in an Unfamiliar World

### For More Information

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