



## EDUCATION IN THE UK

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**Abstract:** The UK is an advanced country in education. The oldest universities like; Cambridge, Oxford, Glasgow and Durham have been also shedding a type of impression even in present situation. In the field of English language Teaching (ELT) also it has been investing a lot of money every year. As a developed country, its rate of education, employment and investment in education is very high. Thousands of students go to the UK for higher studies and earn valuable certificates each year. But, because of open access in higher education institutions since 1990s, a number of counterfeit higher education institutions were opened till 2010/2012 and collected money from the abroad students. It degraded the life of students as well as the prestige of the United Kingdom. More than a systematic development in education, it brought type of pollution in higher education so the government of UK started making amendments in higher education policies and foreign students since 2010. So, in this study, along with lots of appreciations, I have made some comments which would be useful for both the foreign students and the government of the United Kingdom in case of education.

**Key words:** Higher studies; governance; employment; curriculum; amendment; education.

Introduction of the UK: UK, the abbreviated form of the United Kingdom consists of four states: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. If we exclude Northern Ireland from the UK, it is called Great Britain. It is a well developed country which has a long history of civilization and linguistic development. It is located in the 49 degree north to 59 degree North latitudes and 8 degree west to 2 degree east longitudes. The total area of the UK is 243,610 square kilometer where the estimated population in 2014 is 64.1 million which represents the 1% of the world's population. From the literacy perspective, its literacy rate is 99%(United Kingdom, n.d.)

The UK has unitary system of government but the power is equally distributed all the states. It has a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch where



a king or a queen is the head of the state and prime minister is the head of the government. The UK doesn't have a written constitution but it doesn't mean it has no constitution. Its constitutional ideas are formed from various sources including state law, case law made by judges and international treaties. "The most progressive powers are initiated directly exercised by the ministers, rather than the crown" (The Cabinet Manual, 2011).

#### Education of the UK

From the educational point of view, the schooling is compulsory for children between the age 5-16. Pre-school, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for the children of 2 ½ to 4 years. There is no exact curriculum for this level but they have a set of desirable learning objectives which they need to fulfill during this stage.

Generally the school year starts in the UK from September and ends in July but a whole academic year is divided into 3 semesters (terms); September to Christmas (the Fall/Autumn term), January to Easter (the Spring term) and April to July (the Summer term). Each term lasts approximately for twelve weeks where half term holidays are given in the middle of each term usually of a week's duration but the Christmas and Easter holidays are assigned for two weeks. Summer holidays are long holiday (6 weeks) in which the children can go for tours and educational exertions with their parents in a long distance. In each school, the school time starts from 8:45 am and ends in 3pm generally. All schools are required to give religious education but it is not compulsory for all children. If any guardian doesn't like to include their children in such religious education, they can withdraw their children from that class (Department for Children and Families, 2014)

Primary education is there for the children of 4-11 years where two important evaluation schemes are incorporated into two key stages (key stage 1 and key stage 2) with Standard Attainment Test (SAT) having compulsory core subjects; English Math and Science. The subjects to be taught in primary level are specified by the National Curriculum which sets out SAT.

In the same way Dunn (n.d.) writes, the secondary school is for the children of 11-16. It includes key stage 3 (14 years) and key stage 4 (16 years). Secondary schools must follow the National Curriculum. Here also the evaluation of the students takes place at the key stage 3 and 4. Up to the key stage 3 all students learn the same subjects but after this they choose usually 10 subjects where English, Math and Science are compulsory. At the end of year 11 (key stage 4) or after General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), students may leave school if they wish or move on to technical or training colleges. Otherwise they can pass to the sixth



form. Sixth form is also divided into two: Lower Sixth (16-17) it also called AS Level which have 5 subjects, and upper sixth called A level which have 3 subjects. At the end of sixth form, Students leave school but can more to the university system. Most university courses are of 3-4 years and students usually specialized in one subject in the universities. Here is a detail chart/figure of education system of the UK:

Primary school: 4-11 years children

\*Key stage 1: 4-7 years

\* Key stage 2: 7-11 years

Secondary school: 11-16 years children

●Key stage 3:14 years

●Key stage 4:16 years

Governance of Higher Education

Higher education in the UK is more opened to school education in the sense that it is not compulsory for all but there is no right to entry to university for everybody in Britain. Universities select students on the basis of A-level results and interviews. After sixth form students are opened to go to the universities or Higher Education (HE) institutions. The HE institutions are independent, self governing bodies active in teaching, research and scholarship. However some institutions are eligible to receive support from funds administrated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England(HEFCE).