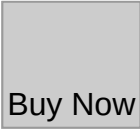




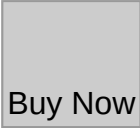
Calls for student visa rules to be scrapped

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[Calls for student visa rules to be scrapped](#)

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The government should scrap a rule which prevents some international students bringing their families with them to the UK, a senior university official has said.

Professor Jennifer Watling, of Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), said the restriction, introduced in 2024, has led to a fall in the number overseas admissions.

She said international students brought “value in terms of cultural richness and diversity” but were also important sources of funding which many universities rely on.

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A government spokesman said while the UK values the contribution international students make, “net migration must come down”.

The Labour government has previously said it has no plans to lift the ban on relatives arriving with international students, which was [brought in under the Conservative government, external](#) to curb migration.

International student visa applications have fallen across some universities since the change was introduced [according to Home Office figures.](#)

[Banzai Japan Music Video](#)

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Prof Watling said the cap on fees for domestic students meant universities “have to obtain income from sources other than UK students”.

UK undergraduates fees are [set to rise to £9,535 a year](#) from September.

International students studying at the same level pay an average of about £22,000 annually, though some pay as much as £38,000, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) said.

‘More welcome’

There are more than 51,000 international students at universities in the north west of England, according to 2024 admission figures from advocacy group Universities UK.

A study by think tank the Higher Education Policy Institute found income from these fees can be vital to universities.

Rose Stephenson from the Institute, said: “For Manchester, there was an economic benefit of £450

million which actually translates to over £3,500 per resident, again per cohort of international students coming in.”

Despite the falls in admissions, international students are still attracted by opportunities in the UK, Margarida Vasconcelos, a digital marketing student at MMU, said.

She said: “There are a lot of international students and opportunities, people from different cultures, religions, so it makes it us feel more welcome – it was why I wanted to come to Manchester.”

“This government strongly values the contribution that international students make to our economy, to our education institutions and to our society,” a Home Office spokesman said.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR8YYeb4PMk>

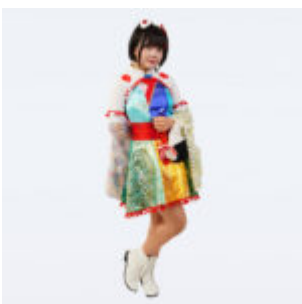
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