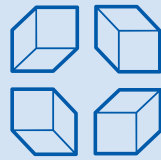
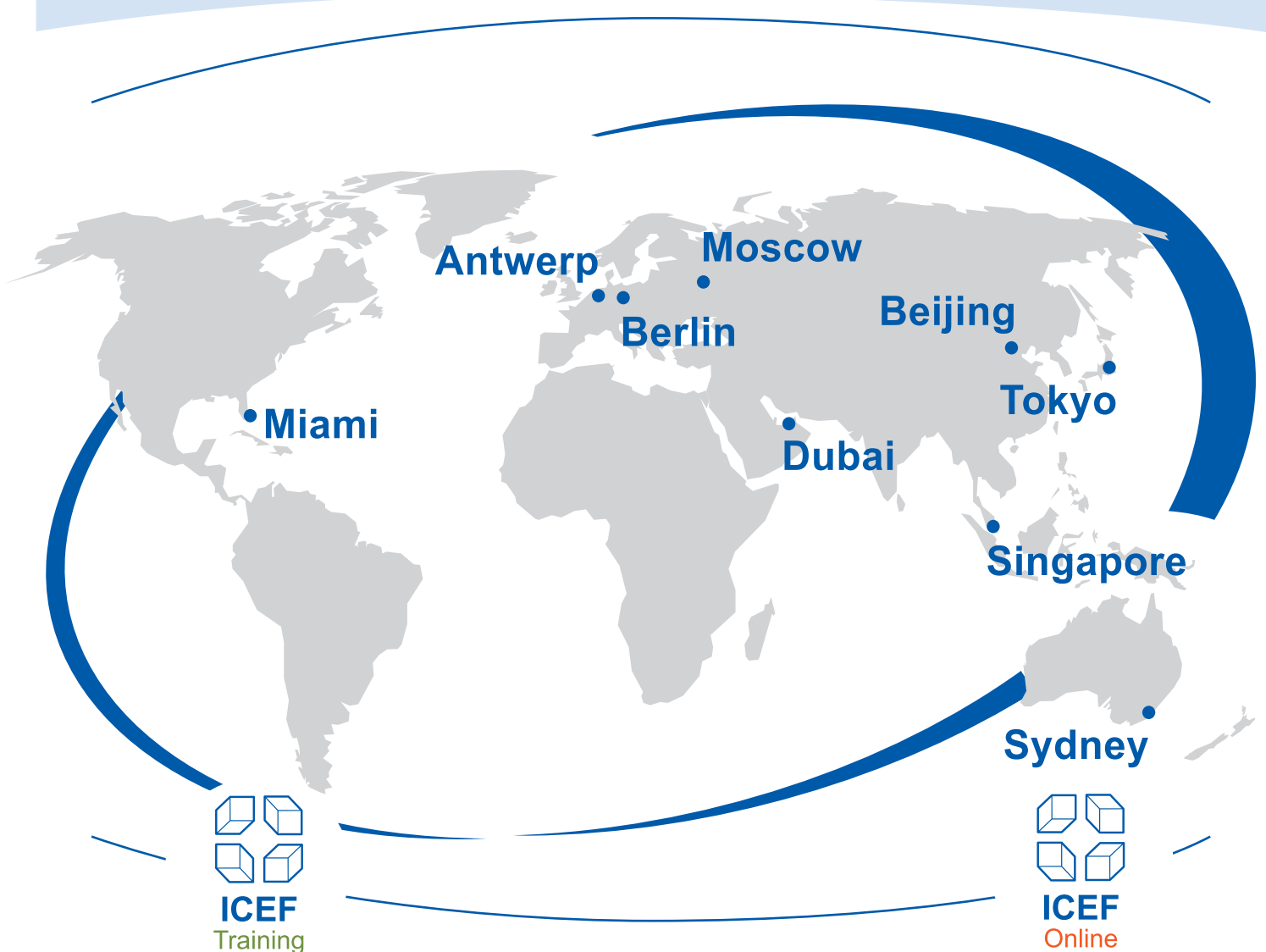


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UK introduces security checks and visa changes

International students undertaking science graduate courses in the UK now have to undergo increased security checks in order to apply for a student visa. The new rules apply to students from outside the European Union or Switzerland.

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (Atas) requires international students studying one of 41 subjects at a UK university – including biology, physics, chemistry and maths – to complete an online questionnaire that must be vetted and approved by security agencies before visa issuance. The UK government

Higher language requirements in Victoria

International secondary school students in the state of Victoria in Australia will face tougher English language requirements for getting into some universities in the state after universities noted low English standards among ESL students.

Secondary school students who have been in an English speaking country for less than seven years are allowed to sit a separate English exam from native English speakers in their final year of school. From 2009, students sitting the ESL exam will have to score five points higher than local students studying English to meet university entrance requirements.

The University of Melbourne, the Australian Maritime College, Monash University, La Trobe University and Deakin University have all indicated that they will require an increased English score.

Elaine Wenn, Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre Director, said, “[Universities] found that students entering university with ESL were not doing as well, some even had a higher rate of failure than students who had the same study scores in English.”

announced that 23,000 students would be affected by the introduction of the new scheme, which was introduced to stop international students from gaining access to sensitive information that could be used for mass terrorism.

The Atas scheme replaces a system of voluntary reporting among UK universities where staff members notified the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if they suspected individual students of gaining access to sensitive information for improper reasons.

Universities UK was involved in the drafting of the new scheme and a spokesperson said that they had tried to make sure that it would cause the minimum of delays to international students applying for a visa. “The new scheme replaces the voluntary vetting scheme and is more efficient and less bureaucratic,” he said. “It has shifted the burden of monitoring international students from the institutions themselves to the government.” The FCO website stated that the vast majority of Atas applications would be processed within 10 days of them being received.

All students requiring a visa to study in the UK will also be subject to visa changes later on this year that will require them to get a university to sponsor them before they can apply for a student visa. Universities will therefore have to allocate places to international students earlier in the year and also register them with the Home Office.

The visa changes are part of a new points-based visa system aimed at clarifying the visa issuance process and encouraging skilled migration. Professor Rick Trainor, President of Universities UK, said that the system would create increased costs and administration for universities. “We believe there is a very real danger that the Home Office agenda will undermine the international and trade agenda of the rest of the government, which seeks to increase the number of international students in the UK.”

A recent report by the UK Home Office showed that international students boosted the UK economy by almost £8.5 billion (US\$16.75 billion).

CIBT acquires Canadian college

The Canadian CIBT Education Group has bought Spratt-Shaw Community College (SSCC) in Vancouver, BC, for US\$12 million in a cash deal.

SSCC was established in 1903 and is British Columbia's oldest and largest private career college. The college operates career and vocational schools, language training schools and a degree-granting college through its 17 campuses in western Canada and also has business locations in Vietnam, the Philippines, Jordan and China. CIBT has bought the college in order to export many of its vocational programmes to China in order to meet student demand for Canadian education among students there.

Toby Chu, President and Chief Executive of CIBT Education Group Inc, said, “According to Chinese government

estimates, over 250 million workers from rural China are gradually migrating to the coastal and urban cities of China in search of better paid jobs. These workers will require extensive vocational re-training or career enhancing skills in order to secure better paying jobs in China's modern and rapidly advancing economy.”

CIBT already runs vocational programmes through its subsidiary in China, CIBT School of Business, and local students typically study for two years in China before spending two years overseas finishing their course, usually in the UK or USA.

Dean Dupperon, President of Spratt-Shaw Community College, said, “The combination of SSCC and CIBT will transform our two organisations into a global education player immediately.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Maine marketing trip overseas

Representatives from a number of educational institutions in Maine, USA, visited Japan and Korea in November last year in order to encourage more international students from these two countries to consider studying in the state. Staff from the University of Maine Business School, Foxcroft Academy, University of Southern Maine School of Business and York County Community College spent several days meeting with education agents and college campuses in Seoul and Tokyo. Rhyann Romaine from York County Community College said, “A lot of students don't want to go to places with lots of Japanese students, like Hawaii and California, so the east coast is growing in appeal.”

Germany-India links

German students will receive funding to study at an Indian university after the German Education and Science Ministry announced a €4.3 million (US\$6.39 million) annual package to encourage more students to gain experience in India. Education Minister, Annette Schavan, said that she wanted to increase the number of German students studying in India from 500 to 1,000. The initiative, known as the “new passage to India” was introduced to encourage the introduction of bi-national masters courses and the setting up of a centre of excellence in engineering and environmental sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras.

Chinese student survey

A survey on Chinese students conducted by the China Youth Daily newspaper showed that 80 per cent wanted to study overseas. The online survey was completed by 2,400 university students and revealed that 66 per cent believed that students with an overseas education were more competitive than graduates from domestic universities when it came to job hunting.

Q&A



Full name: European Association for International Education

Year established: 1989

Organisation's main role: to stimulate and facilitate the internationalisation of higher education, meet the professional needs of individuals active in the field and bring together fellow professionals worldwide in all aspects of international education.

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Who are your members?

We are a member-led, non-profit organisation and welcome individuals with an interest in the internationalisation of higher education. At the moment, EAIE has over 1,775 members from 68 countries worldwide, including rectors, vice-rectors, directors and staff of international offices, exchange programme coordinators, credential evaluators, language specialists, academic staff and counsellors.

What activities has the EAIE been involved in over the last year?

The EAIE organises a range of activities, including an extensive professional development and publications programme and our major event, the annual EAIE conference. The 2007 conference was held in Trondheim, Norway, and the 20th Annual EAIE Conference will take place from 10 to 13 September 2008 in Antwerp, Belgium. In addition, the EAIE offers a variety of e-services to its members aimed to inform and to facilitate networking.

How is membership progressing at EAIE?

EAIE membership keeps growing steadily as the conference and training courses gain more recognition. The Bologna process and all the changes presently occurring in higher education institutions have also

caused more people to become interested in gaining knowledge and sharing information and experiences.

Why do you think international students choose to study in Europe? What are its main attractions for international students?

Europe offers a multitude of cultures in a small geographical space with opportunities for language learning, travel, and adventure. For some students the chance to experience different learning/teaching styles attracts them to Europe, whereas for others it is the opportunity to reconnect with family roots.

What plans do you have for the future in terms of increasing the profile of Europe as a study destination overseas?

Europe as a whole is working hard to increase its worldwide attractiveness by working towards a European Higher Education Area where students can easily move from one country to the next with easy credit transfer and recognition. The EAIE tries to aid this process by offering information and training for international educators. A good example are the EAIE training courses on international marketing and recruitment, which equip international educators with different tools to make their institutions more attractive for international students.