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## UK introduces new requirements for visa students

The UK government has put forward a new visa regulation that will see international students having to prove that they have at least £9,600 (US\$17,112) a year to support themselves while studying in the UK. The regulation is part of a general shake up of visa rules in the UK that was first introduced in 2006 (see LTM, October 2006, page 6).

Under the new regulations, which were announced by the UK Border Agency and Home Office in July, students apply-

ing to study at a university in September 2009 would have to pay their tuition fees upfront and also prove that they have adequate funds to support themselves, as well as have an income of £535 (US\$954) a month for every dependent child they may have.

Diana Warwick, Chief Executive of Universities UK (UUK), said, "UUK would like to have further discussions with the UK Border Agency on maintenance levels as this area could pose serious problems for international student recruitment if adjustments are not made."

As many undergraduate courses in the UK charge international students fees of up to £15,000 (US\$26,737), students will have to show evidence of funds of nearly £25,000 (US\$44,563) for their first year of study when applying for a visa. Students will also not be able to take into account any possible earnings while working part-time in the UK.

Paramjit Singh from Global Study Resources in India said that the UK embassies in India already ask Indian students to prove that they have US\$18,000, but the new ruling was likely to harm the UK's reputation as an international education provider. "I don't think that this step will do any good to the internationalisation of the UK university campuses," he said. "Problems like illegal immigration – ie backdoor entry into the UK employment market by international students – might decrease but it will harm UK education in a big way."

A new post-study work visa was also announced, which will enable international graduates of UK university courses to stay and work in the country for up to two years. The visa replaces the International Graduates Scheme and Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland scheme, which previously allowed students to work in the UK after graduating.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**Online directory of OZ uni courses overseas**  
Australia has launched a new online directory that will make it easier for international students to search for university courses administered by an Australian university in their own country. Individual institutions will be able to submit information to the AusLIST. Australian universities currently offer courses in a range of countries including Singapore, China, Mauritius, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. All the institutions displaying information on AusLIST must provide education and training in other countries to a standard comparable to the courses they deliver in Australia.

**Australian college forced to close**  
The Sydney International College of Business in Australia, a vocational college that specialised in cookery courses for international students, was ordered to close down in September after an inspection by state authorities. The Vocational Education Training Accreditation Board found that demonstration kitchen did not comply with city council health and safety regulations and that too many students were being taught in inadequate numbers of kitchens. The NSW government suspended the college's registration last year prompting it to appeal to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

**Finland to charge for education**  
A new law due to be passed and brought into effect in Finland by the end of 2009 will end free university tuition for some non-EEA students. Finnish universities plan to start charging non-EEA students for some master's programmes. Currently, there are 450 programmes offered in the English language at Finland's universities and polytechnics and these types of programmes are becoming increasingly attractive to international students. Universities would be able to set their own tuition fees but current proposals suggest fees of between US\$5,000 and US\$18,000.

### WA holds seminars in Ireland

The Western Australian government, in conjunction with Perth Education City and The Small Business Development Corporation, has held two seminars on education and immigration in Dublin and Cork.

The seminars took place in July and attracted several hundreds of people interested in migrating or studying in one of the state's universities or colleges. Kasia Orłowska, Trade and Investment Manager at the Government of Western Australia's office for migration and education in Europe, said that the government seminars combined the two topics of migration and education for the first time. "We realised that these two topics were very much linked," she said. "We were trying to target potential migrants who might not qualify for a visa automatically and inform them of the opportunities that studying in Australia can bring. We told them that if they study a subject in an in demand area they would be able to get a visa to stay and work in Australia."

Orłowska added that Ireland was particularly targeted as students would have no language barriers when they went to Australia and also there was currently high unemployment in the country. The government office is planning more seminars in different potential markets in the future.

### China more popular with US students

More students from the USA are choosing to study in China, according to statistics and reports from agents in the country. The latest statistics from the Institute of International Education show that China was the seventh most popular destination for US students in the 2005/2006 academic year with a percentage increase in popularity of 38.3 per cent on the previous year.

Stephen Wittig, Study Abroad Coordinator at the NRCSA in the USA said that this increase was likely to continue. "We have noticed a lot of interest in China especially within the last two years," he confirmed. "We expect it to become a major destination for us within the next two years." Wittig puts this popularity down to China becoming an important trading partner with the USA. "Most of the time it is required to know Chinese to make the best deals," he said. "Additionally, many

universities have started to add Chinese programmes to their curriculum."

Andrew Gordon from Diversity Abroad in the USA said that the Olympics had attracted more students to China, as well as the tremendous growth in the country in the last 20 years. "Modern China is a beautiful place where economic successes can be witnessed first hand," he said. "There is still a tremendous amount of respect for America and Americans in China and students feel this when they travel."

China itself is keen to encourage more international students to come and study in the country and earlier this year increased the number of scholarships available for incoming students from 10,000 to 20,000 by 2010. The scholarships provide undergraduate students with 1,400 yuan (US\$200) a month for living expenses and increased by 50 per cent this year compared with last year.



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