

# Open Doors – IEP figures in USA are positive

The latest 2006 *Open Doors* figures produced by the Institute of International Education (IIE) relating to students studying at Intensive English Programmes in the USA reveal that the total number of student weeks recorded increased from 2004 to 2005.

While a "small decline" of 2.2 per cent was cited in the survey in relation to actual

student numbers year on year, the more reliable indicator of total number of student weeks increased on 2004 results from 490,122 to 557,311 in 2005 (the 2006 report actually relates to the 2005 calendar year).

This indicates that the average length of stay at US IEPs is increasing. And given that only 164 institutions took part in the 2005 survey – down from 194

in 2004 – the figures are even more encouraging, as 18 per cent fewer IEPs took part.

Don Back, President of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP), acknowledged that while top-producing Korea, Japan and Taiwan all showed decreases in student numbers, all three posted increases in stay in the same period. Overall average stay

was up by 16.3 per cent. Back blamed any decline in numbers on "competitors in Canada and Australia who are aggressively attacking traditional US markets and have a distinct advantage as [they] do not require a student visa for short-term study". He noted that members had reported 2006 was a good year and "they are even more buoyant in talking about 2007". ●

## New Esos rules for refunds in Australia

NEW RULES on how refunds are handled for international students form some of the first round of amendments to the Education Services for Overseas Students (Esos) Act in Australia, which came into effect on 1 January. More changes, in a revised National Code of Practice, are to be introduced on 1 July.

The main change to date is that education providers are unable to use a written agreement to limit the refund of course fees to students who are unable to start their course because of a visa denial. Circumstances when a refund can be denied are defined by "student default" and include misbehaviour by the student or a breach of their visa conditions.

The Department for Education Science and Training advised providers that from July, when the new National Code is in place, written agreements between providers and students will be compulsory and contain specified information on refunds. Refunds are calculated in accordance with Esos regulations, which allow providers to keep an amount for administrative purposes and a portion of fees if the student has already started their course. ●

## UK universities to demand language skills

THERE ARE SIGNS that several prestigious UK universities will follow the lead of University College London (UCL), which has announced that from 2012, in principle, all university candidates will be required to have a foreign language GCSE to be considered as an undergraduate applicant.

The reason for the decision is that the institution wants to encourage language learning in UK schools; currently, students can drop foreign languages at 14. A review of the current policy, commissioned by the UK Education Secretary, Alan Johnson, has indicated that this is not likely to change in the near future but greater focus will be made on language learning at primary level.

At UCL, Vice Provost, Michael Worton, said, "We describe ourselves as London's global university and we feel it's essential that students have an understanding of how another language operates and knowledge of another culture." Bristol, Cambridge and Oxford University are reported to be considering a similar move. ●

## IH forum for Spanish teachers expands

THE ANNUAL ENCUESTO PRÁCTICO (Practical meeting) for Spanish teachers around the world, organised by International House Barcelona and educational publisher, Difusión, proved so popular in December that a new venue is to be sought for the 2007 event.

More than 330 Spanish language teaching professionals converged on Barcelona to attend the 15th such training event, with participants from 12 different countries including Germany, Switzerland, the USA, Mexico, Brazil and Colombia. Lucy Davis at IH Barcelona explained, "This conference offers a space in which to exchange experiences, ideas and materials. Specialists from the field are also invited to make presentations focusing on specific areas of Spanish teaching methodology."

With a waiting list of over 80 Spanish teachers in 2006, next year "we'll be looking for a large auditorium for the plenary sessions", confirmed Davis. Among those speaking at the event last December were representatives from the University of Barcelona, UAB, the University of Seville, the Instituto de Cervantes and the



Over 300 Spanish teachers got together to exchange ideas in Barcelona last year

University Antonio de Nebrija in Madrid.

Workshops reviewed new trends in evaluation, the importance of discourse analysis and other topics. ●



### Palestine Third Educational Exhibition

Date: April 2-5  
Venue: Ramallah, Palestine  
Email: info@pedex.ps  
Web: www.pedex.ps

### Study Abroad and Language Fair

Date: April 3  
Venue: Pusan, Korea  
Email: kamc@korea.com  
Web: www.kamc.com

### International Language and Study Abroad Fair

Date: April 7-8  
Venue: St Petersburg, Moscow, Russia  
Email: iciep@aha.ru  
Web: www.iciep.ru

### Kazakhstan Educational International Fair

Date: April 14-15  
Venue: Almaty, Kazakhstan  
Email: enquiries@intellect.kz  
Web: www.intellect.kz

### International Ed. Fairs of Turkey

Date: April 15-22  
Venue: Adana, Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul - Turkey  
Email: info@ieft.net  
Web: www.ieft.net

### The Partnership Workshop, Europe

Date: April 18-19  
Venue: Madrid, Spain  
Email: info@csglobal.net  
Web: www.csglobal.net

### English Australia Agents Workshop

Date: April 19-21  
Venue: Adelaide, Australia  
Email: easec@englishaustralia.com.au  
Web: www.englishaustralia.com.au

### UIEF Education & Career

Date: April 20-22  
Venue: Kiev, Kharkov - Ukraine  
Email: veronika@dteducation.com  
Web: www.dteducation.com/en/fair

## Saudi scholarships granted for study in NZ

NEW ZEALAND IS the latest country to benefit from Saudi Arabia's international scholarship programme for students. Many students have already availed themselves of King Abdullah's scholarship programme, heading primarily to the USA (see *Language Travel Magazine*, June 2006, page 29).

The latest announcement from the country has indicated that 300 students from Saudi Arabia will be selected to study in New Zealand – delighting officials there. “The scholarships could be worth more than NZ\$10 million (US\$6.9 million) a year to the New Zealand economy, based on estimated foreign exchange earnings for an international university student of around NZ\$40,000 (US\$27,435) a year,” said New Zealand Tertiary Education Minister, Michael Cullen. He added, “This represents a strong endorsement by Saudi Arabia of the quality of our teachers and the excellence of our learning environments.”

New Zealand is taking its new status as a destination for Saudi students seriously, and Cullen said that government agencies and education providers had been reviewing pastoral care and immigration procedures relating to Middle Eastern students. A representative of Education New Zealand had also helped coordinate the programme from within Saudi Arabia to ensure its smooth running. “We are satisfied that the necessary mechanisms are in place,” said Cullen. “There will be a pre-departure briefing for students on living and studying in New Zealand and the students' progress will be carefully monitored following their arrival here.”

## New framework for UK foundation programmes

A WORKING GROUP of English UK members has spent 18 months working on a plan to develop a consistent framework for foundation programmes that prepare international students for further academic study. The result is an agreed framework or structure for programmes that the working party hopes to take further and see adopted within the National Qualification Framework (NQF) as a national standard for “International Foundation”.

Sue Edwards of Aspect in Bournemouth is Co-Chairperson of English UK and a member of the working party.

She explained that while there were many types of foundation programme available, “there is no common policy, joined-up strategy or national framework for curriculum design, quality assurance or level alignment”. The framework was agreed upon in order to avoid confusion for international students and is intended to be a guideline for educators active in this sector.

Edwards said, “Programmes are often called international foundation programmes but there is a lack of consistency in usage of this term. For the first time, [a standardised framework could] bring to providers and universities a clearly defined programme with a level playing field. It will also enhance a transparent understanding [among clients and parents] of the programme they are buying.”

The agreed features of the framework indicate that a foundation programme should incorporate academic English, study and communication skills required for university study; be 26 or more weeks typically in duration; include subject study that is typical of final year of high school; include progression requirements and possibly the offer of a place at university upon completion; and the inclusion of an external exam such as IELTS was also suggested to “ensure further regulation and validity of the programme”.

### Currency

1xUS\$ =currency\*

Argentinean	Pesos	3.103
Australian	Dollar	1.291
Brazilian	Real	2.118
British	Pound	0.514
Bulgarian	Leva	1.508
Canadian	Dollar	1.173
Chilean	Pesos	546.00
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	7.764
Czech	Koruny	21.73
Danish	Kroner	5.730
Egyptian	Pound	5.691
EU	Euro	0.768
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.813
Hungarian	Forint	195.55
Icelandic	Kronur	68.06
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,048.9
Israeli	New Shekels	4.240
Japanese	Yen	121.33
Maltese	Lira	0.331
Mexican	Peso	11.021
New Zealand	Dollar	1.458
Norwegian	Kroner	6.228
Polish	Zloty	3.011
Russian	Rubles	26.36
Singaporean	Dollar	1.541
Slovakian	Koruny	26.54
South African	Rand	7.262
South Korean	Won	936.41
Swedish	Kronor	7.035
Swiss	Franc	1.248
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	33.099
Thai	Baht	33.699
Turkish	New Lira	1.405
Venezuelan	Bolivar	2,147.2

\*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 13/02/07.

### First Feltom-accredited school in Malta

THE FIRST MALTESE ENGLISH language school to undergo the accreditation process that is overseen by the language schools' association, Feltom, was awarded a Certificate of Accreditation at Feltom's AGM earlier this year. Donald Brincat from BELS in Gozo accepted the certificate for the first school to have undergone a process that becomes mandatory for all members in January 2008.

Feltom's independent accreditation council is expected to be busy this year dealing with accreditation applications and Isabella Conti, Executive Secretary of the association, said that the board had voted to waive the entrance fee for new members to join the association this year. “This should encourage more non-member schools, whose membership is subject to accreditation, to join Feltom,” she said.

At the AGM, President, John Dimech, was re-elected for another term.



BELS in Gozo has become the first language school in Malta to be accredited under Feltom's new scheme

#### Ialc Agents' Workshop

Date: April 26-29  
Venue: Cape Town, South Africa  
Email: info@ialc.org  
Web: www.ialc.org

#### British Boarding Schools Workshop

Date: May 1-3  
Venue: London, UK  
Email: Suzanne@britishboardingschools.co.uk  
Web: www.britishboardingschools.co.uk

#### IH Agent Workshop 2007

Date: May 10-12  
Venue: Gozo, Malta  
Email: affiliates@ihworld.co.uk  
Web: www.ihworldworkshop.com

#### StudyWorld 2007

Date: May 11-12  
Venue: Berlin, Germany  
Email: beate.kleessen@icwe.net  
Web: www.icwe.net

#### The Partnership Workshop, Canada

Date: May 23-24  
Venue: Vancouver, BC, Canada  
Email: info@csglobal.net  
Web: www.csglobal.net / www.bmimedia.net

#### The AAIEP Agents Workshop

Date: May 26-27  
Venue: Minneapolis, MI, USA  
Email: info@csglobal.net  
Web: www.csglobal.net / www.bmimedia.net

#### Nafsa Annual Conference

Date: May 27 - June 1  
Venue: Minneapolis, MI, USA  
Email: kathleenp@nafsa.org  
Web: www.nafsa.org

#### The Alphe UK Workshop

Date: August 31- September 2  
Venue: London, UK  
Email: jane@hthousemedia.com  
Web: www.hthousemedia.com

#### The LTM Star Awards

Date: September 1  
Venue: London, UK  
Email: mail@hthousemedia.com  
Web: www.hthousemedia.com

#### Study World

Date: September 3-5  
Venue: London, UK  
Email: fair@englishuk.com  
Web: www.studyworldfair.com