

UK schools must pay to use new visa system

The news that language schools in the UK will have to pay the government a fee of UK£10 (US\$20) for an enrolment number for each newly enrolled student from next year is causing some concern in the industry. The fee will be brought in as part of the points-based visa system that comes into force in spring 2009 for Tier 4 – relating to students (see LTM, October 2006, page 6).

Students will need to prove sufficient funds and show an enrolment number from an accredited school to gain a student visa for the UK. Schools wanting to accept student visa holders will also have to apply for a sponsor licence at a cost of UK£400 (US\$786).

Most language schools welcome the new visa system, but some are wary of the effect the extra charges will have on their business. Guido Schillig at Anglo-Continental in Bournemouth said that costs would “ultimately have to be passed on to the customer either directly or indirectly”, and added, “It is not rocket science to understand that an increase in fees will make schools in the UK less attractive than those institutions in other countries.”

Francisco Bustos from St Clare’s Oxford said that while he believed the new visa regime “is a good thing and has taken too long to happen”, the extra charges were not so welcome. “The cost perhaps is more of an issue, especially as customers will pay twice for the visa service,” he said. “[This is] another example of tax by stealth and an unnecessary burden on the summer school market.” Vincent Iannucci at Bloomsbury International in London agreed, saying that although the UK£10 sum itself might not cause a problem, “it will not be welcome on the back of other recent rises in visa charges.”

Like Iannucci, Brian Brownlee at Anglo European School in Bournemouth said the UK£10 charge would likely be added to student fees for 2009, and he pointed out that visa changes in the UK recently had caused problems, such as lack of access to biometric testing centres in Russia (see LTM, May, page 8). “Visas and problems in getting and paying for them have become the biggest threat to our business,” he said. “I am convinced that, whatever is said in its defence, the points-based system will see us lose more business.” ●

Cricketer, Steve Waugh, to promote Navitas in Asia

IN A CANNY marketing move, education group Navitas has signed up Australian cricketer and ex-captain, Steve Waugh, to promote the company in the Indian subcontinent for the next three years and provide celebrity endorsement.

Rob Brown at the Australian College of English and Australian Tesol Training Centre – part of the Navitas Group – pointed out that “Steve Waugh has legendary status in India”. He is contracted to make a certain number of public appearances promoting Navitas throughout the region. “It ties in nicely with his other philanthropic work such as the



Steve Waugh Foundation in Calcutta, which provides food and education to children living in Calcutta’s slums,” said Brown.

Navitas, formerly IBT Education, rebranded last year and has since embarked on a campaign to promote the brand to students and agents worldwide. Brown said, “Agents in Asia were very familiar with the IBT pathway programmes so we are working to increase their awareness of the Navitas brand.” ●

New websites for Gaela and Seltic

THE GLOBAL Alliance of Education and Language Associations (Gaela) launched its new website earlier this year and aims to be a “one-stop-shop for finding the best language programmes around the world”, according to Sue Blundell, Chairperson of Gaela, which is an umbrella association of national schools’ associations.

The website, www.gaela.org, provides links to all member websites, as well as useful immigration links, a link to the agent association federation, Felca, and a password-protected section for members. This will contain an up-to-date contact list of members that will facilitate communication and sharing of ideas and issues between associations, as well as a library for easy sharing of minutes, agendas and reports.

Blundell said that the website would provide information on the quality end of the language travel industry. “Gaela members wanted to show that this is a cohesive global industry,” she explained.

Meanwhile, Scottish language school association, Seltic, has also launched a new website, www.seltic.org, that provides a search facility for all the courses offered by members. Andrew Fisher, Chairperson of Seltic, said that the revamp occurred due to more and more clients being received by members through the site. “The great advantage of the website is that all of our members get the same amount of exposure whatever their size – it is a complete level playing field,” he said, adding, “All the membership were keen to develop the site.” ●

Calendar	AUGUST	M T W T F S S
	SEPTEMBER	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
	OCTOBER	8 9 10 11 12 13 14
		15 16 17 18 19 20 21
		22 23 24 25 26 27 28
		29 30 31

IEFT - International Education Fairs of Turkey
Date: August 16-17
Venue: Istanbul, Ankara - Turkey
dawn@ieft.net

FPP Edu-Media Expo Brazil Roadshow
Date: September 4-14
Venue: various, Brazil
j.ronchetti@fppmediacorp.com
www.fppmedia.com

The Alpha UK Workshop
Date: September 5-7
Venue: London, UK
jane@hothousemedia.com
www.hothousemedia.com

The LTM Star Awards
Date: September 6
Venue: London, UK
jane@hothousemedia.com
www.hothousemedia.com

The ICEF Higher Education Workshop
Date: September 7-9
Venue: Antwerp, Belgium
info@icef.com
www.icef.com

StudyWorld London
Date: September 8-10
Venue: London, UK
info@studyworldfair.com
www.studyworldfair.com

Annual Conference of the EAIE
Date: September 10-13
Venue: Antwerp, Belgium
eaie@eaie.nl
www.eaie.nl

WYSTC 2008
Date: September 13-17
Venue: Brooklyn, NY, USA
mailto:mail@wystc.org
www.wystc.org

Study Group launches Wales International Study Centre

STUDY GROUP has launched a unique international study centre in Wales that will offer foundation programmes for international students wanting to study at any of 11 universities and higher education institutions in this part of the UK.

The Wales International Study Centre was originally proposed as an idea by Nick Rhodes, Director of International Study Centers at Study Group, and has been developed over the last two years with the University of Wales, Newport, the Wales International Consortium, International Business Wales, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Welsh Universities and the British Council. Rhodes said that the centre would be located in "a state of the art building" provided by the University of Wales, Newport, but would focus on preparing students for higher education in universities throughout Wales.

"It has been an extraordinary experience working with the Welsh educa-

tion sector," Rhodes told *Language Travel Magazine*. "They recognise the value of collective promotion and collaborative communication. It is a very coherent sector. We have articulation agreements with the universities in Wales and there will be active participation by partner universities. At our other eight international study centres in the UK, there is very little transfer to other universities so this centre is unique in that it has a national focus."

The centre, which opened its doors to the first foundation English students in July, will offer foundation degree programmes in law, social studies, engineering and science from September. Next year, courses will also include pre-postgraduate programmes as well as a higher level foundation course that will provide access to the second year of a university degree course.

Rhodes said that so far the response from agents and students had been very good. "We are expecting around 50 to 60 students in September," he said. ●



The student centre in Newport, south Wales

Nafsa celebrates 60th anniversary conference

NAFSA: Association of International Educators celebrated its 60th anniversary conference in Washington, USA, in May this year and attracted record numbers of industry attendees.

Janice Mulholland, Assistant Director, Government and Media Relations at Nafsa, said, "About 9,400 people attended Nafsa's annual conference in Washington this year, which represented 114 countries. Also, Nafsa's expo hall, our largest yet, featured more than 450 exhibitors comprised of universities and organisations from across the globe."

The majority of attendees at the five-day conference were Nafsa members located in the USA but more than 3,000 participants came from outside the USA, while 1,275 attended the event for the first time.

Gwendolyne Guzman, Marketing Manager for the University of California San Diego Extension International Programs in the USA, said, "In

addition to good networking, Nafsa provides hundreds of sessions and workshops to learn the latest trends and policies to be effective in the industry."

She added that it was important to attend Nafsa every year as "the topics being discussed directly affect our recruitment efforts and university as a whole". "Nafsa is a great opportunity to meet with current agents and university partners. It is also a good opportunity to meet new agents and establish new university partnerships."

Nafsa's 2009 annual conference will be held in Los Angeles, CA, in May. ●



Pearson acquires schools in China

PEARSON, a publishing company based in the USA and UK, has acquired majority stakes in two privately-owned English language school chains in China.

The company has bought 80 per cent of the Learning English Center, which has 17 schools principally in the Shanghai area, and 50 per cent of Dell English, which has 20 schools in the Beijing region. Pearson will invest in the further expansion of Dell English over the next three years and eventually increase its stake to 70 per cent. Both school chains will be operating under the new brand 'Learning', which was launched at one of the schools in Shanghai in May.

Marjorie Scardino, Pearson's Chief Executive, said, "We are significantly accelerating our investment and growth in China. It is a market where public and private spending on education is growing rapidly, where parents see that English language proficiency is central to their children's success and adults see that English greatly improves their job prospects." ●

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.086
Australian	Dollar	1.042
Brazilian	Real	1.625
British	Pound	0.508
Bulgarian	Leva	1.240
Canadian	Dollar	1.000
Chilean	Pesos	484.05
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	6.926
Czech	Koruny	15.92
Danish	Kroner	4.784
Egyptian	Pound	5.337
EU	Euro	0.641
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.804
Hungarian	Forint	155.08
Icelandic	Kronur	76.399
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,300.00
Israeli	New Shekels	3.262
Japanese	Yen	104.38
Malaysian	Ringgit	3.223
Mexican	Peso	10.327
New Zealand	Dollar	1.271
Norwegian	Kroner	5.108
Pakistan	Rupees	67.100
Polish	Zloty	2.162
Russian	Rubles	23.663
Singaporean	Dollar	1.361
Slovakian	Koruny	19.439
South African	Rand	7.734
South Korean	Won	1,015.9
Swedish	Kronor	5.993
Swiss	Franc	1.031
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	30.280
Thai	Baht	32.599
Turkish	New Lira	1.229
Venezuelan	Bol. Fuertes	2.144

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 03/06/08.

FPP Edu-Media Expo Latin America Roadshow
Date: September 17 - October 8
Venue: various, Latin America
j.ronchetti@fppmediacorp.com
www.fppmedia.com

The AAIEP Agents Workshop
Date: October 4-5
Venue: Washington DC, USA
info@csglobal.net
www.csglobal.net /
www.bmimedia.net

Foreign Languages Plus
Date: October 6-13
Venue: Moscow, St Petersburg
- Russia
abroad@study.ru
http://plus.study.ru

Study Abroad and Language Fair
Date: October 7
Venue: Busan, Korea
kamc@korea.com
www.kamc.com

Scope on the Globe
Date: October 8-11
Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands
s.vdaakster@aromedia.nl
www.scopeontheglobe.com

International Education Fairs of Turkey
Date: October 12-19
Venue: Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, Istanbul
- Turkey
info@ieft.net
www.ieft.net

The ICEF China Workshop
Date: October 14-16
Venue: Beijing, China
info@icef.com
www.icef.com

Fedele Annual Meeting
Date: October 16-19
Venue: Madrid, Spain
info@fedelespain.com
www.fedelespain.com

China Education Expo 2008
Date: October 18-19
Venue: Beijing, China
Lily@fairlink.com.cn

a2 Morocco Fair
Date: October 21-22
Venue: Casablanca, Morocco
info@aafair.com
www.aafair.com