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# AGENTS

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# Quality English visits Italy and the Balkan States

Representatives from English language schools travelled to Milan and the Balkans to meet with local agents in missions organised by Quality English (QE) earlier this year. Overall, 17 school representatives from the UK, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Malta met with agents from throughout Italy at the one-day event in Milan.

A smaller group of seven schools went on to attend a similar event in Zagreb in Croatia and eight schools went to Ljubljana in Slovenia, where local agents were interested to discover what Quality English schools have to offer.

Carolyn Blackmore, Chief Executive of QE, said, "Agents reported how valuable it was to meet these independent schools under one roof at an event which was altogether more manageable and less intense than the big annual agents' workshops."



A group of QE school representatives in Zagreb, Croatia

David Leigh from Churchill House in Ramsgate, UK, who attended the event in Milan, was very impressed with the quality of the agents present. "Most of the leading educational agents from Milan were present – an excellent opportunity to meet partners and new contacts," he said.

In Slovenia, Vesna Kosir Salabalija from Intelektla underlined that the trade mission to her country was appreciated. "There are not a lot of schools who are prepared to visit us here," she commented.

Garth Youngusband from Frances King School of English in London, UK, agreed that the mission was definitely worthwhile for them for this reason. "Speaking to agents, they do appreciate QE taking the trouble to visit them in their own country and feel they have more time to spend with the schools than they do in some of the bigger workshops," he said. ●

## Cactus goes stateside with new office in New York City

UK-BASED agency Cactus has opened its first US office in New York, USA as part of its global expansion plans. The new office opened its doors to clients in October and aims to offer an improved service to its US student base and send more US clients to partner schools.

Cactus Owner, Rich Ambler, said, "This feels like the right time to go to New York. We have the courses, partners and people in place and we

are confident we can give it a go." Ambler is heading up the office in New York, while Richard Bradford takes over the UK office. Meanwhile, Germaine Broadbent, former Head of Cactus Language Training in the UK becomes the new Head of Sales, leading a new global sales division and focusing on business development throughout Cactus in the UK and USA.

The agency also plans to open new offices in different countries around the world in the future. Ambler said, "If we get the model right, we will be looking to open another branch somewhere in Europe, then somewhere further afield."

As well as counselling outbound clients, Cactus will also start offering foreign language courses in seven locations in New York. Tuition in 22 different languages will be offered to local clients, as well as tailor-made individual and business language courses. ●

## Agency of the month



This month, **Loch Ness English** in Fort Augustus, Scotland, nominates **Club Royale** in Japan. **Chris Kennard**, Director of the school, explains this decision.

In a series appearing each month in *Language Travel Magazine*, we ask a different language teaching institution to nominate one of their preferred agencies or agent partners, and to explain why this person/company is worthy of their nomination.



"Loch Ness English is an unusual school that does not fit into the normal mould thanks to our extreme location, so it is essential that our agents fully understand our setup. That's why we place great value on the business relationship with our main agency in Japan, Club Royale. Like us, they are small

and we have forged strong personal links with them. I have made frequent visits to them to give presentations, and their director, Horoyuki Kobuna and his British wife Debbie, have visited us here in Scotland, so they understand perfectly how we operate. Our school is located in a wild area of the Highlands of Scotland, and while it's an exciting area to visit, it's quite a contrast to metropolitan Tokyo life. There's a real risk of a dramatic culture shock for the uninitiated, but Club Royale understands this. They take the trouble to explain all aspects of the school very clearly to potential students, and this has led to a string of successful course bookings and great student satisfaction. Not all agencies would take the trouble to represent us so well."

## Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

### Q. Do you have much contact with school associations and how useful are they to you?



**Patrick Mueller,**  
StudyGlobal, Europe

"There has been an interesting development in the sector with more and more associations and accreditation schemes coming up. I believe schools must distinguish themselves by making their quality standards official. Many agents look for quality assurance and reliability. Associations help to guide agents through their selection process. The member schools' joint marketing efforts through association workshops such as IH and IALC also helps us to meet accredited schools and make potential partnerships with them. We often find ourselves referring to association's directories on their website when it comes to finding a new partner in a new destination. Visa info would very much be a useful contribution to these websites. This could be done through an agent login as many individual schools don't update their agents on the latest visa

requirements and immigration issues."



**Rodolfo Robles, Especialistas en Educacion en el Extranjero, Mexico**

"In the 10 years that I have been in the student recruitment business, I have not been involved with any language school associations and did not even know they existed. I think they would give me more help and information in order to recruit more students."



**Suad Alhalwachi,**  
Education Zone, Dubai

"I think having an association is a good idea. But I am not sure how they can help the agents? I have found that language associations are at times arrogant and [distance] themselves from the schools and are very selective of who can become a member. I have been talking to a school and they were totally against being in the

association as they felt that it will not be able to represent the aims of the schools."



**Andrea Gerber, Pro Linguis, Switzerland**

"We do very much appreciate working with language school associations such as IALC, English UK and others. Schools that are accredited by language school associations usually meet our demands and standards, which is a good base for a partnership. To work with schools that are regularly inspected and monitored gives us the security that the students get the quality they pay for and deserve. As a founder member of Salta, our focus is very quality-minded."



**Irina Mikhaylovskaya,**  
Educational Centre Vera, Russia

"We do work with school associations and find them really useful. Our agency has attended MEI-Relsa fam trips and is attending the

Fedele workshop and fam trips this year. This is an excellent opportunity to compare language schools and to see the advantages of each of them with our own eyes. Every school association website is a tool to find the best option for every particular student/client. I often visit the websites of English UK, Feltom, Tandem, MEI-Relsa and find them really helpful. In fact, I can't imagine doing my work without these websites. Besides, we received some practical help from school associations' directors a couple of times and it was great."



**Flavia Werneck,**  
Master Exchange, Brazil

"Language school associations are a vital tool that we constantly use here at Master Exchange. They not only assist in the establishment of national standards for private language schools but also help us to develop successful marketing strategies."



## Join Bell for a traditional British Christmas & New Year celebration!

23 December 2007 - 5 January 2008

Minimum age: 16 years

Minimum level: Elementary

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# Q&A



The Australian Council for Private Education and Training has plenty going on to keep it busy. RUTH ROSEN, Manager for International Policy and Marketing, tells us about its latest activities.

## Fact box

**Full name:** Australian Council for Private Education and Training

**Year established:** 1992

**Number of members:** 1,200 in total, around 120 ELT providers

**Type of members:** Private/non-Government funded

**Association's main role:** Government lobbying, policy positions, promotions and marketing, quality and compliance

**Government recognition:** yes

**Code of practice:** yes

**Complaints procedure:** yes

**Agent workshops/fam trips:** no, but working on it for 2008

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### What has your association been up to in the last 12 months?

We have participated in government delegations to China and India, hosted numerous international delegations and developed new relationships with private provider associations in Singapore, China and Thailand. Acpet has held regular meetings with the Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) – the government authority for skilled migration. We developed a new website for the National Code 2007 [for education providers] and provided workshops and training for members to assist in its implementation. Similarly, Acpet provided training for the implementation of the new Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007.

### Have you been involved in any government discussions regarding issues within the ELT industry in Australia?

Having a significant membership delivering ELT in Australia, Acpet plays an active role in discussions around strategy and policy. Acpet has lobbied to improve the Assessment Levels for student visas for English language study, and contributed to the policy changes for the English language level requirements for general skilled migration.

### What main challenges are your members currently facing?

The major challenge facing members is to ensure staff are well trained and compliant with the new National Code 2007 and AQTF 2007. In addition, members need to better understand the changes to the general skilled migration programme that came into effect on 1 September. Many students are keen to use the education and training pathways for a general skilled migration outcome, and new opportunities have arisen for members to offer additional English language training.

### What marketing activities are you planning for the near future?

Acpet is hosting a Thailand Ministry of Education delegation and continues to promote the private sector in its meetings with visiting international delegations and individuals. Acpet will participate in Australian government missions to India and the Middle East, and has been invited to present at an international forum in Germany.

## On the move

Grace Wu has been appointed Sales and Administration Manager for International House Qingdao in China. She will work with both overseas agents as well as Qingdao-based companies to oversee International House's educational administration. Ms Wu worked both as an ESL teacher on examination courses and a business translator before moving to the business end of ESL.



Laetitia Maury-Larivière has been appointed Programmes Director of SILC Group in France. Ms Maury-Larivière has been with SILC for more than six years, running the Spanish branch in Barcelona. She now joins the head office and will be responsible for development and promotion of the incoming, outgoing and adventure programmes, along with coordinating relationships with SILC's partners and clients.



Andy Millburn (top) has been appointed Director of Business Management at the British Council in London with responsibility for products and services in ELT and exams. Mr Millburn has worked for the British Council since 1990 with postings in Asia and the Middle East as well as the UK, where he has managed ELT projects and teaching and exams services. Tony Jones (below him) is the new Manager of English Language Quality Services with responsibility for Accreditation UK. He has 20 years of experience working for the British Council in the Middle East and North Africa. Barbara Hewitt (third) takes on the role of Director, Research and Consultancy responsible for coordinating research into developments in English language teaching and learning. Finally, Sharon Parr has been appointed Director of Business Development Global Products leading on a range of new British Council products aimed specifically at learners and teachers of English.



Sue Damment has joined Study Group as Head of Marketing Communications. Ms Damment brings with her 15 years' design and marketing experience and will be responsible for this internal agency at Study Group. As Study Group continues its meteoric growth, she will guide the branding, design and production of all marketing materials for the divisions worldwide.



## Grapevine



The Rose of York Language School in London, UK, moved to new premises in Hallam Street earlier this year. In the picture below, School Principal, Chikako Williams (centre), cuts the ribbon with her Director of Studies (right) and Marketing Manager (left) to officially open the new premises. The school gained British Council accreditation in 2005 and now teaches over 300 students.



Pacific Language Institute in Vancouver, BC, Canada is proud to announce that its team of international students won the Westrek Sport & Social League for the ESL Summer League 2007. "This is the premiership soccer league for ESL schools in Vancouver," said Raymond Loretan, Marketing Manager at the school, although, he added that it is "not the equivalent to the English Premiership".



The annual Wycst event was held in Istanbul, Turkey this year and the social activities were as lively as ever, with reports of delegates "going to Asia" for dinner and back to Europe for drinks. Pictured



left, Jane Gilham, Alpha Workshops Manager with Jose Flores, ex-Kaplan; Jose Corrie and Ivo Haefliiger (far right), both Eurocentres. And right, a frenzied scene from the dancefloor on the final evening's closing party.

**Next issue - January 2008: Special Report** reports on the latest trends in the junior sector • **Market Report** charts business performance in Spain • **Direction** looks at the rise of the IELTS exam • **Agency Survey** canvasses Germany • **Destination** tours Ireland • **Spotlight** lists third-age programmes in the USA • **Status** Malta



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For more information about EC Boston, or any of our other centres, please visit our website or drop us an email at [ec@ecenglish.com](mailto:ec@ecenglish.com)

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