

Visa reforms likely in the USA

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinian	Pesos	0.995
Australian	Dollar	1.992
Brazilian	Real	2.723
British	Pound	0.696
Bulgarian	Leva	2.172
Canadian	Dollar	1.576
Chilean	Pesos	714.55
Chinese (PR)	Yuan	8.267
Czech	Koruny	37.680
Danish	Kroner	8.327
Egyptian	Pound	4.230
EU	Euro	1.121
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.80
Hungarian	Forint	283.390
Icelandic	Kronur	104.880
Indonesian	Rupiah	10,250.0
Israeli	New Shekels	4.293
Japanese	Yen	119.50
Maltese	Lira	0.442
Mexican	Peso	9.475
New Zealand	Dollar	2.463
Norwegian	Kroner	8.876
Polish	Zloty	4.223
Russian	Rubles	29.700
Singaporean	Dollar	1.768
Slovakian	Koruny	48.895
South African	Rand	9.020
South Korean	Won	1302.0
Swedish	Krona	10.635
Swiss	Franc	1.621
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.500
Thai	Baht	44.260
Turkish	Lira	1,595,687.0
Venezuelan	Bolivar	742.50

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 28/10/01

Arels joins UK tourism body

THE Association of Recognised English Language Services (Arels) in the UK has joined a new tourism alliance that has been established to provide one voice for the entire tourism industry in the country.

Tony Millns, Chief Executive of the association, said Arels was pleased to playing a part in this new initiative. "Language students contribute over UK£1 billion (US\$1.4 billion) a year to the UK's economy," he said.

The association has also reformed its all-party parliamentary group, which joins Members of Parliament and peers from all political parties. They aim to take up issues on the language teaching industry's behalf. □

Senator Dianne Feinstein, who proposed a six-month moratorium on US student visa issuance in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA, has backed away from her proposal, removing the bleak prospect of a six-month ban on student visa issuance. However, the pressure remains on the US education industry to work with the government in devising stricter immigration procedures as soon as possible.

Last year, David Ward, President of the American Council on Education, wrote to Senator Feinstein and later gave testimony before the Senate subcommittee on technology, terrorism and government information.

Representing many US education associations, Ward outlined proposals for reforming the immigration system – including the rapid implementation of the Student Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) tracking scheme – which, he argued, would make it unnecessary for "more far-reaching actions that, at a minimum, would have serious consequences for... our nation's colleges and universities and our economy".

Reneging on her original stance on the student visa issue,

Feinstein allegedly commented that the moratorium would not be necessary if institutions work with the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) to better monitor foreign students. Ward suggested that institutions supply electronic updates of student enrolment to the INS within 30 days of each academic term's deadline; report the non-appearance of students; and designate a member of staff as a liaison for the INS. Other proposals included a recommendation that the INS informs institutions of a student's entry into the country using an I-20 form issued by them.

A new system was also suggested in which schools no longer issue the I-20 forms required by a student to gain a visa from their local consulate. Ward told the subcommittee, "We understand your concern about the possibility that international students may receive more than one I-20 form if they apply to and are admitted by multiple colleges." Instead, the system suggested would see institutions sending I-20 forms direct to a US consulate.

The main thrust of Ward's suggestions for improving student visa security in the longer term, however, centred on SEVP. "We believe that the single most im-

portant step in improving our ability to monitor international students and work with federal authorities will come from the prompt implementation of [SEVP]," he said. He called for federal funding to get the project up and running, and noted that James W Ziglar, Commissioner of the INS, testified that the agency had been unable to develop the SEVP system without the student fees which are intended to fund it.

US intensive English language programme associations, AAIEP and UCIEP, issued a joint statement supporting these points, and called on Congress to "fully fund both the research, development and operating costs... as part of the US\$40 billion emergency supplemental appropriation".

However, Feinstein said that student fees would also have to be collected to fund the scheme, despite the fact that she had asked the President for emergency federal funds of US\$32 million to speed up SEVP's development.

Fellow sub-committee member, Senator Kyl, added, "[International] students and universities have to bear part of the expenses. I don't think it's too much of a sacrifice [for institutions] to help us enforce the laws [they] benefit from."

Moves to improve languages in China and Taiwan

THE PRESSURE on Asian students to speak and understand foreign languages looks likely to increase in China and Taiwan as colleges and universities in the countries introduce or improve proficiency tests for students.

From this year, all Chinese postgraduate students will have to undertake listening and speaking examinations in English, Russian and Japanese, according to *China Education Daily*, to complement the existing language tests. The Ministry of Education enacted the new regulation in July last year to eliminate the problem of "dumb English" and promote listening and speaking proficiency.

From 2003, scores from the listening and speaking compo-

nents will count towards the final language exam grade, although this year, the exam score will just be used as a reference when making admissions decisions.

China Daily reported that some university professors welcomed the move. Ge Xiulian, a professor at Capital Normal University, remarked, "I have taught postgraduates English for over 20 years. Many of my students cannot carry on a conversation with native speakers."

Meanwhile, in Taiwan, Taipei's Mayor, Ma Ying-jeou, has been lamenting the standard of English among Taiwanese. According to Singapore newspaper, *Straits Times*, Ma has asked two colleges, which are under the

city's jurisdiction, to require all graduating students to pass an English proficiency test.

He said that local students were lagging being other Asian nations in their English language proficiency, adding that both Beijing and Shanghai had already implemented strategies to improve English standards among their populations. As an example, he cited that China was aiming for one-quarter of all taxi drivers in Shanghai to have passed an English test by the time it hosts the 2008 Olympic Games.

Taipei Physical Education College is one institution that is responding to the call for English tests. Students aiming to become elementary school teachers must

Ward, in his proposals, called for sufficient funding for SEVP and an increase in the budget for consular affairs at the Department of State to allow for additional staffing and better facilities where necessary. Many in the industry regard current student visa procedures as out of date. Renovation and additional funding – to allow for the INS to check that students leave when their visas expire, for example – would be welcomed. Allan Goodman, President of the Institute of International Education, commented, “There is no question... everyone thinks the system needs to be fixed.”

Many individual schools also share this viewpoint, although there are still some fears in the industry that extensive background checks, for example, or mismanagement of the scheme, will deter students.

Foreign students already in the USA were said to be broadly supportive of any tightening of the visa procedures, according to the *San Jose Mercury News*. “It’s good for the country,” said Sirtorn Sattapant, a student from Thailand studying at San Francisco State University. “Maybe it will be less good for me. But if [I am not disturbed] too much, I think it will be ok.” □

now take English as a compulsory course. Taiwan’s *United Daily News* also reported that from this year, Taiwan University will test students on their English reading and listening ability before they are allowed to graduate.

In another move in Taiwan, the Taipei City Government is planning to offer free tuition in English and Japanese to high school students to improve international relations. Lee Hsi-chin, Director of the city’s Bureau of Education, said that the free courses, which will be offered at 29 local high schools, would focus on tourist conversations. They would enable Taiwanese citizens to “understand the diversification of cultures”, he explained. □

Australia and NZ tipped for student growth

BOTH Australia and New Zealand could experience a surge in student numbers as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA, according to industry forecasts. Many students are expected to favour studying in Australasian countries as they turn to countries they perceive as being safe.

Both countries experienced good student growth last year and Education New Zealand was reported to be discussing strategies to cope with another expected rise in student numbers this year.

“Clearly we are an alternative [to the USA],” said Lester Taylor, Chief Executive of Education New Zealand, “but it would be inappropriate to go out and market New Zealand [as a safe destination] at this stage.” New Zealand’s new marketing brand already draws upon safety as one of the reasons for choosing to study in New Zealand (see *Language Travel Magazine*, December 2001, page 7).

Others in the industry in New Zealand said it was still too early to tell if students would choose New Zealand above other destinations. John Langdon of Dominion English School in Auckland told the *Evening Post* that any increase would only be apparent by March.

Meanwhile, in Australia, promotion body English Australia (EA) has reported that English language teaching is one of the fastest growing export industries in the country. A survey of 87 English language colleges revealed market growth of 10 per cent each year, reported Alyson Moore, EA Chairperson.

Moore noted that the number of European students grew by 41 per cent in one year, and added that numbers from countries such as Sweden, Switzerland and Brazil might continue to rise because of the effects of the US terrorist attacks on the market. “[EA] believes that despite the current world uncertainty, Australia is now more attractive than ever,” she said. □

Calendar

International Studies Fair

Date: 18-20 January
Venue: Paris, France
Contact: Stéphanie Romano, L’Etudiant
27 Rue du Chemin Vert
Paris, 75011, France
Tel: +33 1480 74206
Email: stephanie.romano@letudiant.fr

Foreign Languages Plus

Date: 25-28 January
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Date: 7-10 February
Venue: Moscow, Russia
Contact: Mikhail Koudriavtsev
BKC International House
Moscow, Starovagankovskiy per, 15, office 5,
Moscow, 121019, Russia
Tel: +7 0957375225
Fax: +7 0957376579
Email: abroad@study.ru

International Study Fair

Date: 26-27 January
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Contact: Ms Boonsiri
Trakulseangrutsamee
Study Overseas Centre
179 Bangkok Bazar
Nr Big C Dept.
Rajdamri Road, Lumpini
Bangkok, 10330, Thailand
Tel: +66 2255 7592
Fax: +66 2255 7593
Email: studyoverseas@fareast.net.th

Expolangues

Date: 30 January - 3 February
Venue: Paris, France
Contact: Camille Rabehanta
L’Etudiant (address as above)
Tel: +33 148074372
Email: camille.rabehanta@letudiant.fr

American Education Expo 2002

Date: 10-11 February
Venue: Dubai, UAE
Date: 13 February
Venue: Abu-Dhabi, UAE
Date: 14 February
Venue: Muscat, Oman
Date: 16-17 February
Venue: Kuwait City, Kuwait
Date: 20-21 February
Venue: Manama, Bahrain
Date: 22-24 February
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey
Date: 24-26 February
Venue: Seoul, Korea
Date: 27-28 February
Venue: Pusan, Korea
Contact: Max Visconti
ISN Inc. 1500 Market Street
12th Floor East Tower
Philadelphia, PA, 19102, USA
Tel: +1 215 246 3432
Fax: +1 215 477 7378
Email: ISN4YOU@aol.com

Nolia Education and Future Fair

Date: 12-24 February
Venue: Piteå, Sweden
Contact: Annica Renberg
Nolia AB, Noliagatan, 1
Piteå, 94131, Sweden
Tel: +46 911 93324
Fax: +46 911 18330

Kub Educo 2002

Date: 14-19 February
Venues: Yugoslavia, Serbia,
Montenegro
Contact: Magdalena Jugovic,
Kub Travel Enterprises
Vasina 10, Belgrade, 11000
Yugoslavia
Tel: +381 11634648
Fax: +381 11633957
Email: maggie@kub.co.yu

Saíão Do Estudante

Date: 28 February
Venue: Ribeirão Preto, Brazil

Date: 2-3 March
Venue: São Paulo, Brazil
Date: 5 March
Venue: Curitiba, Brazil
Date: 7 March
Venue: Salvador, Brazil
Date: 9-10 March
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Date: 12-13 March
Venue: Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Contact: Nexus Media Ltd.
Nexus House, Azalea Drive
Swanley, Kent, BR8 8HU, UK
Tel: +44 1322 660070
Fax: +44 1322 616305
Email: info@nexusmedia.com

Salon de L’Etudiant

Date: 14-17 March
Venue: Paris, France
Contact: L’Etudiant (as above)

Vieca International Education Fair

Date: 16-17 March
Venue: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date: 19-20 March
Venue: Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam
Contact: Vieca c/o Vietnam Education
Promotion Association, 30 Ta
Quang Buu, Hanoi, Vietnam
Tel: +86 48223675
Fax: +86 48223699
Email: vieca@ipt.vn

Tieca International Education Fair

Date: 23-24 March
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand
Contact: Tieca, Saijai Sriyayanta
503/30 KSL Tower 18th
Floor, Sri-Ayudthaya Road,
Phayathai, Rajthavee,
Bangkok, 10400, Thailand
Tel: +662 642 6114
Fax: +662 642 6115
Email: admin@tieca.com

Tosa International Education Fair

Date: 29-31 March
Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
Date: 2 April
Venue: Taichung, Taiwan
Date: 3 April
Venue: Kaohsiung, Taiwan
Contact: Albert Lee, Tosa, Room 1122,
No. 15 Fu-hsing North Rd,
Taipei, ROC 105, Taiwan
Tel: +886 277 39330
Fax: +886 277 39481
Email: ablee@tps6.seed.net.tw

International Educational Fair

Date: 2 April
Venue: Pusan, Korea
Contact: Mansuk Bae
KAMC, 422-30 Jangjeon 3 -
Dong, Keumjeong-Ku
Pusan, 609-840, Korea
Tel: +82 51517 7340
Fax: +82 51517 7341
Email: kamc@thrunet.com

Expolingua Madrid

Date: 11-14 April
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Contact: Brenda Groot-Wesseldijk/
Carmen Alemany
Expolingua Madrid
Guzmán el Bueno, 99-1° izda
Madrid, E-28015, Spain
Tel: +34 915431702
Fax: +34 915432519
Email: info@expolingua.es

The Alphe USA Workshop

Date: 15-17 April
Venue: Las Vegas, USA
Contact: Matthew Northover
Hothouse Media Ltd
11-15 Emerald Street
London, WC1N 3QL, UK
Tel: +44 20 7440 4027
Fax: +44 20 7440 4033
Email: matthew@hothousemedia.com