

# Ireland looking at quality control

Ireland is the latest country to consider aggressive marketing tactics to attract international students to its shores. A report called *The Internationalisation of Irish Educational Services*, which was commissioned by several government departments, has suggested a number of strategies aimed at doubling the number of international students in the higher education sector in Ireland by 2010.

It suggests that an enforced quality system should be introduced that would provide a code of conduct for the pastoral care of international students and certify the quality of English language teaching institutions. A further suggestion is that the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform ties visa issuance to a requirement for all language schools to be quality-certified, thereby refusing visas to students looking to enrol at an unaccredited English language teaching institution.

This is a similar model to the one being implemented, albeit slowly, in the UK. From January, all UK schools have to be regis-

tered to be able accept student visa holders, and a plan to upgrade these requirements, from registration to a more comprehensive accreditation, is on the cards.

The Irish interdepartmental working group also recommends that a quality mark is developed for tertiary-level institutions, which could be used in marketing campaigns. While international students currently account for seven per cent of the higher education student community, a goal of 15 per cent has been set by 2010. According to the *Irish Times*, there is potential for growth in the secondary and tertiary education systems, with many unfilled places at several secondary schools.

"Demand is increasing in all sectors and it is in the national interest that all parties and agencies work together to achieve common goals," states the report, which recommends that a central agency be responsible for overseeing the new international student recruitment drive. ●

## New schools for Malvern House

MALVERN HOUSE in London, UK, has opened a new teaching centre in Piccadilly, central London and launched a school in Campinas, Brazil. The Piccadilly school is the company's third school in London and offers 18 classrooms, a library and café. Marketing Director, Nick Hobson, said, "The location and facilities are our best yet."

The school in Brazil has 14 classrooms and offers a similar range of courses to those offered in London. Stephan Rousounis at Malvern House said the school would be promoted as a beacon of English language training for the city. ●



The new centres in London, UK (top) and Campinas, Brazil

## Wellington, NZ, courts students

ENGLISH LANGUAGE student numbers in Wellington, New Zealand, have dropped by 30 per cent in one year, according to research undertaken by Education Wellington International (EWI), a business group that has universities, institutes of technology and private language schools as its members. In the first six months of 2004, English language student numbers stood at 393, down from 568 in the same period in 2003.

EWI has teamed up with Positively Wellington Business to distribute a CD-Rom about the region to potential students. With subtitles in Chinese, Korean, Thai, Japanese, Vietnamese, Russian and Spanish, the CD-Roms are being sent overseas to schools, tertiary institutions and agents. "Most people overseas have heard only of Auckland and Christchurch," said Marilyn Davies of EWI. "The CD is one tool that will help to redress the balance."

Davies pointed out that there are five cities in the region, offering a variety of lifestyles. She also mentioned advantages such as "a sense of space you'd be lucky to find anywhere else in the world", low-cost living and scenery seen in the film, *Lord of the Rings*. ●

## Learning a language changes the brain

NEURO-scientists at University College London, UK, have compared the brains of bilingual people with monolinguals, and found that those who speak two languages have more grey matter in the brain; nerve endings which are generally responsible for processing information.

Published in the journal, *Nature*, the findings revealed that the earlier a language was learnt, the better the ability and the denser the brain in one area. The effect on the brain's structure was most significant when language study began before the age of five. ●

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

**Fitur 2005**  
Date: 26-30 January  
Venue: Madrid, Spain  
Email: fitur@ifema.es  
Web: www.fitur.ifema.es

**Foreign Languages Plus International Fair**  
Date: 5-13 February  
Venue: St Petersburg, Moscow  
- Russia  
Email: plus@study.ru  
Web: www.plus.study.ru

**Expolangues**  
Date: 9-12 February  
Venue: Paris, France  
Email: camille.rabehanta@letudiant.fr  
Web: www.letudiant.fr

**Nolia Education and Future Fair**  
Date: 16-17 February  
Venue: Piteå, Sweden  
Email: info@nolia.se  
Web: www.nolia.se

**The Partnership Workshop**  
Date: 24-25 February

Venue: São Paulo, Brazil  
Email: rupert@csglobal.net  
Web: www.csassociedades.com

**Kub Educo 2005**  
Date: 25-27 February  
Venue: Belgrade, Serbia  
Email: maggie@kub.co.yu  
Web: www.kub.co.yu/educo.htm

**Salao do Estudante**  
Date: 1 March  
Venue: Curitiba, Brazil  
Date: 3-4 March

Venue: Belo Horizonte, Brazil  
Date: 6-7 March  
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
Date: 9 March  
Venue: Florianópolis, Brazil  
Date: 26-27 March  
Venue: São Paulo, Brazil  
Contact: C&S (as before)

**The Pacific-Rim Workshop**  
Date: 1-2 March  
Venue: Tokyo, Japan  
Email: info@icef.com  
Web: www.icef.com

## Changes made to Australia's Neas

CHANGES ARE being made to the governance of Australia's National ELT Accreditation Scheme (Neas), in part, to satisfy the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (Acpet), which spent much of last year calling for a change to the previous system of governance to make the Neas set-up more independent.

Neas was originally set up by the Elicos Association, now known as English Australia (EA), as the nationwide accreditation system for English language training (ELT) at the government's request in 1980.

But in the last year, Acpet has claimed that an accreditation system, essentially linked to one industry body, was no longer appropriate. At a forum organised by the Department of Education, Science & Training (Dest) last year, EA suggested making changes to diminish any legal ties between the two organisations. The Neas board will now comprise an independent Chairperson, representatives of state and government departments, an EA representative and other elected members.

Sue Blundell at EA explained that the EA representative on the board would be there to represent the ELT-sector association and because of EA's role in the setting up of Neas. "EA believes that these changes will strengthen the position of Neas as the national accreditation body, as indicated by the endorsement of the changes by the significant majority of participants at the forum," she said.

Despite the amendments, Acpet has voiced concerns that the changes have not gone far enough. Tim Smith of Acpet said that he would appeal for Acpet to also have a seat on the Neas board, a suggestion which is currently under discussion. ●

## Refusal rate rockets in UK

STUDENT VISA refusals by UK authorities have increased considerably, according to information released by UKVisas, the body responsible for processing visa applications. UKVisas revealed that it refused almost 30 per cent of applicants in the 2002/2003 academic year.

According to a report in *The Observer* newspaper, which highlighted that close to one-in-three students was rejected in that period, the Foreign Office said that only bogus students were denied entry to the UK. The Foreign Office is jointly responsible for UKVisas with the Home Office.

UKVisas refused 52,520 requests in this period, and the number of students arriving on student visas from outside the European Union fell by 14 per cent. Rejection was most common in South Asia, while nearly half of applicants from Equatorial Guinea were refused.

According to a separate study from the National Audit Office, refusal rates for student visa holders are twice as high as the refusal rate for tourists and four times higher than for work permit applicants. ●

## Second association for South Africa

ENGLISH SOUTH Africa is the latest association to be launched in South Africa (see page 19), pitching itself alongside the English Language Teaching Association of South Africa (Eltasa). The new association, which formed in the autumn, currently has six members: Cape Academy, Cape Studies, Cape Town School of English, Language Teaching Centre, Magister Internships in South Africa and Cape Executive Communications.

"We see ourselves as customer-oriented providers, which means that we offer a wide range of products from school to school, from the tailor-made option through to the general English group course,"



said Jens von Wichtingen of Cape Studies. Many Bredell of the Cape Town School of English added that the association's aim was to set standards, conduct group marketing and liaise with the government. She would only say that a group of schools decided not to join Eltasa for "various reasons".

An Eltasa spokesperson said that it wanted to represent the whole industry, but that its high standards had to backed up in practice by its members. ●

## Currency

1xUS\$ =currency\*

Argentinean	Pesos	2.962
Australian	Dollar	1.342
Brazilian	Real	2.853
British	Pound	0.544
Bulgarian	Leva	1.534
Canadian	Dollar	1.226
Chilean	Pesos	608.80
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	8.281
Czech	Koruny	24.73
Danish	Kroner	5.852
Egyptian	Pound	6.216
EU	Euro	0.787
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.781
Hungarian	Forint	193.12
Icelandic	Kronur	69.067
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,096.0
Israeli	New Shekels	4.448
Japanese	Yen	106.27
Maltese	Lira	0.337
Mexican	Peso	11.483
New Zealand	Dollar	1.460
Norwegian	Kroner	6.444
Polish	Zloty	3.389
Russian	Rubles	28.785
Singaporean	Dollar	1.667
Slovakian	Koruny	31.392
South African	Rand	6.177
South Korean	Won	1,115.3
Swedish	Kronor	7.140
Swiss	Franc	1.208
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	33.515
Thai	Baht	41.094
Turkish	Lira	1,471,281.1
Venezuelan	Bolivar	1,919.0

\*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 02/11/04

**21st International Fair "Education and Career"**  
Date: 3-5 March  
Venue: Moscow, Russia  
Email: rtv@znanie.info  
Web: www.znanie.info

**ExpoBelta 2005**  
Date: 5-6 March  
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil  
Date: 8 March  
Venue: Curitiba, Brazil  
Date: 10 March  
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Date: 12 March  
Venue: Salvador, Brazil  
Email: expobelta@belta.org.br  
Web: www.belta.org.br

**Aula - Education Opportunities Exhibition**  
Date: 9-13 March  
Venue: Madrid, Spain  
Email: aula@ifema.es  
Web: www.aula.ifema.es

**Alphe Intensive Asia**  
Date: 13-15 March

Venue: Seoul, Korea  
Date: 16-18 March  
Venue: Tokyo, Japan  
Date: 19-21 March  
Venue: Shanghai, China  
Email: jane@hthousemedia.com  
Web: www.hthousemedia.com

**Work Experience Travel Market**  
Date: 16-17 March  
Venue: Prague, Czech Republic  
Email: mailbox@gwea.org  
Web: www.gwea.org

**The Moscow Workshop**  
Date: 19-21 March  
Venue: Moscow, Russia  
Contact: ICEF (as before)

**Korea Student Fair**  
Date: 26-27 March  
Venue: Seoul, Korea  
Email: fairs@ktfairs.com  
Web: www.ktfairs.com

**Expolingua Madrid**  
Date: 8-10 April  
Venue: Madrid, Spain

Email: info@expolingua.es  
Web: www.expolingua.es

**EA Agents' Workshop**  
Date: 14-16 April  
Venue: Perth, Australia  
Email: easec@englishaustralia.com.au  
Web: www.elicos.edu.au

**Int. Education Fairs of Turkey**  
Date: 17-24 April  
Venue: Adana, Ankara, Izmir - Turkey  
Email: info@ieft.net  
Web: www.ieft.net