

Immigration changes for the UK

Education institutions in the UK enrolling student visa holders must maintain records of enrolment and attendance and supply these to the Home Office if requested to do so. In addition, visa applicants will have to provide biometric information by the end of 2008 under immigration changes introduced in March this year.

Currently, schools are encouraged to report students who fail to attend courses under a voluntary system, although this is due to become mandatory under the new points-based system for managed migration, which is being introduced over the next two years.

The new requirement was announced in the report *Securing the UK border*, introduced by the UK Immigration Minister, Liam Byrne, as part of a raft of immigration changes. Other changes included the unveiling of a short-term student visitor visa in September 2007 for those wanting to study in the UK for a period of less than six months and the introduction of biometric visas by the end of 2008, whereby all visa applicants will be required to provide biometric information to officials before entering



PM Tony Blair and Home Office Minister, John Reid, were treated to a demonstration of the new biometric data capture equipment

the UK. Under the new system, short-term students will no longer be able to enter the country on a visitor visa but instead must demonstrate that they are attending a registered educational institution, can maintain and accommodate themselves during their stay and that they intend to leave at the end of their study period.

UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Home Office Minister, John Reid, were given a demonstration of biometric data capture equipment on the day the new immigration strategy was unveiled. Blair said, "The ease of modern travel means that many more people can visit countries like Britain

to work, study, meet relatives and friends or for a holiday. It makes it more important than ever that we know with confidence who is entering our country."

Earlier in the same month, UK visa fees were raised for those applying for a visa after April 1. The charges for a work permit visa increased from UK£85 (US\$168) to UK£200 (US\$396), while student visas increased from UK£85 (US\$168) to UK£99 (US\$196)●

India scholarships doubled in the USA

DEMAND AMONG US students for scholarships to study an Indian language has prompted the US government to double the number of scholarships available to travel to India under the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI). Last year, over 4,500 Americans applied for one of the 165 scholarships available, causing officials to double the number available this year to 365.

Thomas Farrell, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, said, "India is very much on the radar of American students and there is a mad rush among them for studying [an] Indian [language] and other foreign languages." Besides Indian languages, government scholarships are also available under the NSLI scheme for students wanting to learn Turkish, Persian, Korean, Chinese, Russian and Arabic. ●

Work rights extended in the UK

INTERNATIONAL students gaining a bachelor's degree or higher level qualification from a UK college or university are now eligible for a one-year work permit after graduating, following a change in the rules from May this year.

The new regulations, called the International Graduates Scheme, replace the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme, where graduates from certain degree subjects with a 2:2 degree class or above were allowed to stay in the UK and work for up to one year. Under the new scheme, all graduates will be eligible for the work permit, whatever their degree

class and subject. Minister for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education, Bill Rammell, said, "International students bring many benefits to the UK. After the United States, the UK is the country which attracts the most international [university] students and we need to build on this enviable position," he relates.

Meanwhile, in Scotland, the Fresh Talent Initiative allowing international students of Scottish universities the chance to stay in the country and work for two years after graduating was extended to include graduates of postgraduate certificates and diplomas. The Scottish Executive is also investing a further UK£390,000 (US\$772,277) into the Fresh Talent Initiative in order to encourage more international students to settle in Scotland. The money will go towards funding support activities for international students during their studies in Scotland and also a scheme bringing together students from Scotland, the USA, Canada and Poland to encourage entrepreneurship in students.

Tom McCabe, Scottish Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform, said, "Already we can see the success of this initiative – more than 4,300 international graduates have chosen to stay and work at the end of their studies." ●



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

The Alpha UK Workshop
Date: August 31 - September 2
Venue: London, UK
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

The LTM Star Awards
Date: September 1
Venue: London, UK
Email: mail@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

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

The Icef Higher Education Workshop
Date: September 10-11
Venue: Trondheim, Norway
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Annual Conference of the EAIE
Date: September 12-15
Venue: Trondheim, Norway
Email: eaie@eaie.nl
Web: www.eaie.nl

Foreign Languages Plus
Date: September 15-17
Venue: Moscow, Russia
Date: September 23-24
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Email: abroad@study.ru
Web: http://plus.study.ru

WYSTC 2007
Date: October 3-5
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey
Email: mailbox@wystc.org
Web: www.wystc.org

New Zealand language association merger

NEW ZEALAND'S two English language school associations have merged, making English New Zealand the sole representative group for private and public English language schools in the country.

The Association of Private Providers of English Language (Appel) will continue to deal with administrative issues for the next few months but will no longer take any public action and visitors to its website are being directed to the English New Zealand website.

The majority of Appel members voted for the merger and Frances Woolcott, Appel Chairperson, said, "Appel has championed the interests of private English language schools, but English New Zealand's coverage of private and public schools will give it greater influence. The enormous support from Appel members shows that this is the right move."

As members of English New Zealand have to fulfil specific quality and marketing requirements, the association has set

up an associate membership package that will be available to all schools. Associate members will be able to take part in all activities concerning government-related issues.

Angela Oliver, English New Zealand Chairperson, said that the merger would help to coordinate efforts to benefit the industry in New Zealand. "One industry body will help us to link our work on marketing, quality standards and government relations," she said. "English New Zealand's aim is to attract students profitably and sustainably into members' schools," she added. ●



Angela Oliver and Frances Woolcott celebrate the merger

Worldwide Spanish exam system unveiled

A NEW WAY of assessing non-native speakers of the Spanish language, which has been designed for students of Spanish throughout the world, was unveiled at the Fourth International Congress of the Spanish Language held in Cartagena de Indias in Colombia this year.

The International System for Certification of Spanish as a Foreign Language (SICELE) has been developed over the past four years with input from academics in Spain and Latin America, and will be available to students in 2008. The assessment aims to acknowledge differences in the Spanish language spoken in different countries while providing a unified way of testing students of the language for academic and other purposes.

Cesar Molina, Director of Instituto Cervantes in Spain, which was involved in the certification system, said that more than 14 million people currently study Spanish worldwide and added, "We've been very careful about respecting the particular characteristics of each country."

Ane Munoz, also from the Instituto Cervantes, said that the SICELE was not "an exam, but a system of examinations and certifications in the Spanish language". She added that the exam was likely to make its mark in the future if it was proved to "meet certain standards, including quality, transparency and coherence" ●

Radio station to tie in with language courses

A LANGUAGE CENTRE in the UK has developed an Internet-based radio station aimed at expatriates living overseas and plans to expand this to cater for former and potential language students by the end of the year.

Peter Richards from The Language Centre Torbay in Devon said that, so far, they have concentrated on marketing their English language podcasts in France but he hopes to expand this in the future. "So far the programmes are delivered in English but we are planning to include Dutch, French and Spanish," he said.

The website, www.expatsradio.com, will provide podcasts as well as text material for language students wanting to brush up their skills after returning home from a language course overseas, as well as encouraging students to come to the UK to learn English where it is spoken. Richards said, "The benefit of the Internet is that you never miss a programme. You can listen to what you want when you want. Students will be able to choose a podcast dealing with

a particular language topic and then click on different links within the website to other texts and examples."

The radio station currently has 140,000 listeners and Richards says that they aim to increase this to one million in the next two years. "Language is all about communication," he relates. "Whether you are talking to people in a classroom or talking to them through another medium such as radio it is all about applying communication skills." ●

Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.085
Australian	Dollar	1.208
Brazilian	Real	2.189
British	Pound	0.505
Bulgarian	Leva	1.446
Canadian	Dollar	1.136
Chilean	Pesos	532.60
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	7.726
Czech	Koruny	20.75
Danish	Kroner	5.531
Egyptian	Pound	5.694
EU	Euro	0.741
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.814
Hungarian	Forint	182.22
Icelandic	Kronur	65.84
Indonesian	Rupiah	9,078.5
Israeli	New Shekels	4.063
Japanese	Yen	118.91
Maltese	Lira	0.319
Mexican	Peso	11.030
New Zealand	Dollar	1.374
Norwegian	Kroner	6.008
Polish	Zloty	2.845
Russian	Rubles	26.35
Singaporean	Dollar	1.518
Slovakian	Koruny	24.80
South African	Rand	7.202
South Korean	Won	930.668
Swedish	Kronor	6.874
Swiss	Franc	1.215
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	33.200
Thai	Baht	32.502
Turkish	YTL	1.376
Venezuelan	Bolivar	2,147.3

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 12/04/2007.

International Education Fairs of Turkey

Date: October 6-10
Venue: Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Turkey
Email: info@ieft.net
Web: www.ieft.net

Study Abroad and Language Fair

Date: October 9
Venue: Busan, Korea
Email: kamc@korea.com
Web: www.kamc.com/fair.htm

Scope on the Globe

Date: October 10-13
Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands
Email: s.vdaakster@aromedia.nl
Web: www.scopeontheglobe.com

The Icef China Workshop

Date: October 17-19
Venue: Shanghai, China
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

The Alphe Russia Workshop

Date: October 26-28
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

a2 Kazakhstan Fair

Date: November 2-3
Venue: Almaty, Kazakhstan
Email: info@aafair.com
Web: www.aafair.com

Icef Work & Travel Forum

Date: November 2-3
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Email: wtforum@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Icef Berlin Workshop

Date: November 4-6
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Email: info@icef.com
Web: www.icef.com

Expolingua Praha

Date: November 9-10
Venue: Prague, Czech Republic
Email: prague@expolingua.com
Web: www.expolingua.cz

a2 Turkey Fair

Date: November 10-15
Venue: Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara
Email: info@aafair.com
Web: www.aafair.com