

Sevis tracking system is in action

Currency

1xUS\$ =currency*

Argentinean	Pesos	3.105
Australian	Dollar	1.683
Brazilian	Real	3.431
British	Pound	0.622
Bulgarian	Leva	1.769
Canadian	Dollar	1.484
Chilean	Pesos	746.25
Chinese (PR)	Yuan	8.277
Czech	Koruny	29.07
Danish	Kroner	6.831
Egyptian	Pound	5.768
EU	Euro	0.920
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.798
Hungarian	Forint	225.18
Icelandic	Kronur	77.018
Indonesian	Rupiah	8902.0
Israeli	New Shekels	4.785
Japanese	Yen	118.32
Maltese	Lira	0.408
Mexican	Peso	10.833
New Zealand	Dollar	1.828
Norwegian	Kroner	7.186
Polish	Zloty	3.990
Russian	Rubles	31.370
Singaporean	Dollar	1.749
Slovakian	Koruny	38.410
South African	Rand	8.147
South Korean	Won	1246.0
Swedish	Krona	8.499
Swiss	Franc	1.348
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.752
Thai	Baht	42.779
Turkish	Lira	1,642,496.1
Venezuelan	Bolivar	1,598.0

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 13/03/03

Australia's latest weapon: new book project

AUSTRALIA'S commitment to self-promotion in the international education arena shows no sign of waning, as it reveals its latest marketing device: a book entitled, *Australian Education – Passport to a Global Career*.

The publication has been sponsored by key industry bodies including Australian Education International and the Australian Council for Private Education & Training (Acpet), under the patronage of Brendan Nelson, Minister for Education, Science and Training.

The book, which will be distributed by Acpet members, showcases a range of Australia's education providers, including English language schools. □

The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (Sevis) in the USA, which requires information about all new international students to be inputted into a central computer system maintained by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS), is now up and running, although some glitches have already become apparent.

Nevertheless, many school representatives report that they believe the system will be easy to use once the initial problems have been ironed out. "We have been using Sevis on real time since August 2002," reports Enoc Q Flores, Director of International Services at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. "The system is easy to use and will make it easier in the future to manage our international population. In the meantime, we will continue to assist in cleaning up all the bugs."

One serious problem pointed out by Alan Turner, Principal of St Giles International in San Francisco, California, is that the Sevis system has been geared towards university enrolment. "This will eventually show up at a port of entry where immigration officers will have direct links to Sevis," he said. "For example, under courses we can only enter 'major in English language or literature' as the closest to a language programme. When an immigration officer sees this on their screen, they will question why a student is only taking a four-week course."

Those working with the system are hopeful that changes will be implemented to lead to a confusion-free system. "There are several problems to work through, and we foresee this continuing for a while," said Joyce Burnham, Director of Admissions at the New England School of English in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "There were many situations that were not thought of and need to be reprogrammed. However, the INS is continually making updates and working through the reported glitches."

Other problems reported by schools – aside from technical



Sevis problems have been noted

hitches – such as being locked out of the system for days due to password error or having to restart during the loading of details – are that student details loaded into the interim system (called Iseas), used until Sevis became operational, are not always picked up by Sevis. Turner reports, "I-20s (visa forms) issued under this system are supposed to be valid, but there are reports of students being denied visas with I-20s issued under the Iseas system."

Arlene Spencer, Director of International Student & ESL Programmes at Fulton-Montgomery Community College in New York, adds that there is a significant

added workload too. "The biggest issue I have is in meeting deadlines," she says. "We have 30 days to update records for new students. Those 30 days go very quickly at the start of a new semester. Basically, Sevis has added to my personal workload without any compensation in pay."

Sevis was implemented following the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA, when the US government agreed to invest US\$36 million to start up the operation (see *Language Travel Magazine*, May 2002, page 5). All new student records must now be entered into the system, and there is an August deadline for entering existing students' details onto the database. Sevis is seen as a modern technological alternative to maintaining files on students in schools, and failure to comply with Sevis rules and deadlines can mean a fine for institutions.

Those institutions not approved by the INS to use the Sevis system are not eligible to enrol overseas students. However, some sources have claimed that the INS checking of a school's validity has been haphazard, and no schools have been refused clearance. Critics of the scheme also question the INS's ability to chase up students who fail to attend classes. □

Students protest in Spain following ELT schools collapse

STUDENTS in Spain demonstrated in front of the Catalan parliament earlier this year in protest of the collapse of a number of English language schools in the country that left students with huge debts.

The payment procedure used by schools such as the Opening English School chain – which catered for 46,000 students in 90 centres, according to the *TES* newspaper – meant that students paid in instalments and were legally obliged to maintain payments to the bank during their course, even if the school closed.

Public confidence in this system eroded following the closure

of Opening Schools, which fuelled, in part, the closure of the Cambridge English chain, the Brighton school and the Oxford English chain.

The *TES* estimates that 150 English language centres have closed since summer 2002, and at least 60,000 students have been left without classes.

Protesting students called on the Catalan parliament, which represents one of the worst affected regions in Spain, to regulate the sector. Meanwhile, members of the Association of Language Schools of Catalonia agreed to accept students caught up in the furore for free. □

Over 80 members for GWEA

THE GLOBAL Work Experience Association (GWEA), which was inaugurated at the World Youth and Student Travel Conference last year in Greece under the framework of Fiyto (see *Language Travel Magazine*, November 2002, page 5) has got off to a great start, with over 80 applicants already accepted as members of the association.

"We are extremely pleased with the overwhelming response we have had from organisations wanting to join GWEA," commented Paul Christianson of InterExchange in the USA, President of GWEA. "The rapid increase in numbers and the scramble [by organisations] to gain membership is a great confirmation that work experience is the fastest growing sector in the world of youth travel today."

GWEA was set up for organisations involved in sending or receiving work experience par-

ticipants, to provide them with an industry forum. Members include work experience placement organisations, language schools providing work experience, exchange organisations, student travel agencies and employers with an interest in the field.

The Executive Committee has now been elected and includes: Paul Christianson, President; David Stitt of NETC in the UK/USA, Treasurer; Brigitte Schwarzenbach of Experiment in International Living in Switzerland, Vice President/Secretary; Caroline Fox of Twin Education in the UK; and Ashley Rowlands of English 2000 in the UK. The committee is currently working on promotional strategies such as the introduction of a website, a member directory and plans for membership activities.

See pages 18-19 for our article about work experience placement organisations. □

Visa issuance under scrutiny

THE INTEGRITY of New Zealand's immigration system took a knock earlier this year, when Immigration Minister, Lianne Dalziel, confirmed that the government was investigating a bribery scam at the New Zealand Embassy in Thailand involving Cambodian applications for visitor and student visas.

According to *The Dominion Post*, Embassy employee, Twich Kanchananaga, who was in charge of processing applications from neighbouring Cambodia, was charging US\$4,000 to guarantee visa issuance. The scam is alleged to have started in 1999 and involved hundreds of students and visitors, according to New Zealand's Cambodian community.

Meanwhile, authorities in Ireland are carefully scrutinising operations in their own country in an effort to ensure that students do not enter the country to study at a fraudulent school. Fifteen schools are currently under investigation

by the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) amid fears that schools are operating in name only and fronting visa factories. Ten schools were closed down last year, and in January this year, a member of GNIB's own staff was arrested over involvement with false documents.

Speaking to the *Irish Examiner*, Det Chief Superintendent Martin Donnellan said that many cases of fraud involved Chinese nationals. "[Schools] are springing up one after the other and in almost all cases where there are problems, there is involvement by Chinese nationals somewhere in the running of those colleges."

There have been calls for a mandatory licensing scheme for English language schools in the country, but the Department of Education said there were currently no plans to implement this. The Advisory Council for English Language Schools operates a voluntary licensing scheme. □

Calendar

IALC Agents' Workshop

Date: 2-4 May
Venue: Cuernavaca, Mexico
Contact: Jan Capper
JC Communications
PO Box 798
Canterbury, CT1 2WX, UK
Tel: +44 1227 769007
Fax: +44 1227 769014
Email: info@ialc.org

7th International Education Fair

Date: 3-8 May
Venue: Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Adana - Turkey
Contact: Arzu Guven
Hit International Education
Buyukdere Cad. Hur Han 15/A
Sisli, Istanbul, 80268, Turkey
Tel: +90 212 964600
Fax: +90 212 336315
Email: arzu@hit.com.tr

The London Education Exchange

Date: 9-10 May
Venue: London, UK
Contact: Karl Badde, ICEF
Am Hofgarten 9
Bonn, 53113, Germany
Tel: +49 228 201190
Fax: +49 228 2011944
Email: icefbonn@icef.com

ICC/ISS Workshop

Date: 9-11 May
Venue: Nagoya, Osaka, Tokyo - Japan
Contact: Noriko Irie, ICC International Communication Center
Sankei Bldg 3F, 1-28-10, Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, 169-0075, Japan
Tel: +81 3 5272 2433
Fax: +81 3 5272 2447
Email: uk@iss-ryugaku.co.jp

World Education Market

Date: 20-23 May
Venue: Lisbon, Portugal
Contact: Dominique Wasquel
Reed Midem Organisation
11 rue du Colonel Pierre Avia
Paris, 75726, France
Tel: +33 141 904438
Fax: +33 141 904628
Email: info@wemex.com

The Alpe USA Workshop

Date: 22-24 May
Venue: Las Vegas, USA
Contact: Matthew Northover
Hothouse Media
11-15 Emerald Street
London, WC1N 3QL, UK
Tel: +44 20 7440 4027
Fax: +44 20 7440 4033
Email: matthew@hothousemedia.com

55th Annual Nafsa Conference

Date: 25-30 May
Venue: Salt Lake City, UT, USA
Contact: Nafsa, 1370 New York Ave
NW, Eighth Floor
Washington DC, 20005, USA
Tel: +1 202 737 3699
Fax: +1 202 737 3657
Email: Conference@nafsa.org

10th New Zealand Int. Education Conference.

Date: 11-13 August
Venue: Wellington, New Zealand
Contact: Education New Zealand
Level 4, Dalmair House
114 The Terrace
Wellington, New Zealand
Tel: +64 447 20788
Fax: +64 447 12828
Email: enquiry@educationnz.org.nz

The Alpe UK Workshop

Date: 22-24 August
Venue: London, UK
Contact: Matthew Northover
Hothouse Media (as above)

Int. Languages & Education UK Fair

Date: 26-28 August
Venue: Brighton, UK
Contact: Annie Wright, Arels
56 Buckingham Gate
London, SW1E 6AG, UK
Tel: +44 207 802 9200
Fax: +44 207 802 9201
Email: info@arels.org.uk

MEI-Relsa Agent Workshop

Date: 1 September
Venue: Co. Clare, Ireland
Contact: Gillian Nother, MEI-Relsa
17 Lower Camden Street
Dublin 2, Ireland
Tel: +353 147 53122
Fax: +353 147 53088
Email: info@mei.ie

Language Parade 2003

Date: 5-7 September
Venue: Budapest, Hungary
Contact: Robert Goldmann
c/o PO Box 435, Budapest 62
H-1395 Hungary
Tel: +36 126 95489
Fax: +36 130 22863
Email: lingvisit@lingvisit.hu

International Educational Fair

Date: 8 September
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@korea.com

15th Annual Conference of the EAIE

Date: 10-13 September
Venue: Vienna, Austria
Contact: EAIE Secretariat, PO Box
11189, Amsterdam, 1001
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 205 254999
Fax: +31 205 254998
Email: eaie@eaie.nl

Expo Brazil Roadshow

Date: 11-19 September
Venue: Sao Paulo, Campinas, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Porto Alegre - Brazil
Contact: Daniel Ripple, FPP
Front Page Promotions Media,
7421 Frankford Road #1236,
Dallas, TX, 75252, USA
Tel: +1 972 612 9659
Fax: +1 972 612 9659
Email: daniel@fppmedia.com

Expo Estudante

Date: 13-14 September
Venue: Bogota, Colombia
Date: 17 September
Venue: Cali, Colombia
Date: 20-21 September
Venue: Panama City, Panama
Date: 23 September
Venue: Guadalajara, Mexico
Date: 25 September
Venue: Monterrey, Mexico
Contact: Rupert Merrick
C&S Associadas
Alameda Santos, 1470
Sao Paulo, 1470, Brazil
Tel: +55 112 896599
Fax: +55 11 251 0251
Email: rupertmerrick@csassociadas.com.br

Fedele Workshop

Date: 18-23 September
Venue: Valencia, Spain
Contact: Astrid Verlot
Centro Internacional de Turismo de Andalucía
C.N. 340, Km 189.6
Marbella, 29600, Spain
Tel: +34 952 834 782
Email: info@fedelepain.com