

English UK passes 400 member mark

With 402 members, English UK can proudly proclaim that it has beaten its target of 400 members, confirming it is the largest English language school association of its kind. The acceleration in membership is linked to the Tier 4 points-based visa system that came into effect in the UK on March 31.

From now on, all English language schools have to be accredited and listed on the Register of Sponsors in order to be able to issue confirmation of enrolments and accept student visa holders at their school (see LTM, Jan 2009, pages 38-40). The Association of British Language Schools (ABLS) also became recognised by UKBA as an accrediting body in March this year.

Liz McClaren, Manager of the Accreditation Unit at Accreditation UK, which runs the scheme that is jointly managed by English UK and the British Council, told *Language Travel Magazine* that she

estimated another 500 schools in the UK might be unaccredited, meaning that they are unable to recruit students from outside the European Economic Area. She added that in total, 480 schools had now been accredited by Accreditation UK. "Pass rate for new applicants inspected is around 66 per cent," she noted.

At the time of going to press, it was not known how the new visa route, Tier 4, was effectively going to work, but institutions had been preparing for its rollout and their new responsibilities as sponsors (keeping a copy of all students' passports, reporting absences, etc).

Students need to prove they are capable of covering all course fees and living expenses while studying in the UK. The financial requirements of students were confirmed to be course costs plus funds of UK£600 (US\$833) per month if studying outside of London or UK£800 (US\$1,111) per month if studying within London. ●

New premises for Malvern House in London

MALVERN HOUSE in London, UK, is opening a new school in the King's Cross area in June.

It is closing its Trafalgar Square school and moving its intermediate and upper-intermediate teaching to the purpose-built centre, which forms part of Nido Hall of Residence.

Nido offers upmarket accommodation for international students and this complex was opened last year by the Black-

stone Group at a cost of UK£95 million (US\$132 million).

"It's a step by step upgrade of quality for us," said Nick Hobson at Malvern House. "We will have three premium centres in Central London: Piccadilly, Bloomsbury and King's Cross."

All 17 classrooms will be fitted with interactive whiteboards, with a commitment to installing the same technology in the other schools in the future. Jean Daruvala, Academic Director at Malvern House, said, "We've identified these [proficiency] levels as the hardest to progress through and we think that these resources will certainly help students reach their goals more quickly." ●



Mixed message in NZ

NEW FIGURES out in New Zealand indicate a 16 per cent rise in international student enrolments to July last year, but there are mixed messages about how the education sector is faring overall. While tertiary sector enrolments are said to be buoyant – with reports of some universities stating numbers up by 20 per cent this year, in part because of the low value of the New Zealand dollar – English New Zealand is worried about the prospects for the English language teaching sector.

It represents 26 established English language schools and reported in March that in a survey of members, 55 per cent said bookings were down on last year, with 30 per cent reporting similar trading levels. Rob McKay, Chairperson of the association, commented that the ban on part-time work for visa holders who had not proved a certain English language level was not helping. "This regulation funnels students to Australia," he said, indicating that the sector was lobbying the government for similar immigration rules to those in their closest competitor country.

McKay also signalled that as many language schools were the springboard into further academic study for students, the survey results had implications for the tertiary sector. Nevertheless, Robert

Stevens at Education New Zealand said surveys undertaken by his association did not prove so pessimistic. "People are worried about forward bookings, but most of the institutions we have surveyed – and we have surveyed quite a few – remain pretty upbeat," he told the *NZ Herald*.

And Study Auckland, which represents 130 schools (across all sectors) in their overseas marketing, told the same paper that most schools were reporting an increase of 10 to 15 per cent in enrolments. "The low New Zealand dollar certainly makes [New Zealand] an attractive study destination right now," said Debbie Chambers, Study Auckland Manager. ●



IH Agent Workshop 2009
Date: April 29 - May 1
Venue: Vancouver, Canada
affiliates@ihworld.co.uk
www.ihworkshop.com

IALC Agents' Workshop
Date: April 30 - May 3
Venue: Milan, Italy
info@ialc.org
www.ialc.org

Italian in Italy Workshop
Date: May 8-10
Venue: tbc
info@italianinitaly.it
www.italianinitaly.it

FPP Edu-Media High School Expo
Date: May 16-23
Venue: various, Latin America
www.fppmedia.com

StudyWorld 2009
Date: May 15-16
Venue: Berlin, Germany
www.icwe.net

Nafsa Annual Conference
Date: May 24-29
Venue: Los Angeles, California
kathleenp@nafsa.org
www.nafsa.org

8th Conference on Languages & International Business
Date: June 15-17
Venue: Düsseldorf, Germany
www.icwe.net

The Alphe UK Workshop
Date: September 4-6
Venue: London, UK
jane@hthousemedia.com
www.hthousemedia.com

Paul Simon Act in USA pushes study abroad

AN ACT that would pave the way for many more Americans to study overseas using state-sponsored scholarships is making its way through congress yet again. The Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act wants to authorise US\$80 million of funding to be made available for study abroad opportunities for US undergraduates.

The Act was passed by the House of Representatives in 2007 but grounded to a halt in the Senate. There are hopes that President Obama, who advocates international exchange, may back the bill, but funding would have to be separately agreed, which presents a further potential stumbling block.

Obama highlighted education as one of the three pillars of prosperity when speaking before congress and raised a concern that "our children will compete for jobs in a global economy that too many of our schools do not prepare them for".

The Paul Simon Act (named after a late Senator) also advocates a focus on study abroad opportunities in non-traditional destinations. At present, the UK is the most popular destination for Americans, followed by Italy, Spain and France, according to the annual *Open Doors* report published by IIE.

Feltom marks 20-year milestone with an event

MALTESE federation of English language schools, Feltom, has decided to mark its 20th anniversary with a three-day event.

Organised in cooperation with Alphe Conferences, Feltom plans to invite 40 agencies to the island from 10 to 13 September. Andrew Mangion, President of the association, explained that the three-day event would include a fam trip, a one-day workshop and an industry round-table, with key industry "thought leaders" speaking about the current challenges facing the industry.

The fam trip around the island will "give visitors a chance

to experience at first-hand some of Malta's rich cultural heritage," commented Mangion, adding that many of the 49 licensed language schools would be attending the workshop that will be followed by a gala dinner. Various dignitaries, stakeholders and participating agents will be invited.

The third day's round-table will draw on expert prognosis about the industry's direction, and guests will be invited to participate in the subsequent discussion and share ideas and recommendations, explained Mangion. Contact executive@feltom.com for more details.

GV opens in Byron Bay

GLOBAL VILLAGE (GV) has opened a new campus on the east coast of Australia, with GV Byron Bay becoming the third Australian school in the network alongside GV Noosa and GV Brisbane.

Ian Pratt, Managing Director of the other Australian campuses, said the new destination ideally complemented the existing locations of schools. "This new school offers our agents another great resort environment to promote to their clients," he said. "We have received wonderful encouragement from our agents to add the Byron location to the GV brand, and we are looking forward to what already looks

like being very rapid growth in our new school." GV also operates in Canada and Hawaii.

Pratt noted that GV Australia has invested heavily in the past few years in curriculum design and teacher training, which will lay solid foundations for further success.

Mood at Alphe Asia upbeat

THE RECENT Alphe Asia workshop in Thailand saw 44 educators and 98 agencies meet in the Thai capital to discuss business opportunities for the coming year, and, according to Alphe Agent Organiser, Emilie Giret, the mood was optimistic among delegates about business prospects for 2009.

"We had very positive feedback from attendees about the quality of business meetings organised while here," she said, pointing out that the agencies came from five countries to meet with educators representing language schools, high schools and tertiary institutions from 14 countries.

"We've met with agents who have specific students in mind to send to our school," noted Peter Harris from The Kings School in Ely, UK. "It's great to deal with quality agents, interested here and now," he added. Meanwhile, Andrew Redgrave from IH Sydney in Australia commented that he had, "Lots of very good meetings with excellent potential for business."

Agencies were also happy with the event although some requested a wider range of universities and colleges in attendance, which Giret said would be a focus for next year. Pippa Watt from Mentor International in Thailand said, "I found the two days very useful indeed. I think I will want to work with at least six [contacts] that I met."

Alphe has also announced a new conference venue for April 2010. Alphe Istanbul will target agencies in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Turkey.



Currency

		1xUS\$ =currency*
Argentinean	Pesos	3.647
Australian	Dollar	1.514
Brazilian	Real	2.283
British	Pound	0.720
Bulgarian	Leva	1.499
Canadian	Dollar	1.271
Chilean	Pesos	582.25
Chinese (PR)	Yuan RMB	6.835
Czech	Koruny	20.57
Danish	Kroner	5.713
Egyptian	Pound	5.630
EU	Euro	0.766
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.752
Hungarian	Forint	230.01
Icelandic	Kronur	114.95
Indonesian	Rupiah	11,945.56
Israeli	New Shekels	4.118
Japanese	Yen	98.621
Malaysian	Ringgit	3.683
Mexican	Peso	14.096
New Zealand	Dollar	1.894
Norwegian	Kroner	6.748
Pakistan	Rupees	80.464
Polish	Zloty	3.485
Russian	Rubles	34.392
Singaporean	Dollar	1.529
South African	Rand	9.857
South Korean	Won	1,422.0
Swedish	Kronor	8.414
Swiss	Franc	1.175
Taiwanese	NT Dollar	34.166
Thai	Baht	35.917
Turkish	New Lira	1.705
UAE	Dirhams	3.672
Venezuelan	Bol. Fuertes	2.150

*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 18/03/2009.

The LTM Star Awards

Date: September 5
Venue: London, UK
mail@hothousemedia.com
www.hothousemedia.com

StudyWorld London

Date: September 7-9
Venue: London, UK
jodie@englishuk.com
www.studyworldfair.com

Feltom 20th Anniversary Workshop & Roundtable

Date: September 10-13
Venue: Malta
executive@feltom.com
www.feltom.com

The ICEF Higher Education Workshop

Date: September 13-15
Venue: Madrid, Spain
info@icef.com
www.icef.com

20th Annual EAIE Conference

Date: September 16-19
Venue: Madrid, Spain
www.eaie.nl

English Australia Conference

Date: September 17-19
Venue: Melbourne, Australia
easec@englishaustralia.com.au
www.englishaustralia.com.au

WYSTC 2009

Date: September 20-25
Venue: Manchester, UK
www.wystc.org

The ICEF Latin America Workshop

Date: September 30 - October 2
Venue: Sao Paulo, Brazil
info@icef.com
www.icef.com

The ICEF China Workshop

Date: October 14-16
Venue: Beijing, China
info@icef.com
www.icef.com

The Alphe Russia Workshop

Date: October 23-25
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia
stephanie@hothousemedia.com
www.hothousemedia.com