

LEARNING SPANISH IN SPAIN

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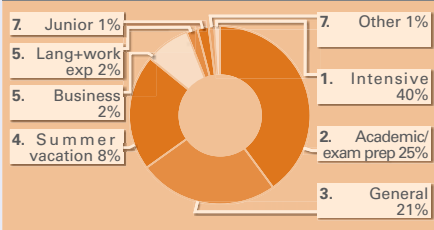
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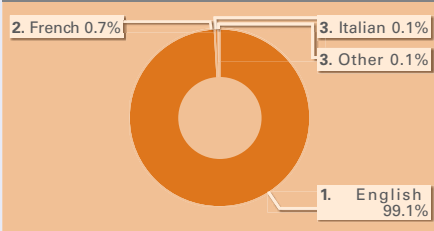
# Thailand shows cautious growth

Thailand's language travel industry is looking fairly healthy according to the results of our Agency Survey, although economic factors are still affecting the market.

## Most popular courses



## Top languages

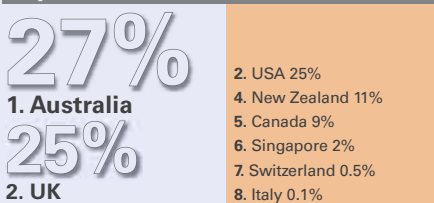


## Economic overview

- A number of factors caused the Thai economy to slow down during 2005, including a devastating tsunami at the end of 2004, prolonged drought and the return of an avian flu outbreak in poultry.
- Private consumption in 2005 increased by 4%, a decrease on the previous year's growth, mainly due to persistent high oil prices, rising inflation and increasing interest rates, which contributed to more cautious consumer spending.
- The economy is expected to increase in 2006 with the main driver of growth predicted to be net exports.

Source: Bank of Thailand

## Top destinations



## How do agencies find new schools to represent?



## Market growth

Average business growth was just over eight per cent among the agencies participating in this year's Agency Survey on Thailand, an increase on the one per cent growth of last year (see *Language Travel Magazine*, May 2005, pages 14-15). The majority of agents indicated that their business had grown over the last 12 months by between 10 and 30 per cent, although two agents said that business had stayed the same and a further three said that they had experienced a decrease in student numbers in the last year of between five and 20 per cent. Some agencies pointed out that rising oil costs had had a negative effect on their business recently, due to increasing flight costs deterring students from studying overseas.

## Language and destination trends

A massive 99 per cent of students visiting these agencies sought English language courses over the last 12 months and no fewer than eight agencies said that all their clients chose English-speaking destinations. One agency reported that 20 per cent of their business was dealing with clients wanting to study French and another 20 per cent with clients wanting Italian but the overall size of the business was so small that this had little effect on overall results. Of the English-speaking destinations chosen by Thai students, Australia was narrowly favoured by the majority of students, closely followed by the UK and USA in joint-second place. These results differ little from last year, when Australia was the top destination and attracted 40 per cent of students, followed by the USA chosen by 21 per cent and the UK chosen by 20 per cent of language travellers.

## Key points

- The total number of students placed by the 12 agencies in our survey was **1,648**
- Individual agencies placed between **eight** and **620** students on courses per year
- Average business growth was **eight per cent** in the last 12 months
- The average length of stay for Thai students was **17.3 weeks**
- Overall, **70 per cent** of Thai students stayed in host family accommodation when studying overseas
- Four** agencies charged their clients a handling fee of between B1,000 (US\$26) and B3,000 (US\$79)
- On average, agencies had worked with **33** schools in the last 12 months

However, the UK and USA have closed the gap somewhat on Australia this year.

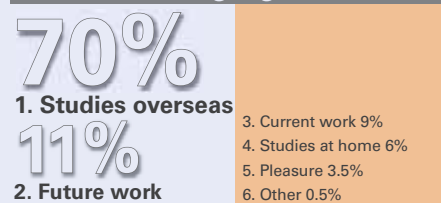
## Student and course trends

The majority of agency business was taken up with advising students about intensive or academic-focused courses and the serious intentions of Thai students towards their academic goals can be determined by an increase in average length of stay from 15 weeks last year to 17 weeks this year. However, the average percentage of agency clients intending to go on to further studies overseas after their language course decreased slightly this year from 80 per cent to 70 per cent. Instead current and future work reasons received greater emphasis in this survey, highlighting the growing recognition among students of the importance of English language skills for international business.

## Agency business

Individual agents differed widely in their business practices with some preferring to specialise on a few schools in one destination and others representing a large number of schools around the world. The number of school partners claimed by agents varied from between five and 300, while the number of countries represented varied from one to eight. On average, agencies had 93 school partners in four countries, although four out of 12 agencies worked with schools from just one country. Fairs and expos were the most successful means of contacting new partner schools this year, accounting for an average of 41 per cent of partnerships, compared with just 15 per cent previously.

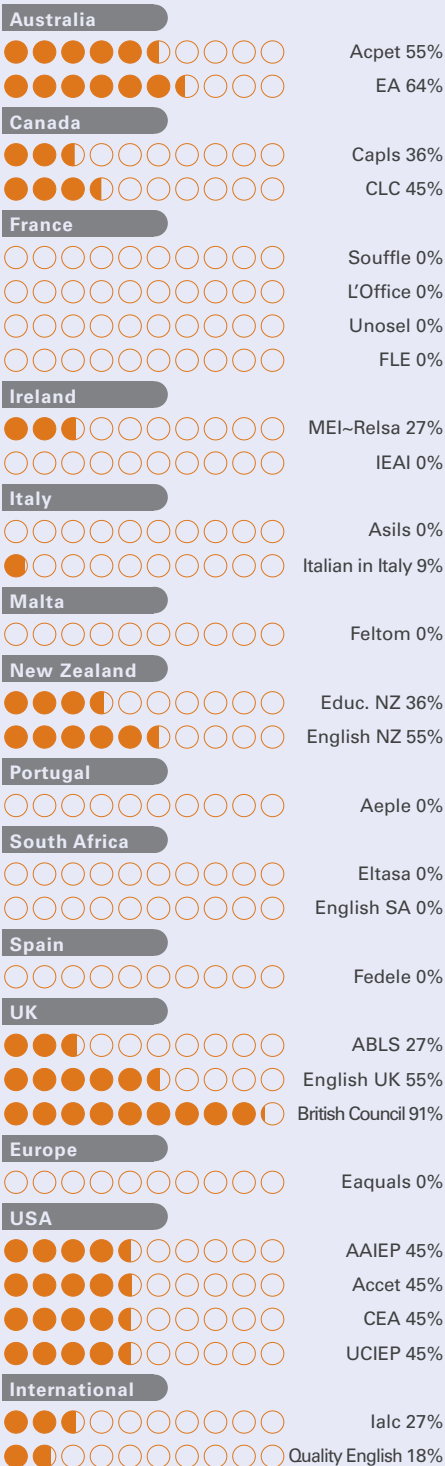
## Reasons for language travel



## How do agencies recruit students?



**Percentage of agents who recognised each of the following organisations**



**Thai agents named a range of education institutions they work with, including:** **in Australia:** Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra, ACT; Curtin University of Technology, Perth, WA; Holmes College, Melbourne, VIC; Inseach UTS - University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, NSW; Victoria University, Melbourne, VIC. **in Canada:** Richmond School District, Richmond, BC; Vancouver Community College, Vancouver, BC; Vancouver English Centre, Vancouver, BC. **in Italy:** Scuola Leonardo da Vinci, Milan. **in New Zealand:** Aspiring Language Institute, Christchurch; Christchurch College of English, Christchurch; Crown Institute of Studies, Auckland; Seaford School of English, Christchurch. **in Switzerland:** Ecole Lémania, Lausanne. **in the UK:** IH Newcastle, Newcastle; Malvern House, London. **in the USA:** ELS, various; Kaplan, various; Madison English School, Madison, WI; University of California Extension, Los Angeles, CA. **Worldwide:** Aspect, Geos, Kaplan, Language Studies International, Study Group.

**Thank you to the following agencies for taking part in this survey:** Apex Education Consultant, Australia; Centre Chiang Mai, DocuEasy English in Canada, Euro Education Services, Hoco-info Abroad, NZ Study, Professional InterEducation Co, SFA Travel, Study Overseas Centre, Wewin, York Institute.

# Work with MEI-RELSA



Association of 62 high quality English language schools, recognised by the Irish Department of Education.

- ⊙ Small, medium and large schools
- ⊙ Locations all around Ireland
- ⊙ A school and a programme to suit all students
- ⊙ 8 new members in 2006
- ⊙ All schools accredited by the Irish Department of Education through the ACELS inspection scheme

Don't Forget . . .

## MEI-RELSA Workshop

Fitzpatrick's Castle Hotel, Killiney, Dublin  
Saturday 31st March 2007

## Other opportunities to meet Irish schools

MEI-RELSA is holding a series of agent familiarisation trips and road shows in Ireland and abroad in 2006 and 2007. If you would like to participate contact us for details.



For further information on MEI-RELSA or on any of these events contact us at:

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Learning English *in Ireland*