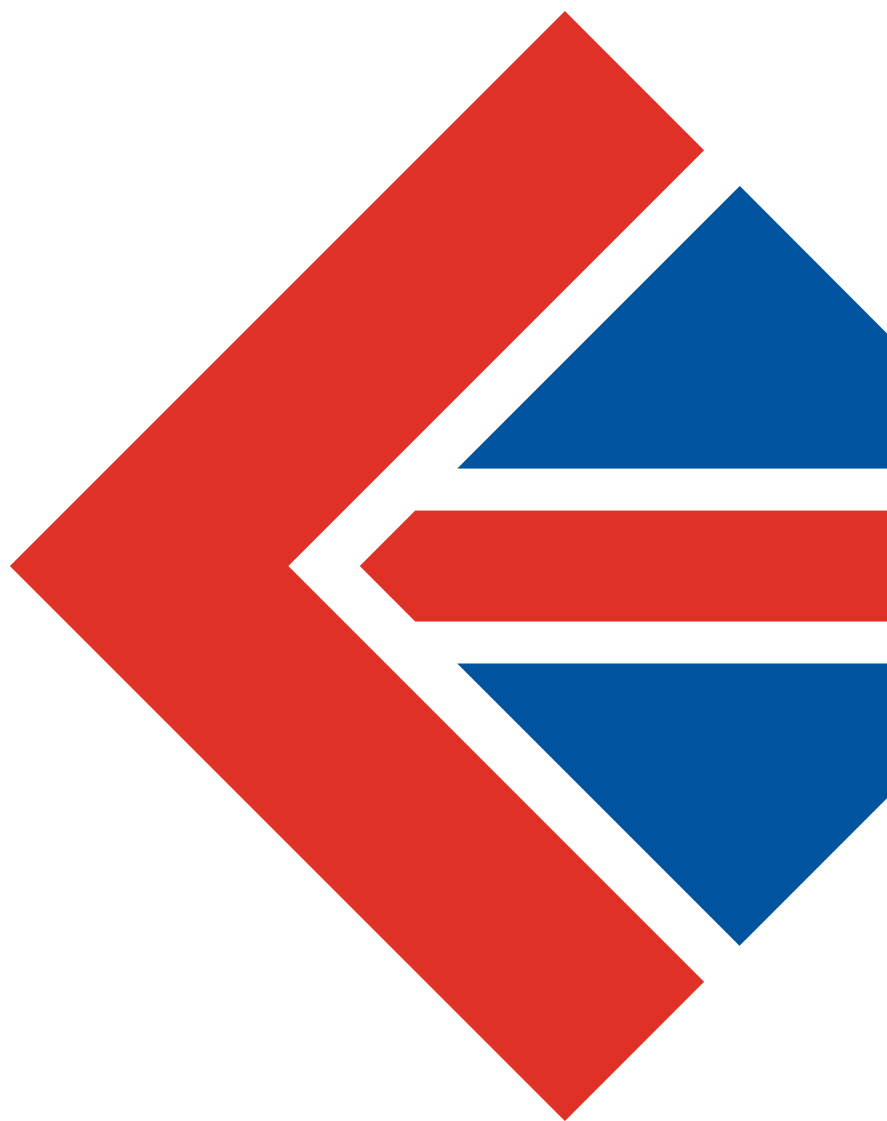


MISSION TO COLOMBIA REPORT

FEBRUARY 2008



The English UK Mission to Colombia

Wednesday 20th – Thursday 21st February 2008
Casa Dann Carlton Hotel, Bogotá



1. OVERVIEW – The English UK Mission to Colombia

UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) London earmarked a pot of money to help finance the participation of member centres based within the M25 on an outward mission to Colombia. This funding was offered as part of UKTI's Market Visit Support (MVS) scheme.

MVS is a trade development business support mechanism aimed at SMEs who are new exporters or those who are new to the emerging markets identified in the UKTI Strategy. It is not aimed at experienced exporters who are already established in a market and who, for example, simply wish to visit existing contacts.

This funding was initially offered to the Work Experience UK group. However, as there was insufficient support for a mission to Colombia among these centres, at the end of 2007 English UK was asked to take on the organisation of the trip and open participation to the wider (London) membership. As UKTI London stipulated that the allocated money had to be spent before the end of the 2007/2008 financial year, we had no choice but to make last minute arrangements for the mission. These time constraints were further exacerbated by the fact that key Embassy and British Council personnel were occupied on other events and there was limited available space in suitable venues in February/March 2008.

Nevertheless, the UK Trade & Investment Team in Bogotá was very helpful, taking on the bulk of the logistical arrangements in Colombia and inviting local agents. Five member centres, accompanied by Tony Millns (English UK) and Elaine Cameron (UK Trade & Investment), participated in a programme including an evening reception, seminar sessions and one-to-one business appointments. The event succeeded in attracting over 100 Colombian agents.

The mission dovetailed with a joint English UK/UK Border Agency (UKBA)* visa briefing session held at the British Embassy on Friday 22 February. Tony Millns and representatives of UKBA and the Visa Section in Bogotá led the session, which was attended by around 80 invited agents, giving an update on changes to the UK's visa system for students.

(* note: though at the time it was still UKvisas, for consistency I shall use the new title of UKBA.)

2. PARTICIPANTS

a. **Educators**

Five English UK members took part in the mission to Colombia.

Buckswood School

Mayfair School of English

Oxford English Centre

The English Studio

Twin Group

b. **Agents**

Seventy-nine (79) study abroad agencies and educational consultancies participated in the mission (104 individual representatives). Agents were selected from the English UK, British Council and British Embassy, Bogotá databases. All new contacts have been passed to the StudyWorld Team and will be invited to complete a New Agent Business Profile form.

Abacentro Europe Line	Bogotá, D.C.
Academia Anglo Colombian	Bogotá, D.C.
Academia del Lenguaje Universal	Medellín (Antioquia)
Advanced Training Processes & Cia S. en C.	Bogotá, D.C.
AES International Education	Bogotá, D.C.
Agencia Internacional de Estudios en el Exterior	Bogotá, D.C.
Agencia Vip Student Travel Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
Alianza Colombo Inglesa	Bogotá
An English World	Bogotá, D.C.
APIEC Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
Assistance Studying in London	Bogotá, D.C.
Au-Pair Colombia	Bogotá, D.C.
Aviatur	Bogotá, D.C.
British Unlimited	Bogotá, D.C.
C.E.I. Consejería en Educacion Internacional	Bogotá, D.C.

C.S.A. Travels	Bogotá, D.C.
Cali Estudios	Cali (Valle)
Cecam International S.A	Bucaramanga (Santander)
Conexión Estudiantil	Bogota
CONINGLES	Bogotá, D.C.
Consejería Británica	Bogotá, D.C.
Eastern American Language Centre	Bogotá, D.C.
Easy.go	Bogotá, D.C.
Educaminos	Bogotá, D.C.
Educonexion	Bogotá, D.C.
Edutavel Victoria Reps	Bogotá
English Star	Bogotá, D.C.
FOBA Language Services	Bogotá, D.C.
Forest	Bogotá, D.C.
Fundación Intersea	Torre C Piso 10
Gateway Estudios Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
Gea - Global Educational Access	Cali (Valle)
Global Connection	Bogotá, D.C.
Global International Studies	Bogotá, D.C.
Global Language Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
Globo Start	Bogotá, D.C.
Gloria Ramírez International Student Adviser	Medellín (Antioquía)
GO Estudios en el Exterior	Bogotá, D.C.
Grupo Gales Educación Internacional	Bogotá, D.C.

Grupo Viva Y Aprenda Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
HRG Colombia-Trafalgar Tours	Bogotá, D.C.
Interactive Language Training	Bogotá, D.C.
International House	Bogotá, D.C.
Interstudent	Bogotá, D.C.
ISAS STUDY & TRAVEL	Bogotá, D.C.
Isso International Student Services Org.	Bogotá, D.C.
Kaplan Aspect	Bogotá, D.C.
Kiosk Estudios en el Exterior	Bogotá, D.C.
Latino Australia Education	Bogotá
Learn English International	Bogotá, D.C.
Learning Out	Bogotá, D.C.
Mc Up Abroad	Bogotá, D.C.
Multilingua	Bogotá, D.C.
Mundo Destinos	Bogotá, D.C.
OAK Educación Internacional	Bogotá, D.C.
Open Hearts Global Education Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
OZI International Ltda	Bogotá, D.C.
Pacific International Studies	Bogotá, D.C.
Qallu	Bogota
Raisbeck Practical English Services	Bogotá, D.C.
Servicio Educativo Internacional	Bogotá, D.C.
Sitio de Contacto	Bogotá, D.C.
Stanton School Of English	Bogotá, D.C.

Student Travel Centre L'Alianza	Bogotá, D.C.
STUDENT VISA	Bogotá, D.C.
Study International	Local 107
Study Now Estudios en el Exterior	Bogotá, D.C.
Teaching and Tutoring	Bogotá, D.C.
Teduc@mos	Bogotá, D.C.
The Grad School	Bogotá, D.C.
TLI Colombia	Medellín (Antioquia)
Top Colleges	Bogotá, D.C.
Travel Sport	Bogotá
Vela Tours S.A	Bogotá
Vela Tours S.A.	Bogotá, D.C.
Viajes Galeón	Bogotá, D.C.
Victoria Express	Bogotá, D.C.
World of Studies	Bogotá, D.C.
Youth For Understanding	Bogotá, D.C.

3. A SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

a. **Educators**

'The English UK staff involved were efficient and helpful. The Embassy staff in Bogotá were fantastic. It was a good opportunity to approach the Colombian market where our presence is minute...we were able to make at least 40 new contacts.'

'We have signed up a number of agents and have already received a good number of bookings...A much greater response than we get after being to an agent fair.'

Can English UK organise another one please? I think the combination of embassy and UKvisas, English UK involvement and schools makes it a much more powerful event than your average agent fair. I would be happy to go even without government grants. I think it would be especially valuable in countries where agents (in our markets at least e.g. Brazil, Turkey, Thailand, Korea) get the feeling that the UK does not want any students due to the obstacles placed by embassies either real or

imaginary. An event like this goes to show that the UK is open to the right kind of students and that if the student has the right support and motives they will get a visa. At the moment agents still feel it is like a lottery in terms of how visas are issued’.

b. Agents

‘I really appreciate these kinds of events because it helps us to be up to date in everything regarding UK schools and UK policies and rules about going to the UK to study.’ [sic]

‘We are very pleased and satisfied with your visit to our wonderful country – it has been very well organised by English UK. All the five British school representatives were extremely friendly and showed a lot of professionalism and knowledge in their field.’

4. CONCLUSION

The visit, and the joint English UK/UKBA briefing session, was undoubtedly helpful in making agents aware of the visa changes coming and their implications, and in trying to answer some of the most pressing current concerns insofar as that can be done.

The positioning of English UK in leading an initiative where in effect we were seen to have brought the UK Government out to explain the new visa system face to face to agents was particularly powerful. Similarly, the high level of involvement of the UK Trade & Investment Team at the British Embassy in Bogotá in organising the workshop programme certainly contributed to the huge turn-out.

5. BACKGROUND – THE COLOMBIAN MARKET (as provided by the UK Trade & Investment Team at the British Embassy, Bogotá)

Colombia is a strategically located market within the Andean Region (Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia) with a hard working population of 44 million, similar in size to Spain. Colombia has much untapped potential for United Kingdom firms who are held in high regard. Colombia links North and South America and has coastlines on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans extending 1,600 and 1,300 kilometres, respectively. This geographical position allows Colombia to be the gateway to South America with ports linking Europe, North America and the Pacific Basin countries.

Despite its poor security image portrayed in the international news media, the security situation has improved, so risks can be managed and good business can result. Colombia has a healthy economy. At the end of 2006, its inflation rate was 4.8%. The inflation target for 2007 is 4.5%, but it will be around 5%. The country has enjoyed a long tradition of political stability, democratic government and prudent economic management. Crude oil, coal, coffee and cut flowers are the principal legal exports.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Despite years of drug and politically related violence, the economy is diverse and relatively advanced.

During 2006 the economy grew 6.8%, compared to 4.0% during 2005. This growth was driven mainly by the construction sector but other sectors also contributed to this growth such as financial services, manufacturing and communications.

Consumer confidence is currently very high in Colombia. Business people are selling more, and the conditions for investment are also at an all time best position.

Colombia is expanding and internationalising its economy. As a member of the Andean Community, Colombia is part of the recent Andean Community-MERCOSUR Trade Agreement. In February 2006, Colombia signed a Free Trade Agreement with the United States but this is pending

congressional approval in the United States. The agreement is expected to be enacted sometime in 2008. The Andean Community is also seeking free trade agreements with Canada, Europe and Central America.

Basic Economic Facts

Inflation: 5.69% (December 2007)

Unemployment: 10.7% (Sep 2007)

GDP: 6.8% (2006) (predicted 7% for year 2007)

Major Industries: Construction; Financial Services; Manufacturing; Restaurants and Hotels; Transport and Communications.

Major trading partners: USA; Venezuela; European Union; other Andean Countries; China; Mexico and Brazil.

**Source: National Planning Department/DANE*

6. GENERAL INFORMATION FROM THE UK TRADE & INVESTMENT TEAM AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY, BOGOTA

Colombia has one of the most successful economies in South America, despite adverse conditions and an unequal distribution of wealth. A small number of Colombians hold most of the country's wealth and political power, but the middle and working classes are growing over time in Colombia's cities. Colombians are hardworking and peace loving. Politeness, proper behaviour, good manners and courtesy are highly valued.

The country also has a literacy rate above 80 percent, has a laudable program of compulsory primary education, and provides quality university programs well respected across the continent.

Important Hints

- Shake hands with everyone when entering or leaving a room. When you have made a good friendship, Colombians may exchange a formal kiss on one cheek with you (among members of the opposite sex).
- Colombians are very warm people. Smiling is very important.
- Formality is important to Colombians; accordingly, the use and observation of titles is important, as they are very conscious of social status. Anyone holding a university degree should be addressed as "doctor". (This does not necessarily imply a PhD degree)
- Colombians are not very punctual in business, they may be up to a half-hour late. The best policy for foreign businesspeople is to be punctual, but be prepared to wait. Don't get angry if a 12:00 p.m. appointment doesn't begin until 12:30 p.m. Excuse yourself if you are late.
- "In an hour or two" may mean tomorrow or next week. "Tomorrow" seldom means tomorrow and may mean next week. Don't get offended if someone says they will phone you tomorrow and then calls a week later.
- Colombians want to know you personally before they do business with you. You must develop a relationship with your counterparts before they will consider you trustworthy. Be ready to talk about different topics before talking about business.
- Always allow your Colombian counterparts to bring up the subject of business. Be aware that this may take a while. Meetings may be slow, with quiet, deliberate discussions.
- The best policy is to arrive in Colombia a day early so that you can adjust to the high altitude. This is especially true in the capital, Bogota, which is 8,600 feet [2,600meters] above sea level. The only exception is if your trip will take place exclusively in the coastal lowlands.
- It may take several trips to complete a business transaction. Colombians prefer to do business in person.

- Prepare to spend more time in Colombia than you expect will be necessary. When first meeting your Colombian counterparts, don't expect business discussion to be first on the agenda. Colombians like to take time to establish a comfortable working relationship.
- Do not expect to schedule meetings well in advance; Colombians do not arrange meetings with more than one week in advance. Moreover, give yourself two or three hours between each meeting.
- Follow up a meeting by sending a letter summarising the main points and what was agreed upon.
- Colombians usually take holidays during Christmas and Easter week. Try to arrange your visit at other times.
- Do not expect them to meet deadlines on time, although they will eventually come through.
- It is advisable to have some knowledge of Spanish although many executives /businessmen speak English. However, to have knowledge of some basic Spanish words will be appreciated.
- Be prepared with promotional materials of your product line or proposed venture, including technical materials and small samples, if applicable, that will make your visit most effective during preliminary negotiations. Try to provide company literature in Spanish.
- Contracts may be long and detailed. Put the key aspects of agreed-upon points in writing.
- Third-party contacts are vital to business success. When negotiating, never employ hard-sell techniques or aggression. You should hire a local distributor, representative, salesperson and/or lawyer.
- Business cards are not very popular among the Colombian business community. They will be keen on writing their contact's details.
- Colombians often conduct business through working breakfasts, lunches or cocktails. Colombian business executives are increasingly using these alternatives to obtain contacts and finalise business details in an informal environment. Most of the Colombian events organise different kind of social activities, try to attend most of them, if not all.
- Be sure to reciprocate hospitality and expect your spouse to be included in invitations, since, like other Latin cultures, family is very important.
- When you organise a reception do not expect Colombians to confirm their attendance. Expect 60% turn out of their invitees at the reception.
- Colombians pay a lot of attention to appearance and clothing. Dress conservatively and be well groomed. Colombians do not wear tennis shoes unless they are playing tennis, jogging, etc. Some restaurants require formal dress code.
- For business, men should wear dark suits, light colour shirts and ties in the cities. In warmer areas, dress is less formal. Women should wear dresses and suits and pantyhose in Bogota at all the times. Wear comfortable cotton in warmer areas.
- If you are invited to attend a dinner/lunch in someone's house, bring your hostess fruit, flowers, wine or chocolates. Send flowers ahead of time, if possible. This is not necessary when dinner/ lunch is arranged in a restaurant.
- Don't offer your opinions about local politics, religion, drugs and terrorism.
- Do not be offended if you are called a "gringo." Colombians use this term to refer to people from English speaking countries and it is not meant to be insulting.
- A woman in the workforce are treated as any man, notwithstanding special courtesy and manners.
- It would be a mistake to depend on regular mail service to make appointments. Instead, use the phone, e-mail or fax.

Hours of business

Business Houses

Generally 8.00-12.00, 14.00-18.00

Monday to Friday.

Government Offices

08.00-12.00, 14.00-18.00 Monday to Friday.

Banks

09.00-15.00 Monday to Friday

09.00-12.00, last working day of each month.

Shops

10.30-20.00 Monday to Saturday

Shops, such as supermarkets, are however often open until 23.00, and for the last part of Sunday.

British Embassy

08.30-12.30, 13.30-17.00 Monday to Thursday. 08.30-13.30 Fridays.

Finally, Colombia presents a good number of aspects that are common when doing business in the US or Europe. However, it is worth noticing that Colombians still continue to uphold “old fashioned” formality (dress, greetings, and protocol) with due exception of punctuality. Time keeping and deadlines, are occasionally observed.

Useful information

General market and more detailed background information is available at our official website:

www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

Relevant information on Colombia can be obtained from the British Embassy in Bogotá:

www.britain.gov.co

Current Exchange Rate (as per 12 February 2008):

1£ = Col\$ 3,911.40

1US\$ = Col\$ 1,912.80

Further Information on Colombia is available at:

Official Government Site for Colombia

Ministry Trade, Industry and Tourism

National Surveillance Institute for Food and Medicines – INVIMA

National Planning Department

Export, Promotion, Tourist & Investment in Colombia

Central Bank (Banco de República)

Colombian Customs & Excise – DIAN

Colombian Statistics - DANE

www.presidencia.gov.co

www.mincomercio.gov.co

www.invima.gov.co

www.dnp.gov.co

www.proexport.gov.co

www.banrep.gov.co

www.dian.gov.co

www.dane.gov.co

7. APPENDIX 1 – The English UK mission to Colombia – programme

Tuesday 19 February (optional)

	Arrival Accommodation at the Casa Dann Carlton Hotel	Calle 94 No. 19-71 Tel: +57 1 600 1313
19:00	Informal drinks with British Embassy staff at the hotel	

Wednesday 20 February

08:00 – 08:30	Registration	Room: Victoria I
08:30 – 08:40	Welcome words by Steve Talbot	Head, UK Trade & Investment, British Embassy
08:40 - 10:00	Presentation by English UK and introduction of member centres	Tony Millns, Chief Executive and representatives of member centres

10:00 - 10:30	Presentation by Nic Humphries and Melba Pyne	Deputy Director and Education Manager, British Council
10:30 – 11:00	Presentation by María Elvira Hoyos	Visa Section Office Manager
11:00 – 12:00	Coffee Break and appointment scheduling	
12:00 - 13:30	Appointments session	
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch	At the Swimming Pool
14:30 - 18:00	Appointments session	Room: Victoria I
18:15	Cocktail reception	At the Swimming Pool

Tony Millns will hold an open forum/Q&A session on opportunities and developments for Colombian agents to work with UK English language centres in room Victoria II during the afternoon appointments round.

Thursday 21 February (optional)

09:30	Call on Nic Humphries and Melba Pyne Deputy Director and Education Manager British Council	Carrera 9 No. 76-49 5 th Floor <i>t.b.c.</i>
12:30	Lunch with Embassy staff at the invitation of Steve Talbot, Head of Trade & Investment	<i>t.b.c.</i> Venue to be confirmed

Friday 22 February (optional)

10:00 to 13:00	English UK/UKBA visa briefing session at the British Embassy	Carrera 9 No. 76-49 9 th Floor
----------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------

8. APPENDIX 2 – English UK presentation to agents attending the English UK/UKBA visa briefing session in Bogotá, Colombia
9. APPENDIX 3 – UK Border Agency presentation to agents attending the English UK/UKBA visa briefing session in Bogotá, Colombia

English UK

Tony Millns
Chief Executive



English UK

- World's leading language teaching association, 365 accredited member centres, thousands of course options
- Charity – no direct Government funding – members pay fees
- Key aim to 'advance the education of international students in the English language'
- 350,000 students a year to UK (out of 500,000 total learning English)
- UK still global market leader for English language learning by study abroad

What do we do?

- Quality assurance through partnership with British Council in Accreditation UK
- Professional development and training
- Representation to governments and other agencies worldwide
- Marketing and promotion, including StudyWorld international education fair in London
- Business development services for members

Quality Assurance

- Partner with the British Council (BC) in Accreditation UK inspection scheme
- Approved by UK Government
- Regular independent inspections of English language centres
- Covers management, resources, teaching and learning, welfare and student services
- English UK represents the sector's views on the scheme, and promotes it to the sector
- Accreditation Consultancy Service

Colombia

	2004 (base 227)	2005 (base 227)	2006 (base 243)
Market position	13	14	13
% of total UK ELT market	3.1	3.3	3.5
Student weeks	36,997	38,767	48,891

Accreditation UK

- Work with BC to run the accreditation scheme
- Key criteria: teaching and learning, management, resources and environment, welfare and student services
- Teachers are observed teaching – host families are sampled – etc
- Global benchmark of quality
- Approved by the UK Home Office for the new Register of Sponsors (for visas)

Changes to visa system

- Early 2009 – student visa based on a) enrolment at accredited centre b) proof of funds
- Only accredited centres will be on new Register of Sponsors able to issue “Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies” for UK visa
- Implications for agents – work with accredited centres ONLY

Changes 2

- Student Visitor Visa – for short courses – no right to work (at all), extend, or switch to another category – will still be issued on ‘old’ basis
- Important for agents and centres to recruit genuine students only – clear, consistent and credible reasons for wanting to study in UK, plus capable of doing course, able to pay, intend to return
- Responsibility will be ours!

English UK News

- Quarterly e-newsletter distributed to database of language travel agents worldwide, members of the press and other stakeholders
- Total circulation of around 5000
- News about ELT in the UK, members, course types, UK regions, tourism developments



Working with Agents

- Agent zone on website plus course search – around 200,000 searches a day, biggest ELT course database in world
- The English in the UK Guide
- Overseas visits
- Inward missions and fam trips
- Special requests via members’ e-forum
- Specialist agent network – code of practice, disputes resolution, model agency agreement
- StudyWorld London and small local workshops – Cancun, Bogota, Hong Kong

StudyWorld

“The most important study travel event in the world – where the best providers meet the best agents!”



StudyWorld

- Established 1969 – ‘English Language Schools Workshop’
- 1991-2006 – ‘International Languages & Education UK Fair’ – Brighton
- 2007 – moved to London and rebranded StudyWorld - 450 study abroad agents, 255 educators – 62 countries worldwide
- StudyWorld London 2008 – 8-10 September – Hilton London Metropole Hotel



Conclusion

- UK international reputation for quality in education, plus rigorous accreditation
- Strong commitment to student support
- UK is still relatively safe – and the food is getting better
- New visa system will be simpler for all
- Good value
- Agents – partners in quality


www.englishuk.com
www.studyworldfair.com

ENGLISHUK 



UKvisas - The student visa journey

EnglishUK – UKVisas, Rio de Janeiro
25 February 2008



Presentation will cover

- UKvisas Background
- Student Visas
- Points Based System

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Part One - UKvisas in context

UKvisas headline figures

- 2.75m applications in 2006/7 (1.8m in 2001/2)
- 81% of visa applications are issued
- 66% of these are issued within 24 hours
- 146 visa issuing posts
- Over 100 nationalities require visas
- Approximately 2,500 staff. Approximately 2,300 overseas and 200 in London
- Independent Monitor scrutinises decisions

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office




UK Border Agency

From 1 April 2008

- Will consist of:
 - Border and Immigration Agency
 - UKvisas
 - Parts of HM Revenue and Customs
- Reporting to the Home Office and Treasury

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



UKvisas' aims

1. Maintain a strong border control against immigration abuse and security risks
2. Facilitate the journey of genuine visitors and migrants. Boost the UK economy.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Controls - Biometrics and commercial partners

As of now:

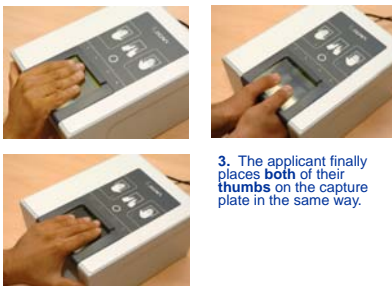
- Rollout of Biometric data collection programme completed January 2008
- Over 80 Visa Application Centres open in approximately 50 countries
- By the end of 2008 over 80% of applications will be handled through VACs

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

The Enrolment Procedure – Collecting Fingerprints

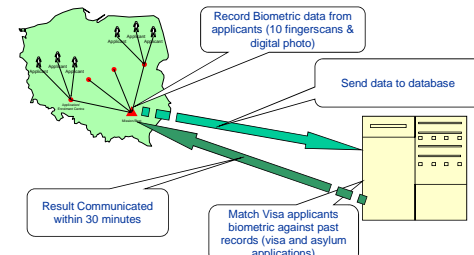
1. The applicant places the four fingers of their **right hand flat** on the capture plate, and presses gently downwards.
2. The applicant places the four fingers of their **left hand flat** on the capture plate in the same way.
3. The applicant finally places **both** of their **thumbs** on the capture plate in the same way.



A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

Biometrics



Record Biometric data from applicants (10 fingerscans & digital photo)

Send data to database

Match Visa applicants biometric against past records (visa and asylum applications)

Result Communicated within 30 minutes

Biometrics taken from every visa applicant by 1 January 2008

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

Customer Service

- Speed of turnaround
- Ease of access
- Fewer interviews
- Excellent information, complaints handling, professionalism
- Consistent decision-making, objective criteria
- Marketing and outreach

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

Student Marketing & Outreach programmes

Campaign launched August

- Initial stage - 17 city roadshow
- Focus on UK as the destination of choice (to the right people) and to introduce biometrics.
- Strong partnership working with BC, VB and UKTI.



A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

Examples of Marketing - China

Excellent media coverage

- Increased stakeholder confidence through joint marketing – presents a united UK PLC approach.
- Student Visa issues up
- biometrics campaign using professional PR and campaign logo.
- Plans set to market the premium visa post-biometrics.



A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

UKvisas
 Making travel and migration work for Britain

Scrutiny Independent Monitor - findings for her last report

POSITIVE

“UKvisas is rapidly and successfully changing the way applications are handled and determined with the introduction of biometrics, application centres and a risk assessment basis for decision making”;

Overall quality of decision making is improving. The Independent Monitor found no, “*crass or inappropriate comments*” by ECOs in her most recent file sample.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office




Independent Monitor - findings for her last report

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Consistency and quality of the information provided for customers;
 Handling and recording of complaints and correspondence, and learning from outcomes;

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Student applications - statistics

- 312, 737 student applications received in 2006/7
- Up by 10% on 2005/6
- Student applications were 11% of all applications received by UKvisas
- Refusal Rate: 30%
- Applications up in 2007/08


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Top 5 countries 2006/7

	Applications	Issued	Refused
China	30,439	27,218	3,221
Russian Federation	23,819	22,153	1,666
India	36,063	21,050	15,013
Pakistan	28,229	11,491	16,738
United States	10,106	9,785	321


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Student Visitor Category: From 1 September 2007

- Introduction of a new Student Visitor category
- Intended for those who wish to combine visit with short-term study
- No right to work or switch or extend
- £63 charge for visa nationals
- Non-visa nationals may seek entry at port, but must satisfy Immigration Officer are accepted on a course of study to be provided by an organisation on the DfES Register
- All other students to apply for student visa (£99)
- From 2009, student visas will be part of Points-Based System - student visitor category will continue

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



What do we look for in a student application?

- An acceptance letter from the institution in the UK, which includes details of:
 - the type of course; what qualification it will lead to; the duration of the course (including the start and end dates); the number of hours of daytime study per week; the cost of the course and whether the fees have been paid in part or in full.
- Evidence of funds and their ability to pay for the whole course and living expenses
 - evidence of their own funds and/ or evidence of sponsor's funds (eg. bank statements with regular income, details of assets owned)
- Certificates showing previous qualifications/ experience
- Clear indication of the aim of their studies/ qualification
 - question on visa application form 'why did you select this course?' answered fully
- Clear indication of how the course will benefit them
 - Questions on intentions and future prospects answered fully on visa application form


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Common Scenarios - 1


- Applicant presents false academic certificate
- Intended to satisfy ECO that meets minimum course requirements
- Verification process confirms fraud
- Application refused

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office


 **Common Scenarios - 2**

- Applicant claims studies funded by UK sponsor
- Sponsor has sufficient evidence of funds
- Checks on sponsor confirm that he has already funded numerous other applicants to study in the UK (in one case over 20).
- Funds therefore incommensurate with financing multiple students.


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

 **Example of abuse**

- False WAEC certificate
- Implies strong academic background
- Counterfeit document
- Application refused and considered for Fraud & Forgery Strategy including possible arrest.




A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

 **The Points Based System (PBS)**


- To manage migration in work and study routes.
- Decisions will be objective and transparent.
- Stronger compliance.
- Streamlined application process.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

 **PBS - The Tiers**


- Tier 1 - Highly Skilled Individuals
- Tier 2 - Skilled workers with a job offer
- Tier 3 - Limited numbers of low skilled workers
- Tier 4 - Students
- Tier 5 - Youth Mobility and Temporary Workers

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

 **PBS - Timetable**


- Tier 1 - Summer 08
- Tier 2 - Autumn 08
- Tier 3 - TBA
- Tier 4 - Early 09
- Tier 5 - Autumn 08

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office

 **PBS - new responsibilities**

- ECOs will no longer assess an applicant's "credibility".
- Any refusals under Tier 4 will be for clear and objective reasons.
- Institutions will need to ensure their recruitment procedures take the above issues into account

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Students - Tier 4

- Simpler for the compliant. More robust for the non – compliant.
- Increased objectivity and transparency to decision making process
- Greater role for sponsors – ensuring the recruitment of genuine students.


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Sponsorship

- Sponsor register – for responsible sponsors.
- Registration by application – must agree to meet conditions. Accredited by a recognised body.
- Account managers will work with institutions helping to ensure compliance.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Students will retain current ability to...

- Be accompanied by dependants
- Access to post-study work route
- Switch into other work categories following studies
- Take part-time work


A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



We are listening

- An ongoing process of engagement with stakeholders.
- A transparent consultation process.
- Informed by customer insight through targeted research.
- Listening to the views and concerns of you – the experts and your customers – the students.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Paving the way.....

- Developing country specific marketing campaigns in preparation for key changes including PBS.
- Developing strategic marketing partnerships to underpin these campaigns.
- Looking at imaginative ways to prepare key student markets in advance of PBS.

A joint directorate of the Home Office and Foreign & Commonwealth Office



Any questions?





Registered Office 219 St John Street London EC1V 4LY

t +44 20 7608 7960 | **e** info@englishuk.com
f +44 20 7608 7961 | **w** www.englishuk.com