



Dear Taskforce Member

In December the Home Secretary launched a consultation on the reform of the student immigration system. We received over 31,000 responses and over the last few months have worked closely with the education sector and other interested parties to further develop our proposals. I want to thank all of you who submitted responses and discussed many of the issues directly with us.

The Home Secretary has today announced to Parliament the results of this extensive consultation process. Full details of today's announcement can be found on the UK Border Agency website: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk).

The Government is clear that the UK has a worldwide reputation for providing quality education to overseas students, and is the destination of choice for many people wishing to study abroad.

However, we are also clear that we want only the highest quality international students to come to Britain. We want genuine students to study at genuine institutions, whose primary purpose is providing a first class education. And we want students to study for qualifications that will help them in their home countries, not as a route to live and work in the UK.

Broadly the changes announced today fall into four key areas:

## **ACCREDITATION**

From April 2012 all prospective sponsors must have been vetted by statutory education inspection bodies and all must become Highly Trusted Sponsors. All current sponsors will have 12 months to meet these requirements.

We will be introducing an interim limit on those institutions which do not currently meet the new audit requirements.

This will limit sponsors' allocation of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) for the period 6 April 2011 to 5 April 2012 to be the same as the number used which resulted in approved migrant applications in the 12 month period 1 March 2010 to 28 February 2011 - that is, the number of CAS that resulted in a successful visa or leave to remain application.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Those coming to study at degree level will have to speak English at an upper intermediate (B2) level. Those coming to study below degree level will need to be proficient in English at level B1.

UK Border Agency staff will be able to refuse entry to students who cannot speak English without an interpreter and who therefore patently do not meet our required minimum standards

We will also streamline the requirements for the lowest risk students to make the application process easier.

## **ENTITLEMENTS**

Students at universities and publicly funded further education colleges will retain their current work rights but all other students will have no right to work, and we will place restrictions on work placements at courses outside of universities;

We will only allow postgraduate students at universities on courses longer than 12 months, Government sponsored students on courses longer than six months to be able to bring their dependants; at the moment all students on longer courses are able to bring dependants with them;

## **AT THE END OF THE COURSE**

We will limit the overall time that can be spent on a student visa to three years at lower levels, as now, and five years at higher levels, with exceptions for students studying for professional qualifications or a PhD;

We want the very best international graduates to stay on and contribute to the UK economy. But the current arrangements for international students who graduate in the UK are overly generous. So we will close the Post Study Work route from April 2012.

Those graduating from a UK university with a recognised degree, PGCE, or PGDE will be able to switch into Tier 2.

We will also implement a brand new route specifically to attract student entrepreneurs. We want to retain bright young people with innovative ideas particularly in fields like science, technology and design to help drive economic growth and productivity.

The measures will be introduced in stages over the next 12 months. I am very keen we work with you on their implementation.

Jeremy Oppenheim  
**National lead: Temporary Migration**  
**UK Border Agency**