

News Release  
26 June 2014

## **Protect UK's world-class reputation for education whilst eradicating visa abuse, Government urged**

Protecting and strengthening the UK's reputation as a world-leading education provider should be a priority as the Government continues to investigate possible abuse of the visa system, says English UK.

The organisation, which represents more than 470 fully-accredited language teaching centres, supports the government's drive to eradicate criminality in English exams used to support visa applications. This week 57 private further education colleges had their sponsor licences suspended, and action was taken against three universities, when immigration enforcement teams uncovered potential abuses including evidence of cheating in English tests run by US-owned Educational Testing Services.

ETS lost its licence to conduct English tests for visas in April after malpractice at a London test centre was exposed by a Panorama investigation, sparking the current enquiry.

Sarah Cooper, Chair of English UK, said: "English UK is totally committed to the protection of the integrity and reputation of English Language Teaching in the UK and supports the government's robust audit of compliance.

"We are monitoring this situation closely and will continue to work with the government, exam providers, our members and the broader international education sector to ensure any lessons are quickly learned and applied."

Ms Cooper pointed out that the affected colleges and universities now have a right of reply against their suspension as sponsors.

"We understand that they are working closely with the authorities on this, and hope that this proceeds as quickly as possible so that firm conclusions can be made, action taken, and this episode concluded without unnecessary delay.

"The English Language sector alone is worth £2.5bn to our economy, while a report for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills found education was worth around £14.1bn to the UK in 2008-9, rising to around £21bn in 2020. It is vitally important for our economy and thousands of jobs that we protect the UK's well-deserved reputation as one of the world's leading education providers."

## Notes to editors

- English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with more than 470 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity ([www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com)).
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