

English UK responds to latest Tier 4 Visa Changes

NEWS RELEASE
17 JULY 2015

English UK is briefing MPs to ask urgent questions about the changes to student visas which were announced this week.

Among the far-reaching changes are a removal of work rights from students on Tier 4 visas at state FE colleges, and the removal of the right to extend or switch visas whilst still in the UK. Both of these changes are likely to have a particular impact on English UK member centres.

The Home Office departed from its usual practice of advance consultation on these changes because, it said, it feared a repeat of a previous breach of confidentiality.

Huan Japes, English UK's Deputy Chief Executive (Professional Services) said the changes were very disappointing. "The changes announced by the Home Office this week will inevitably hit a successful expert industry, affecting people's jobs and incomes. Some of the changes have far-reaching consequences for our members and will have a further negative impact on the UK's reputation as a study destination.

"We are concerned that the lack of consultation means that the full implications for our education sector may not have been fully considered, particularly when taken as part of an almost constant stream of changes to the Immigration Rules during the past year and the lack of time to implement those which have already happened."

The changes which are likely to have most impact on English UK members are those around work rights for students at FE colleges and in centres which prepare students for university entry, but are not embedded with a specific university. Students preparing for university courses at a centre in the UK would from November have to leave the UK to apply for their university visa. This means many would choose the simpler option of applying to a different destination where they can either apply for a single visa to cover the whole period of study, or where they can apply for their university visa in-country.

Some of the changes announced this week took effect immediately, with other implementation dates on August 3 and 12 November. They include:

Already implemented

Entry Clearance Officers to grant leave to enter in line with the student's intended date of travel

From August 3

New students at state colleges may not work

Clarification of existing rules on T4 students studying at state schools, that 16 and 17 year olds entering the adult education system can only apply for a T4 visa, and of time limits in the UK

From 12 November

College students may not extend T4 visas or switch to T2 or 5 visas whilst in the UK; reduction of time limit for FE level study from 3 to 2 years; dependents of T4 students allowed only to take skilled work; uprating of T4 maintenance requirements "in line with inflation" and removal of the established presence clause in the maintenance rule.

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with around 480 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).
2. For more information, please contact Huan Japes, Deputy Chief Executive (Professional Services) of English UK on Huan@Englishuk.com.