



*Work with us*

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# *Foreword*

*The UK is home to the English language. English is the international language of business and culture, and the most common second language in the world. So it is natural that people want to come here to learn our language.*

Over 500,000 people of all ages come to the UK each year to improve their English at all levels from beginners to those aiming for native speaker fluency.

English is probably our most successful export ever and a durable, long term national asset. Each year, it generates around £2.5 billion in export earnings for the UK. There are enormous long-term affinity benefits too: students become friends of Britain, and many are destined to be leaders in business, politics and the media.

More than 15,000 people are employed in English language teaching across the whole UK. From Aberdeen in the north to Torquay in the south, international students bring wealth, connections and opportunity to our communities.

Teaching English is a highly competitive international business, and the UK's strengths are not an over-riding advantage. Other countries compete on factors which make them distinctive such as their lower living costs, relaxed lifestyle, ease of getting visas, and even their hours of sunshine. The environment in which the UK industry operates is far from supportive, and the UK's market share is increasingly under threat.

Our international education sector is envied and admired across the world; work with us to deliver changes which will secure this success for future generations.

## Work with us

*We make four straightforward calls for change, each valuable in its own right and together representing a unified plan offering substantial benefit to the UK for years to come.*

1

*Work with us to bring more export income and jobs to the UK.*

English language teaching is already economically vital in many UK towns and cities. And the benefits are widely shared, from those directly employed in language schools through to ordinary families who host international students during their stays.

Many students start with language learning before going on to advanced studies at our great universities. Our most successful universities know this and work closely with language schools to help students progress in the UK education system. If these students don't study here they will go to our competitors and bolster their educational systems instead of ours.

This export activity brings money and jobs directly into your local community. And it generates substantial UK taxation receipts - students spend on everything including transport, accommodation, visitor attractions, restaurants, retail and entertainment.

2

*Work with us to recognise that students are not migrants and to improve the visa rules.*

International students are not migrants. They come here to learn, to experience and to take this knowledge back home. Our student visa rules should reflect this.

In the UK we count students as migrants in national statistics and policies; this is wrong. It drags students into the immigration debate, whereas all studies show that the public do not see students as an immigration problem. As a direct result, the UK is significantly disadvantaged internationally with students increasingly questioning whether we really want them here.

## Work with us

We need a sensible and consistent student visa policy without anomalies such as the current 'B1 rule' – which means that to come here on a Tier 4 student visa to learn English, you already have to have good English.

The removal of work rights from some students has created another major anomaly. We seek re-instatement of work rights to all international students at privately funded institutions, matching the existing position for state funded institutions.

We want the UK government to once again accept the world's leading language teaching quality assurance scheme - Accreditation UK – as a core criterion of acceptable educational quality to enrol General Students under Tier 4 as well as short-term students.

UK education is still highly prized by international students but the current visa regime is a grim deterrent, even to students visiting for just a few weeks.

3

*Work with us to promote English on the global stage, showing international students that they are welcome in the UK.*

The world wants to learn English. After decades leading the world, English language teaching in the UK is now falling back at the very time when global demand for this most prized export is stronger than ever before.

Other countries are seizing their chance. As the UK stumbles, their governments are actively supporting their domestic ELT industries. We face substantial competition from the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many other countries too. Australia reports their international student numbers increasing by 11% in 2014 following major government policy changes – overhauling their education strategy, student visa policy and working more closely with the industry.

*English language teaching in the UK brings £2.5 billion a year to our economy.*

## Work with us

We want our government to recognise the strategic value of English language teaching and the catalysing effect it brings to the whole of our education sector. The UK should welcome international students.

Get behind this success story. Bolster our efforts to compete on the global stage, help the UK to be the best study destination in the world.

4

### *Work with us to fully recognise the educational excellence achieved in this sector.*

The UK is rightly acknowledged to be a world leader in international education in every other country, but this is often not fully understood at home.

Many other countries regularly ask to benchmark their quality assurance approaches with ours precisely because of our acknowledged expertise. Highly qualified teachers and a solid professional development programme are at the core of the UK's English language teaching reputation. This contributes greatly to exceptionally high student satisfaction across the sector.

The UK English language teaching sector is fully committed to quality assurance. The British Council and English UK work in partnership to deliver the Accreditation UK scheme. The scheme is constantly evolving, keeping up with legislative changes and developing new standards in important fields such as the safeguarding of young learners.

It is clearly anomalous that the rest of the world looks to the UK ELT sector as an exemplar of global quality but our own government does not. Political concerns around immigration have trumped common sense and this must change.

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# *About English UK*

*English UK is the world's leading English language teaching association.*

We are the national association of English language teaching centres, representing around 480 members in the state and private sectors. These include private language schools, educational trusts and charities and language centres in universities and further education colleges.

We are a UK registered charity with the prime aim of advancing the education of international students in the English language. All of our members are accredited by the Accreditation UK scheme, which we run in partnership with the British Council.

We represent the sector in the UK and internationally with a wide range of partners and stakeholders and governments. We provide training for our members and promote the UK as a great study destination worldwide.

## *The UK English language teaching sector: key facts*

- 1** A 2011 report by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills estimated the ELT sector was worth £2.5bn a year. From this we estimate that Greater London receives £770m, Bournemouth and Poole £213m, and Edinburgh £90m from English language students.
- 2** According to data from English UK member centres, each year over 15,000 staff are employed in centres throughout the UK.
- 3** According to English UK membership data, our members taught over 580,000 students in 2014.
- 4** Students from more than 100 countries worldwide come to the UK to improve their English language skills. Western European markets represent the largest share of students. Other top source markets include Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Korea, Japan, China, plus Brazil and Colombia. Altogether these markets represent 70% of the total students.