



SELLING THE UK TO THE WORLD

2019 election manifesto from the UK's English language teaching sector

The UK's English language teaching sector attracts students from all over the world to study English in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They come to experience our culture, to follow their dreams, and to learn or improve their English so they can study at a UK university or improve their skills for the global economy.

English language students learning in universities, colleges and privately-owned language centres injected £1.4bn into our economy, supporting 35,700 jobs and contributing £236m to UK taxes, in 2017. In the UK, English language teaching (ELT) is a bigger industry than fishing.

Over 550,000 children, teenagers and adults came from all over the world to learn English in the UK. Over 60% come from EU countries.

Their course fees, living costs and leisure spending support tens of thousands of people and businesses, from the ordinary families who welcome students into their homes to teachers and support staff, taxi drivers, café staff to exam boards, tourist attractions and publishers.

And the benefits are far more than just financial.

International English language students are more likely to choose UK universities and to later become influencers for us in their own countries, supporting good diplomatic and trading relationships.

But UK ELT faces increasing competition. In other English-speaking countries, including the USA, Canada, Australia, Ireland and Malta, the sector is officially supported by immigration rules and warm words of welcome. There is also a risk that Brexit may deter students coming from the EU if it becomes more difficult to obtain permission to enter the UK.

As the national association for UK ELT, we and our members work to ensure our industry can compete and grow. But we need the incoming government to create a supportive immigration regime and make students feel welcome.

**£1.4
billion**

Total value of English language students to the UK each year.

**35,000+
UK JOBS**

**supported by English
language students in**
language centres, supply
chains and local services.

550,000
international students
come to the UK to take an
English course every year.

WHAT WE WANT THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO DO

1. Offer visa-free study travel for students from EU/ EEA countries.
2. Continue ID card travel for EU/ EEA teenagers on short courses in the UK, or create a passport free joint travel document for group travel for students aged 18 and under.
3. Create a light-touch, flexible, short-term study visa for up to a year with no time restrictions for all ELT students.
4. Allow all students already studying in the UK to apply for a new visa for further study without leaving the country.
5. All English language providers to be accredited, and recognise Accreditation UK on all visa routes.
6. Ensure EEA nationals essential for staffing ELT centres during summer peak periods are not prevented from returning annually by visa rules or salary thresholds.
7. Restore work rights of up to 20 hours a week for 18+ students on ELT courses with all accredited providers.
8. Maintain Erasmus+ relationships and funding, including for short-term teacher training.



WHAT WE WANT THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO DO

1. Offer visa-free study travel for short-term students from EU/ EEA countries

Students who are used to entering the UK freely to take an English language course, may choose competitor destinations such as Ireland and Malta if they are required to apply for a visa to study here.

2. Continue ID card travel for EU/ EEA teenagers on short courses in the UK, or create a passport free joint travel document for group travel for students aged 18 and under

EU nationals often do not have passports as they can travel widely on ID cards. This is particularly true of teenagers. More than half of ELT students are 18 and under, and most come for short summer courses of under a fortnight as part of a group. The extra costs of getting a passport for one short holiday risks damaging this valuable market.

3. Create a light-touch, flexible, short-term study visa for up to a year with no time restrictions for all ELT students

Current restrictions can prevent students from taking follow-on courses during their unexpired visa period. We think legitimate students should be encouraged to take further courses during their time in the UK.

4. Allow all students already studying in the UK to apply for a new visa for further study without leaving the country

Immigration regulations insist that students already in the UK must depart to apply for a new visa for the next stage of their education. We want to encourage these students to remain in the UK system and make it as easy to apply for follow-on visas as our competitors do in the USA, Canada, Australia, Malta, Ireland and New Zealand. We also believe this should be allowed on environmental grounds, to avoid unnecessary flights.

WHAT WE WANT THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO DO

5. Accredit all English language providers and recognise Accreditation UK on all visa routes

We insist all English UK member centres are accredited (although current regulations only require those teaching non-EU students to be accredited) because we believe all students deserve the highest standards of teaching, management and care. We want all English language teaching centres to be accredited, and for Accreditation UK to be recognised as an educational oversight body on all visa routes including Tier 4.

6. Ensure EEA nationals essential for staffing ELT centres during summer peak periods are not prevented from returning annually by visa rules or salary thresholds

Many UK language centres need to hire seasonal, specialist staff during the summer months when hundreds of thousands of under-18s come to the UK to study English. EEA nationals need to be able to enter the UK for up to three months in consecutive years, without being subject to the current proposed minimum salary threshold of £30,000.

7. Restore work rights of up to 20 hours a week for students aged 18+ on ELT courses with all accredited providers

This would give ELT students the same rights as university students and align the UK with competitor nations. Students value the right to work part-time because they can practise their English and subsidise what can be a very expensive course.

8. Maintain Erasmus+ relationships and funding, including for short-term teacher training

A significant proportion of students travelling to study English in the UK, and ELT teachers taking teacher training courses, are supported by the EU Erasmus+ scheme. The last UK government indicated that it wished to remain a member of the scheme and we believe this is very important.

Learn more about our industry
englishuk.com/facts-figures