



The changing landscape of Education and Immigration In the United Kingdom

There seem to be so many misconceptions about the new rules concerning the many young people worldwide, who wish to study in the United Kingdom, that I thought I would attempt to clarify matters for students, their parents and educational consultants.

Too often in the past we have all been let down by that minority who have manipulated the system. A reaction was inevitable and although in some quarters considered extreme, the intentions of the British Government are honourable. In time, the system will settle down and the restrictions become less onerous as we become more familiar with this changed educational environment.

The points based system is an attempt to regain control over a system of immigration that had become chaotic and subject to abuse.

Having been involved in the private college sector for some years I have seen for myself how the actions of this unprincipled few have acted as a spoiler at every level of our industry with the result that genuine students have suffered, as have those dedicated to educating them.

As I see it the aims of the new system are as follows:

- 1) No longer will a student from overseas, arrive in the United Kingdom to find a non-existent college or one that does not live up to expectations.
- 2) Students who are not serious about their studies and whose plan is to work full time and disappear into the system will not be able to obtain an entry visa to the United Kingdom.
- 3) Bona fide educational consultants will participate in and benefit from the improvements in the law and business practice.
- 4) Similarly, colleges will continually seek to improve their standards and their duty of care.
- 5) Parents and students will receive the necessary reassurances to enable them to choose the appropriate educational institutions for the continuation of their educational journey.

In the past, the rating systems (A/B) for colleges denoted the quality of the establishment. In this new era of higher standards, the situation is more complicated. No longer can a new college gain immediate accreditation with an A rating, but is granted an interim B rating to enable it to enrol students. After some months its practices and procedures are checked by the UK Border Agency before an A rating is granted. The initial B rating is not an indication of an inferior college merely that it is being subjected to ever more stringent tests in the present demand for higher standards.

What we have come to know as 'bogus' colleges can no longer aspire to UKBA approval, let alone be granted a B rating.

Once granted an A rating the ambition of any worthwhile college should be the status of 'Highly Trusted' which is granted after several more months of rigorous inspection.

Students and their parents should appreciate the genuine efforts being made to ensure that the standards of British education are being constantly tested and improved, so that an academic qualification from this country, can be considered second to none, enabling those who achieve them to fulfil their intellectual aspirations on their chosen career path.

Simon Creese-Parsons
Principal
Alfred the Great College

