



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2016-0214, 11 November 2016

# Immigration rules for international students

## Westminster Hall Debate 16 November 2016 at 1430hrs

This pack has been produced ahead of the debate to be held in Westminster Hall at 2.30pm on Wednesday 16 November 2016 on immigration rules for international students. The Member in charge of this debate is Stuart C McDonald MP.

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# 1. The current rules

The [Immigration Rules](#) specify the conditions for entry and leave to remain for students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland.

## 1.1 The short-term study visa

The '[short-term study visa](#)' is available for people who wish to study a short course (one of less than 6 months' duration, or 11 months for English language courses) at any level. It does not entitle the visa holder to sponsor dependent family members to join them in the UK (instead, family members must qualify for a visa in their own right), or to work whilst in the UK, or to extend their stay or 'switch' into a different immigration category without leaving the UK.

## 1.2 Tier 4 (General) student visa

The [Tier 4 \(General\) student visa](#) caters for non-EEA nationals wishing to study for longer than 6 months.

The eligibility criteria for a Tier 4 visa are more demanding than the comparable provisions that EEA nationals must satisfy in order to have a right to reside in the UK as a student. An applicant for a Tier 4 visa must have an unconditional offer of a place on a course provided by an [institution licensed to sponsor migrant students](#), must prove an intermediate level of ability in the English language, and must satisfy specific maintenance funds requirements (the precise amount depending on the location and duration of their studies). There are also minimum requirements applicable to the course of study the applicant hopes to pursue.

An applicant can only extend his or her stay in the UK by demonstrating academic progression. There is an overall limit on how many years an international student can spend in the UK (which varies on the level of study).

The family members of a Tier 4 visa student may be able to join their relative in the UK if they are dependants (a husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried or same-sex partner; a child under 18 years of age). Only students on certain courses are eligible to bring a dependant to the UK. The student must meet additional maintenance funds requirements for each dependant.

## 1.3 EEA nationals and their family members

[EU Directive 2004/38/EC](#) (the 'Free Movement Directive') details the rights of EU, EEA and Swiss nationals (hereafter, referred to as 'EEA nationals') to live, work and study in another EU Member State.

In short, in order to have a right to reside as a student, an EEA national must satisfy the following criteria:

- (c) – [they] are enrolled at a private or public establishment, accredited or financed by the host Member State on the basis of its legislation or administrative practice, for the principal purpose of following a course of study, including vocational training; and
- have comprehensive sickness insurance cover in the host Member State and assure the relevant national authority, by means of a declaration or by such equivalent means as they may choose, that they have sufficient resources for themselves and their family members not to become a burden on the social assistance system of the host Member State during their period of residence;

An EEA national claiming a right to reside in the UK under EU law as a student (and his or her family members) can apply to the Home Office for confirmation of that status. However there is no obligation to do so. A student who chooses to apply for documentary proof of his or her status is required to provide evidence that he or she satisfies the eligibility criteria outlined above.

Although people with a right to reside under EU law can access NHS treatment on the same basis as British citizens, this is not sufficient to satisfy the requirement to have comprehensive sickness insurance.

The family members of an EEA national can also claim a right to reside in another Member State when joining or accompanying their family member. However, a more limited range of relatives are eligible for a right of residence as the family member of a student than for other categories of EEA migrant.

There has as yet been no change to the rights and status of EEA nationals in the UK.

## 2. The closure of the post-study work visa

The Coalition Government closed the Tier 1 (Post-study work) visa in April 2012. The visa had enabled international students (those from outside the EEA and Switzerland) to do any kind of work in the UK for up to two years after graduation (with the possibility of switching to a skilled work visa).

The Government took the view that the visa undermined the principle that student visas are for temporary migration rather than a route to permanent settlement. It felt that many non-EEA graduates were using it as a stepping stone into skilled occupations in the UK, and questioned whether giving foreign graduates open access to the UK labour market was appropriate at a time of high graduate unemployment. Announcing its closure, then Home Secretary Theresa May told the House of Commons:

We want the very best international graduates to stay on and contribute to the UK economy. But the arrangements we have been left with for students who graduate in the UK are far too generous. They are able to stay for two years, whether or not they find a job and regardless of the skill level of that job. In 2010, at a time when one in ten UK graduates were unemployed, 39,000 non-EU students with 8,000 dependents took advantage of this generosity.

So we will close the current Post Study Work route from April next year. In future, only those graduates who have an offer of a skilled graduate level job from an employer who is licensed by the UK Border Agency will be allowed to stay.

...

As we restrict the Post Study Work route, we will ensure that innovative student entrepreneurs who are creating wealth are able to stay in the UK to pursue their ideas.<sup>1</sup>

The Coalition Government replaced the visa with more selective post-study work rights. Non-EEA national students' options for extending their stay in the UK at the end of their studies now comprise of either:

- applying to switch to a skilled work visa (Tier 2 or Tier 5), if they secure a graduate level job or training offer from an approved employer before the end of their student visa; or
- switching to a Tier 1 'entrepreneur' visa, if they have a strong business proposition; or
- switching to a Tier 1 'exceptional talent' visa, if sponsored by an authorised body who considers that they have exceptional talent

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<sup>1</sup> [HC Deb 22 March 2011 c855-8](#)

- in science, humanities, engineering, medicine, digital technology or the arts; or
- applying for a 12 month extension to their visa, under the 'Doctorate Extension Scheme', if they have completed a PhD in the UK.

## 3. Impact on HE Institutions

### 3.1 HEFCE report on financial health of the HE sector in England

In November 2016, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) published data on the financial health of the English HE sector.<sup>2</sup> This said that the sector predicted growth in overseas student numbers, but that data suggested overseas student acceptance rates were 1.1 percent lower than at the same point in the previous year's cycle. It said that institutions were becoming "increasingly reliant" on overseas fee income to ensure continued financial sustainability.<sup>3</sup> Uncertainties around future immigration rules may impact the sector's ability to meet overseas recruitment targets, HEFCE argued:

24. Recruitment of international students is becoming more competitive, both between institutions and across the global HE market. This is happening at the same time as changes are introduced to the UK's immigration regulations; the uncertainty of the impact of the UK's exit from the EU increases the risk of a downturn in overseas student recruitment. UCAS data highlights that 2016-17 overseas acceptances are 1.1 per cent lower than at the same point in the previous year's cycle. These facts, taken together, suggest an over-confidence by the sector in student number forecasts. However, the weaker pound, relative to international currencies, may act as an incentive to international students and boost overseas student fee income.

25. The new government policy proposals around immigration rules, in particular how they relate to students recruited from overseas, pose uncertainties which could impact the sector's ability to achieve overseas recruitment targets and the financial contribution that this makes.

26. A downturn in overseas recruitment would have a significant adverse impact on the sector's income and surplus projections. While the sector has been successful in recent years in attracting more overseas students, future projected growth may not be achieved.

27. Our financial modelling shows that removal of projected growth in overseas fee income over the next three years (2016-17 to 2018-19) would all but wipe out sector surpluses by 2018-19, with projected surpluses falling from £1,081 million (3.4 per cent of total income) to £56 million (just 0.2 per cent of total income). Annex C shows a summary of the results of our modelling.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of income from overseas (non-EU) students, HEFCE reports the following in relation to England:

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<sup>2</sup> HEFCE, [Financial health of the higher education sector, 2015-16 to 2018-19 forecasts, Data analysis November 2016/34](#)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 8-9

Overseas fee income

26. The income generated through tuition fees from international (non-EU) students in 2014-15 came to £3.6 billion (cash terms). By 2018-19 this is expected to grow to £4.8 billion representing 27.5 per cent of all tuition fee and education contract income and 14.9 per cent of total income projected by English HEIs in 2018-19.<sup>5</sup>

The sector representative group, *Universities Scotland*, is [campaigning](#) for reform of post-study immigration rules. It points to the significant contribution of overseas students to the Scottish economy:

- The UK has one of the least competitive post study work policies in the English-speaking developed world.
- There has been a 60 per cent drop in the number of Indian students studying in Scotland since 2012.
- International students bring in £800 million to Scotland's economy every year.
- Scotland's universities score higher than the global average for satisfaction amongst international students.

While total international student recruitment stagnates in Scotland, Canada, Australia and the US see significant growth.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2 The wider context: Brexit and Higher Education

Following the Brexit vote, many in the higher education sector have expressed concerns about the potential for negative impacts on the UK's global HE 'brand'. Some have argued that the vote to leave the EU could impact on enrolment numbers should prospective international students conclude they are not welcome in the UK. One survey reported in the press claimed that almost a third of international students were less likely to come to the UK, as a result of the vote.<sup>7</sup> Further background on the HE sector's response to Brexit can be found in House of Commons Library and Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) briefing papers:

- [House of Commons Library briefing paper, Brexit: Impact across policy areas](#) (Section 15)
- [SPICe briefing paper, Brexit: Higher Education in Scotland](#).

<sup>5</sup> HEFCE, [Financial health of the higher education sector, 2015-16 to 2018-19 forecasts, Data analysis November 2016/34](#), p. 17

<sup>6</sup> See: Universities Scotland, "[Post study work for international students](#)", undated.

<sup>7</sup> "[Brexit: Almost a third of international students less likely to come to the UK to study, survey finds](#)", in *The Independent*, 29 July 2016

### 3.3 Scottish Affairs Committee report

In February 2016, the Scottish Affairs Committee published a [report](#) of their inquiry into post-study work programmes.<sup>8</sup> In this, they raised concerns about the Government's plans not to re-introduce Tier 1 post-study visas. On the likely impact on Scottish HE providers, the Committee concluded:

We have heard that closing the Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) visa has had an adverse impact on access to talent, and resulted in increased skill shortages in key sectors of the Scottish economy. Representatives from the education sector also told us that it meant Scottish universities were losing out when it came to attracting international students to Scotland.<sup>9</sup>

The Government's response was published on 28 October 2016.<sup>10</sup> On the issue of overseas student recruitment, it stressed that there were a number of other routes to enable overseas students to legally remain after finishing their studies; in recent years, overseas student numbers had gone up:

The Government welcomes international students who choose to study in Scotland and is pleased to note that over recent years there have been increases in both visa applications from international students to study at Scottish universities, and in international student enrolments at Scottish universities. It is clear that Scottish universities continue to thrive and remain highly attractive amongst international students as destinations to study, thereby providing a strong stream of talent who can benefit from our excellent post-study work provisions.<sup>11</sup>

The sector representative group, *Universities Scotland*, is [campaigning](#) for reform of post-study immigration rules. It argues:

- The UK has one of the least competitive post study work policies in the English-speaking developed world.
- There has been a 60 per cent drop in the number of Indian students studying in Scotland since 2012.
- International students bring in £800 million to Scotland's economy every year.
- Scotland's universities score higher than the global average for satisfaction amongst international students.
- While total international student recruitment stagnates in Scotland, Canada, Australia and the US see significant growth.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee, [Post-study work schemes. Fourth Report of Session 2015–16](#), HC 593, 15 February 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee, [Post-study work schemes: Government response – Third Special Report of Session 2016-17](#), HC 787.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 2

<sup>12</sup> See: Universities Scotland, ["Post study work for international students"](#), undated.

## 4. Migration statistics

### 4.1 Are students included in official estimates of net migration?

Under the United Nations definition, a long-term international migrant is someone who changes their country of usual residence for a period of at least one year.

So students who come to study in the UK on courses lasting longer than one year are included in official estimates of net migration, while students studying on courses that are shorter than one year are not included, unless they expect to remain in the UK for other reasons.

Students who are not counted in estimates of net migration include those who come to the UK on [short-term study visas](#), which allow adult nationals of countries outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland to study on any course lasting up to six months, or on English language courses of up to eleven months.

### 4.2 Could students be excluded from estimates of net migration?

Strictly speaking, students cannot be removed from estimates of net migration because the figure that is produced by excluding students is **not net migration**.

Net migration is an objective demographic quantity, which represents the change in the population that is explained by migration.

The change in the size of a population over a given period is made up of two principal components:

- **Natural change:** the number of births minus the number of deaths
- **Net migration:** the number of immigrants minus the number of emigrants

Population change in a given period is equal to natural change plus net migration during the period.<sup>13</sup>

Because population estimates are produced annually, it makes sense to define migrants as people who change their country of usual residence for a period of at least one year, because that means people are counted as members of the resident population of a country for the same number of years that they are usually resident in that country.

Removing specific groups from this time-based definition of migration breaks the mathematical relationships that underpin the population estimates and produces a figure that is not equal to net migration in the demographic sense.

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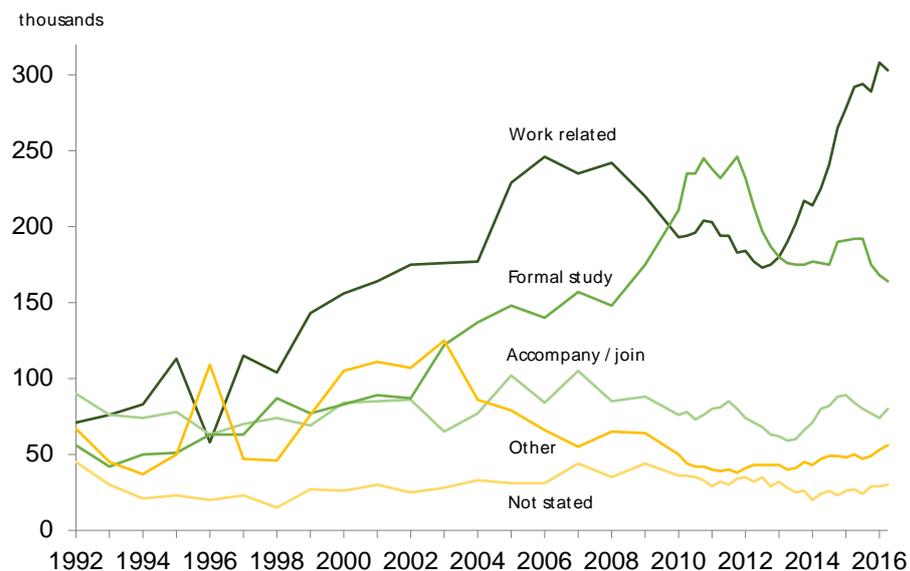
<sup>13</sup> Statistical adjustments may also be included as a third component for reconciliation.

### 4.3 Should students be included in the net migration target?

As Home Secretary, Theresa May made an explicit commitment to “reduce net migration from the hundreds of thousands back down to the tens of thousands” in November 2010.<sup>14</sup> Since then there has been a debate about whether students should be included within that target.

The chart below shows estimates of immigration to the UK by main reason for migration from the year ending December 1991 to the year ending March 2016. As the chart shows “formal study” was the most common main reason for immigration during the period 2009-12. The reduction in the number of people migrating to the UK to study since then reflects a reduction in the number of Tier 4 student visas issued to students from outside the EEA and Switzerland.

#### Immigration by main reason, years ending each quarter, YE Dec 1991 – YE Mar 2016



Sources: [ONS Long-Term International Migration Estimates 2 series \(LTIM calendar year\)](#); [ONS Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, Aug 2016](#)

In the year ending March 2016, around 633,000 people immigrated into the UK. Of these, around 164,000 (26%) migrated mainly for formal study. Students are therefore still a large component of immigration, even though the number of people migrating mainly for work is now larger.

Those who argue that students should be removed from the net migration target point out that while students are around a quarter of immigration, the public does not tend to think of students as migrants.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Home Secretary, HC Deb, 23 November 2010, col 169

<sup>15</sup> See [“Thinking Behind the Numbers: Understanding Public Opinion on Immigration in Britain”](#), Oxford Migration Observatory, 16 October 2011

Conversely, those who argue that students should be included in the net migration target stress that it only makes sense to discount student migration in so far as students return to their home countries after completing their studies.<sup>16</sup> But the limited data that is currently available on the net migration of students suggests that a large proportion of students may remain in the UK after completing their studies.

The ONS has only recently started collecting the data necessary to estimate net migration of people who come to the UK to study.

The International Passenger Survey (IPS), which is the principal source of data used to produce the long-term international migration estimates, has asked migrants about their main reason for migration since 1991. However, as a person who migrates to the UK in order to study may leave in order to work, or to join their family, it is not possible to estimate net migration of students using just this data.

In order to address this gap in the data, the ONS added a question to the IPS in 2012 asking all emigrants who were former immigrants their main reason for coming to the UK when they originally immigrated. This makes it possible to estimate the net migration of people who come to the UK mainly to study.

The table below shows the currently available data on the net migration of people coming to the UK to study. These figures are estimated directly from the International Passenger Survey and differ slightly from the figures shown in the chart above as they have not been adjusted in light of other sources.

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<sup>16</sup> Indeed, if everyone who migrated to the UK to study left the UK at the end of their studies, the contribution of these migrants to net migration would be zero over the longer-term.

## Net migration of people migrating to the UK to study, YE Dec 2012 - YE Mar 2016

*thousands*

Years ending	Immigration by people whose main reason for migration was formal study	Emigration by former immigrants whose main reason for immigration was formal study	Net migration of people migrating to the UK for formal study
YE Dec 12	175	67	+108
YE Mar 13	170	68	+102
YE Jun 13	169	70	+99
YE Sep 13	170	72	+98
YE Dec 13	171	72	+99
YE Mar 14	171	74	+97
YE Jun 14	169	72	+97
YE Sep 14	184	70	+114
YE Dec 14	187	65	+122
YE Mar 15	186	59	+127
YE Jun 15	184	57	+127
YE Sep 15	165	57	+108
YE Dec 15	157	61	+96
YE Mar 16 <sup>A</sup>	154	66	+88

Notes: A. Figures for the year ending March 2016 are provisional. Source: [ONS, Migration Statistics Quarterly Report, August 2016](#), Tables 3a and 4a

It is not possible to directly estimate the percentage of students who remain in the UK after completing their studies from this data, as the data on outflows relates to inflows in a different period.

Comparing the inflows and outflows of people migrating to the UK to study during the period for which data is available shows that the number of emigrants who originally came to study was less than half the number of immigrants coming to study during the same period.

Some researchers have questioned whether IPS estimates of emigration by former student immigrants accurately reflect the true extent of net student migration.

In September 2016 the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) published a report which argued that IPS figures imply higher levels of net inward migration by international students than other sources, such as the Annual Population Survey (APS), the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and Home Office research on the long-term migration status of non-EEA students who first entered the country using a Tier 4 student visa.<sup>17, 18</sup>

The report says:

<sup>17</sup> Marley Morris, Chris Murray, Stephen Murphy, [Destination education: Reforming migration policy on international students to grow the UK's vital education exports](#), IPPR, 6 September 2016

<sup>18</sup> Home Office, [Migrant journey: Sixth report](#), 17 February 2016

The Home Office's visa data suggests that only around 40,000 non-EU individuals who came to the UK on student visas still have valid leave to remain or settlement five years later. The Annual Population Survey suggests that only around 30,000–40,000 non-EU migrants who previously came as students are still in the UK after five years. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA's) Destination of Leavers Survey suggests that three-quarters of non-EU higher education students who are working six months after completing their studies are employed outside of the UK.

While each of these data sources measures slightly different things and has its own methodological limitations, the large discrepancy between the other sources' figures and that of the IPS suggests that the latter's 90,000 figure is not reliable enough to be used as a guide for policy.<sup>19</sup>

However, as the ONS said in a recent briefing on student immigration: "the IPS is the only source that measures the emigration of people who previously immigrated to study".<sup>20</sup> Other sources of statistics on student migration do not directly measure the departure of foreign students and are arguably inappropriate for estimating migration flows.

The ONS has said it is undertaking further research to better understand how the IPS identifies students, and is looking at what administrative sources of data may be linked to provide further information on what students do after their studies.

The ONS will publish a report in December 2016 which will examine the discrepancies between the IPS and the APS, and intends to publish further research on student immigration in due course.

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<sup>19</sup> Marley Morris, Chris Murray, Stephen Murphy, [Destination education: Reforming migration policy on international students to grow the UK's vital education exports](#), IPPR, 6 September 2016, page 4

<sup>20</sup> ONS [Population Briefing. International student migration: What do the statistics tell us?](#), 22 January 2016, page 6

## 5. Press articles

Independent

[Theresa May refuses to act to stop drastic fall in number of Indian students coming to the UK](#)

Joe Watts

7 November 2016

Guardian

[Foreign students are key to our economic and intellectual life. Let's welcome them](#)

Will Hutton

30 October 2016

Financial Times

[Special visa schemes for regions rejected](#)

Mure Dickie and Helen Warrell

28 October 2016

Telegraph

[Theresa May should drop the net migration target like a bomb](#)

Max Chambers

28 October 2016

Telegraph

[Brexit: It's crucial that universities are heard in the political debate](#)

Alistair Jarvis

28 October 2016

Telegraph

[Theresa May should be smart over immigration and take students out of the official figures](#)

Ben Howlett MP

25 October 2016

Guardian

[Overseas student crackdown could hit LSE, King's College London and Soas](#)

Anna Fazackerley

25 October 2016

Guardian

[We are competing with universities worldwide – and we may well lose](#)

Chris Husbands

25 October 2016

Guardian

[No 10 rejects idea that foreign students should not count as immigrants](#)

Rowena Mason

20 October 2016

Times Higher Education

[Knockin' on Britain's door](#)

John Gill

20 October 2016

Telegraph

[Theresa May slaps down Philip Hammond over student visas](#)

Steven Swinford

20 October 2016

Guardian

[Most Britons do not see foreign students as immigrants, survey shows](#)

Press Association

14 October 2016

Times

[A secret report shows that Theresa May massively overstated immigration numbers](#)

Thomas Colson

13 October 2016

Times Higher Education

[The UK government's latest baad idea: sorting sheep from goats](#)

Nick Hillman

13 October 2016

Guardian

[Amber Rudd announces crackdown on overseas students and work visas](#)

Alan Travis and Sally Weale

4 October 2016

Financial Times

[British universities need support to stay at the top](#)

22 September 2016

Herald Scotland

[McConnell: Scotland will lose out on tens of thousands of talented graduates unless elite university visa scheme reformed](#)

Kate Devlin  
7 September 2016

Independent  
[Post-Brexit uncertainty and long-term funding issues hit UK higher education, university rankings show](#)

Aftab Ali  
6 September 2016

Telegraph  
[Theresa May plans new immigration crackdown on student visas](#)

Tim Ross  
24 July 2016

Guardian  
[International student numbers have been plummeting for years. Now what?](#)

James Pitman  
14 July 2016

Herald Scotland  
[Inside Track: Clampdown on overseas students harming our universities](#)  
[Andrew Denholm](#)

29 January 2016

## 6. Press releases

UK Visas and Immigration

[Changes to the Immigration Rules](#)

3 November 2016

Universities UK

[New poll – cutting international student numbers will not address public immigration concerns](#)

ComRes for Universities UK

13 October 2016

Migration Watch UK

[Migration Watch UK press comment on Times report regarding international student migration](#)

13 October 2016

IPPR

[Destination education: Reforming migration policy on international students to grow the UK's vital education exports](#)

6 September 2016

NUS

[The importance of international students](#)

25 August 2016

Politics Home

[Home Office pilots more generous visa scheme for international postgraduate students](#)

1 August 2016

Migration Observatory

[New analysis of language learners and international students in the UK education system](#)

13 July 2016

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

[Government's new Immigration Skills Charge to incentivise training of British workers](#)

24 March 2016

## 7. Parliamentary business

### 7.1 Parliamentary questions

**Asked by:** Paul Blomfield

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made, other than by using passenger survey data, of the number of international students each year who break their visa obligations by remaining in the UK after their course has ended.

**Answering member:** Robert Goodwill

The Independent Office for National Statistics (ONS) has confirmed that the International Passenger Survey (IPS) continues to be the best source of information to measure long-term international migration.

The ONS published a report in January 2016, "International student migration: what do the statistics tell us?" which can be found here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/migration1/long-term-international-migration/student-migration---what-do-the-statistics-tell-us-/student-migration---what-do-the-statistics-tell-us.pdf>

**PQ 50734, 7 November 2016**

**Asked by:** Dr Paul Monaghan

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to review immigration rules for students.

**Answering member:** Robert Goodwill

As the Home Secretary recently announced, we will shortly be consulting on what more we can do to strengthen the system to support the best institutions – and those that stick to the rules – to attract the best talent. The consultation will include looking, for the first time, at whether our student immigration rules should be tailored to the quality of the institution. Interested parties, including businesses and members of the education sector, will have the opportunity to engage with this consultation to help us get these reforms right.

**PQ 49924, 7 November 2016**

**Asked by:** Jim Cunningham

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on the inclusion of international students as part of the net migration figures.

**Answering member:** Robert Goodwill

International students are included in net migration statistics that are produced by the independent Office for National Statistics (ONS). In line with the internationally agreed UN definition, these statistics define a

migrant as someone changing their normal place of residence for more than a year. Students are therefore included in the same way as other migrants. Other countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia also include students in their net migration figures. Like other migrants, students who stay for longer than 12 months have an impact on communities, infrastructure and services while they are here, so it is right that they are included in the net migration count.

**PQ 49911, 3 November 2016**

**Asked by: Royston Smith**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how the proposed changes to university admissions for foreign students will be tailored to different (a) courses offered and (b) educational institutions.

**Answering member: Robert Goodwill**

The Government will shortly launch a consultation on the proposals announced by the Home Secretary. The consultation will include looking at whether our student immigration rules should be tailored to the quality of the institution.

**PQ 48771, 26 October 2016**

**Asked by: Ian Murray**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the criteria for inclusion in the limited post-study work visa pilot were.

**Answering member: Mr Robert Goodwill**

The Tier 4 visa pilot has been introduced to test the benefits of a differentiated approach within the education sector on the basis of compliance with immigration sponsorship requirements.

The four universities chosen to participate in the Tier 4 visa pilot, namely the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Bath and Imperial College London, were chosen on the basis of their consistently low visa refusal rates.

**PQ 48003, 17 October 2016**

**Asked by: Alistair Carmichael**

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the inclusion of Scottish universities in the post-study work visa pilot.

**Answering member: David Mundell**

I meet my Rt hon Friend the Home Secretary regularly and we discuss a wide range of issues.

The Tier 4 visa pilot is part of the Home Office's continued efforts to ensure that the UK maintains an excellent offer to attract the brightest and best to study at our world-leading institutions. Its main aim is to help simplify the visa application process for international students looking to study on a Masters' course, in the UK, of 13 months or less. It will also help to support students who wish to switch into a work route and take up a graduate role by extending the leave period following the end of their study to up to six months. The pilot does not make any changes to the Tier 2 visa route and is not a return to the post-study work visa route, which we closed in April 2012 due to high levels of abuse.

The institutions taking part in the pilot were chosen due to their consistently low level of visa refusals. It is a fundamental requirement of Tier 4 that education institutions who recruit international students take responsibility for them. This means the institution must ensure the student is genuine and meets the requirements of the Immigration Rules, before assigning them a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS), as well as ensuring that the student leaves the UK at the end of his or her studies.

**PQ 46838, 14 October 2016**

## **7.2 Debate**

Immigration: Students

Lords question for short debate on what consideration HM Government has given to removing international students from the net migration figures by including them as non-immigrant admissions, as is done in the United States.

HL Deb 25 Feb 2016 c438-452

## **7.3 Early Day Motion**

**EDM 434**

### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISAS**

That this House notes the important role of international students in the UK higher education sector; further notes that 68,550 international students studied in the UK in 2015; recognises that international students contribute a net value of £2.3 billion a year to the economy, along with a great cultural investment; is concerned about reports of mass deportations of international students; is further concerned that current policy is making the UK a less welcoming place for international students; urges the Government to halt any ongoing programmes of such deportations; and calls on the Government to reassess the criteria by which it grants student visas.

**12 September 2016 (session 2016-17)**

**Primary sponsor: Virendra Sharma**

## 8. Further reading

HEFCE

[Financial health of the higher education sector: 2015-16 to 2018-19 forecasts](#)

November 2016

Scottish Affairs Committee

[3rd Special Report - Post-study work schemes: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2015-16](#)

HC 787 | Published 28 October 2016

[4th Report - Post-study work schemes](#)

HC 593 | Published 15 February 2016

Migration Observatory

[Non-European Student Migration to the UK](#)

15 August 2016

Home Office

[National Statistics Study \(Immigration\)](#)

26 May 2016

Home Office

[Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules](#)

HC667, 3 November 2016

[Explanatory memorandum to HC667](#)

Home Office

[Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules](#)

HC877, 11 March 2016

[Explanatory memorandum to HC877](#)

Chartered Association of Business Schools

[UK business schools and international student recruitment](#)

March 2016

Universities UK

[International students and the UK immigration debate](#)

August 2014

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