

Overview of international student points-based system for UK Colleges

From the end of March 2009 students applying to come to the UK will be assessed under the new **points-based system**.

All students must be enrolled on a course at Level 3 or above on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) or its equivalent.

WHO DOES THIS SYSTEM APPLY TO? Students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA)* and Switzerland.

WHAT DO STUDENTS NEED TO DO? Pass a points-based assessment before they are given permission to enter or remain in the United Kingdom. They must show:

- ▶ That they have been accepted on a course of study at an educational establishment found on the UK's [Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills Register of Education and Training Providers](#)
- ▶ The education documents used to obtain an offer from the sponsor, such as qualification certificates
- ▶ That they are able to pay for their course and support themselves and any dependants, and live in the UK without going into business or getting a job, or needing any help from public funds
- ▶ That they are able and intend to follow the chosen course, and
- ▶ That they intend to leave the UK when they complete their studies, if the course of study is below degree level.
- ▶ That they are enrolled on courses which lead to a qualification approved at or above NQF Level 3 (or its equivalent) found in the [National Database of Accredited Qualifications](#) operated by the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority.

YOUR ROLE AS THE SPONSOR

As an organisation intending to recruit students, you will need to apply to UKBA for a sponsor licence. To get a licence, you must show:

- ▶ You have been inspected, audited or reviewed by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) or you hold valid accreditation from one of these accreditation bodies: Accreditation UK, BAC or ASIC
- ▶ That your international students are enrolled on courses which lead to a qualification approved at or above NQF Level 3 (or its equivalent) as are the ABE qualifications found in the [National Database of Accredited Qualifications](#) operated by the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority.

Any student visa applications or applications for extension of leave made after the end of March will be refused if the education provider is not licensed by the UK Border Agency on the new Sponsor Register. For more information click on this link [Sponsoring students under the points-based system](#).

Successful Sponsors would be given an A rating or a B rating and will be added to the published [register for sponsors](#). Sponsors must:

- ▶ Ensure that students comply with the terms of their visa; and
- ▶ Be able to show that they keep records on each student, and can report any changes such as if students do not turn up for their studies.

Those sponsors thought to be a risk to immigration control or those who do not have the correct systems in place will be given a B-rating, and will have to follow a sponsorship action plan to help them become A-rated or risk losing their licence.

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Between March 2009 and the introduction of the SMS in Autumn 2009, sponsors will need to issue potential students with a confirmation of acceptance letter. As a minimum the UK Border Agency recommends that these letters include:

- ▶ The would-be student's name, nationality and address in country of present residence;
- ▶ The sponsor's licence number;
- ▶ Course title;
- ▶ Course start date;
- ▶ Expected course end date;
- ▶ The list of documents used by the sponsor to assess academic ability to complete the course;
- ▶ The would-be student's passport number.

You should also check any students are likely to score a total of 40 points across the different criteria, before issuing them with your confirmation of acceptance for studies.

CRITERIA FOR POINTS

Criteria for points	What points are awarded for	Points awarded
Sponsorship ► Up to 30 points available	A valid confirmation of acceptance for studies, which is issued if you believe the student is capable of doing and intends to do the course and the course is at the appropriate level.	30
Maintenance ► 10 points available	£800 per month, plus the course fees, for students on courses of less than 12 months. £9,600 to cover the first year, plus the course fees, for students on courses of more than 12 months. £535 per month per dependant.	10

*European Economic Area (EEA): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Irish Republic, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom. Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway are not members of the European Union (EU) but citizens of these countries have the same rights to enter, live in and work in the United Kingdom as EU citizens.