

Important Improvements to the Points Based System



Dear Sir/Madam,

We began the implementation of the PBS in February 2008 when we launched the sponsor register and Tier 1. In November 2008 we went onto launch Tiers 2 & 5 and finally Tier 4 went live at the end of March 2009.

The system, which is part of the biggest shake up of our immigration laws for a generation, is already delivering significant benefits for the UK. As the system embeds, we are able to process increasing numbers of applications, and we are making progress in achieving our service standards.

We are announcing today a number of measures designed to address concerns that our customers have raised and to ensure that our system continues to facilitate the trade, travel, and study that benefits the UK.

We are:

- Exploring the possibility of creating a new employer led route to allow UK businesses to recruit the interns they need.
- Revising our "milk round" recruitment requirements to achieve a truer test of the resident labour market whilst better meeting business needs.
- Outlining our plans to further develop our IT system to make it even easier for customers and sponsors to navigate the system.
- Creating an escalation route for University Vice-Chancellors and Academic Registrars through the use of a dedicated mailbox for urgent incidents requiring immediate attention, with a guaranteed response within 72 hours.
- Modifying our guidance around maintenance to resolve some of the issues that Universities have alerted us to.
- Introducing new rules that deliver a more responsive and straightforward system for bringing researchers and academic visitors to the UK.
- Improving our website so it is easier for students to access information about studying in the UK.
- As the Points Based System continues to bed in we will, where appropriate and practicable, endeavour to contact customers to correct minor omissions or errors in their applications.

PBS is a flexible system which allows us to control who comes to the UK to work and study.

Given the economic circumstances and the action we are taking to be more selective, we expect the number of migrants coming to the UK from outside the EEA to fall during the next financial year.

In order to maintain this control we will continue to take strong action against those who seek to abuse this or any other route into the UK. We are increasing our responsiveness to reports of abuse. In July we revoked the licences of 3 colleges where we had evidence of deliberate breaches of immigration rules.

For further information on the new measures, revised sponsor guidance, and how to contact us please follow the link below.

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/2009/august/pbs-sponsor-changes>

If there is doubt or confusion about any element of the new system, we will offer help and support. However, where actions are taken to undermine the system, we will not hesitate to respond robustly.

Yours faithfully,

Jeremy Oppenheim

Regional Director North East, Yorkshire and Humber and National Lead for Economic and Family Migration