

Losing licence to recruit: the impact of migration debates in the UK on international students

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On 31 March 2009, the UK Government (UK Border Agency) introduced a new system of immigration for students, Tier 4 of the Points Based System. It aims to be more objective than the previous system and gives education providers greater responsibility for ensuring that students comply with the UK's immigration requirements. Institutions have to apply for and retain a Tier 4 sponsor licence in order to recruit international students.

For a variety of reasons, some education providers that were originally approved by the UK Border Agency as Tier 4 sponsors have had their licence revoked. On 29 August 2012, the first university lost its licence. New students could not start their studies at London Metropolitan University and current students were no longer able to continue their courses there. In this session, I will explain how this situation arose and how it affected international students, as well as outlining how various organisations including UKCISA attempted to support the university and its students, and what lessons can perhaps be learned.

UKCISA is the UK's national advisory body serving the interests of international students and those who work with them. We provide immigration advice to students and their advisers, training, publications and we lobby the UK Government in matters relating to international students.