

NEWSLETTER December 2008

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DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF TIER 4 APPROACHES

THE HOME OFFICE HAS SET THE FOLLOWING DEADLINES FOR THE implementation of Tier 4 of the Points-Based System:

2nd February 2009 – applications for a UKBA licence received after this date are not guaranteed to be processed in time for the implementation of Tier 4 at the end of March.

March 2009 – from the end of March 2009 international students applying to study in the UK will be assessed under the new points system. Institutions which are not on the Register of Sponsors will find that prospective students' visas are refused and current students' visas are not renewed.

BAC is working at full capacity in order to process as many applications as possible by the February deadline; for institutions considering accreditation this is the last chance to become accredited in time for the implementation of Tier 4. Please contact us with any queries over accreditation or applications to the Register of Sponsors and we will do our best to keep you informed over the coming months.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWLY ACCREDITED COLLEGES

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| » Birmingham College
www.bcol.co.uk | » London Skills Academy
www.lsa-edu.org |
| » Cambridge Education
www.camb-ed.com | » London Thames College
www.ltcollege.co.uk |
| » Central School of Professional Studies
www.cspsuk.com | » London Trinity College
www.londontrinity.org.uk |
| » Edgware Academy of Languages & Computer Science
www.english-courses.co.uk | » Moorlands College
www.moorlands.ac.uk |
| » Edinburgh School of Business
www.esob.co.uk | » Oxford Royale Academy
www.oxford-royale.co.uk |
| » Educators Abroad
www.educatorsabroad.org | » Pinnacle Public Relations
www.pinnaclepr.co.uk |
| » Empire College London (Birmingham)
www.empirecollegelondon.co.uk | » PMA Media Training
www.pma-group.com |
| » European Study Abroad - Paris
www.eusa-edu.com | » Reach Cambridge
www.reachcambridge.com |
| » Leicester Business Academy
www.lbacad.com | » Richmond, The American International University in London
www.richmond.ac.uk |
| » London School of Commerce & IT
www.lsci.org.uk | » Tobias School of Art & Therapy
www.tobiasart.org |

ACCREDITED INSTITUTION PROFILE: London College of Accountancy

EIGHT YEARS AGO, THE LONDON COLLEGE of Accountancy opened with only about 250 students; now it has over 4000, and has won the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade. This success has been achieved largely through word of mouth: during the most recent BAC visit, inspectors were able to meet a group of LCA students, and learnt that most of them had joined the college through a recommendation from a friend or family member. Behind the success of LCA is the Founder and Managing Director, Mr Ravi Gill, who has built a reputation for high quality teaching at an affordable cost.

The vast majority of students at LCA are studying for ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualifications, but the college also offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses from Anglia Ruskin University such as an International MBA, an MSc in International Accounting and a Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate in Business Administration. There is also the option for ACCA students to top up their qualifications by way of a 5000-word project to gain the BSc in Applied Accountancy from Oxford Brookes University. Soon after the college was established it gained 'Platinum' status from ACCA for its successful examination results, and has since enjoyed a reputation for delivering high-quality ACCA programmes.

Another key factor in the success of LCA is the comfortable relationship the students enjoy with members of teaching and administrative staff. At the last BAC inspection, the students said they could make easy, informal contact with members of the senior management team, and also praised both the quality of teaching and the speed with which feedback was received. The reporting inspector



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noted that all members of the teaching and academic staff saw themselves as playing a part in the general welfare of students at the college; besides this, staff turnover is very low at LCA, which helps to keep things stable, so that students feel more relaxed and able to focus on their work.

The London College of Accountancy received the Queen's Award for Enterprise in International Trade in 2006 after the rapid growth in student numbers from over 100 different countries. In a comment on the LCA website, Gill describes how the college achieved this growth in such a short time by making exam success a top priority: "We have grown so rapidly by attracting the best quality lecturers and by giving our students access to the best tuition in a supportive environment at affordable prices". By putting academic quality first, the London College of Accountancy has ensured its success, and has remained a popular choice for students from all over the world.

www.londoncollege.org

Career Partner Scheme from the Chartered Institute of Marketing

MARKETING CAN BE A VERY DIFFICULT INDUSTRY to enter: competition for jobs is intense, with some nationally advertised positions receiving over 500 applicants. Finding straightforward advice on job roles, career paths and entry points can be a confusing process for students who are contemplating a career in marketing. The Chartered Institute of Marketing's Career Partner Scheme is a free information resource for all final year and postgraduate students looking to break into marketing. Students can register for the scheme at www.getin2marketing.com and access resources empowering them to:

- » Improve their employability – advice on putting together the right CV, interview process and securing work placements;
- » Gain a better understanding of the marketing industry – from the basics of 'what is marketing' to a comprehensive explanation of job roles and necessary skills;
- » Improve their marketing job applications;
- » Begin the journey towards professional qualifications – detailed information on CIM qualifications and podcast testimonials from real-life graduates.

There is no doubt about the scheme's popularity – since 2002 over 10,000 students have registered; so let your students know the resource is available. For more information on the Career Partner Scheme please contact Simon Johnston at the Chartered Institute of Marketing (email simonjohnston@cim.co.uk or call **01628 427207**).

Health and Safety at Work

A YOUNG PERSON IS SERIOUSLY INJURED in a UK workplace every 40 minutes. In the last decade, 66 under-19s have been killed at work. These stark statistics show why it is vital for colleges to have a "competent person" to advise the management on matters of health and safety. The best solution is for a college to put a senior member of staff through NEBOSH's National General Certificate in

Occupational Safety and Health, which is the global standard for low-risk environments such as colleges. This qualification, accredited by QCA at Level 3, takes 10-12 days of study and can be taken at over 400 places in the UK and in many other countries. Details can be found at www.nebosh.org.uk.

You may also want to offer your students a chance to study, free of charge, for the British Safety Council's Entry Level Award in Workplace Hazard Awareness or its Level 1 Certificate in Health and Safety at Work. Both fit neatly into work-related learning programmes and provide a formal assessment outcome to the delivery of health and safety, as well as contributing to college performance figures. Both qualifications are supported by free learning materials. To date, over 1,500 schools and colleges have registered for these qualifications. Further details can be found at www.britishsafetycouncil.org/schools

BAC Best Practice Seminars

THE BAC RUNS SEMINARS ON THE ACCREDITATION process and best practice, including an introduction to issues of Health and Safety at work, which are suitable for all institutions wishing to comply with immigration and workplace legislation.

These seminars repeat the successful format and topics of the BAC seminars so far, except that the price has now been lowered. The seminars will now cost £70 per delegate, with a bulk rate of £60 applying when four or more seminar places are booked at once. Upcoming seminars include:

- » **Introduction to Accreditation**
January 13th 2009
- » **Business Law for Colleges**
January 20th 2009
- » **Improving a University Partnership**
February 18th 2009
- » **Managing Quality**
March 18th 2009

For more dates and further information check our website, at www.the-bac.org/events/ or email events@the-bac.org

HANSARD SOCIETY FIRST ACCREDITED INSTITUTION ON REGISTER OF SPONSORS

THE HANSARD SOCIETY, WHICH IS BAC-accredited for its Hansard Scholars Programme, is now on the Home Office's Register of Sponsors for overseas students, making it the first accredited institution to be listed.

The Register, which lists those institutions that are allowed to sponsor overseas students or workers to enter the UK, is run by the UK Border Agency (UKBA), part of the Home Office. The Hansard Society was one of the first organisations to apply, and is now registered as a sponsor under Tier 4, meaning that it is licensed to enrol students from outside Europe.

The Hansard Scholars Programme "offers students the opportunity to learn about British politics 'from the inside'". The ultimate goal of the Society is to 'strengthen parliamentary democracy and encourage greater public involvement in politics'; the Hansard Scholars Programme exists to further this aim by giving students access to internships at Parliament and closely related organisations, alongside lectures and supervised research.

The Hansard Scholars Programme offers undergraduate and postgraduate courses, which are both run in association with the London School of Economics. The undergraduate programme is run as a study abroad course for international students, with credit given by the students' home university towards their first degree, whilst the postgraduate course is aimed at postgraduates and young professionals who undertake research in their specialist areas. Many of the postgraduate students are funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Chevening scholarship scheme. Participants in both courses divide their time between internships and academic study.

Although the undergraduate programme consists mainly of US students, having been designed with the US education system in mind, the postgraduate programme attracts a very diverse mix of nationalities. At the time of the most recent BAC inspection, the Society had research scholars from the USA, EU and Commonwealth countries such as Uganda, New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Australia. Recent cohorts had included students from South America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

As sponsors under Tier 4 of the PBS (the Points Based System for assessing foreign nationals who wish to enter the UK), institutions such as the Hansard Society will now have certain duties. These will include monitoring student attendance and submitting figures to the Home Office, in order to make sure that immigration controls remain effective. It has now been confirmed that Tier 4 will open to migrant students in March 2009; in order to ensure that sponsor applications are processed by this time, the Home Office has requested that all applications are received no later than 2 February 2009. Beyond this date, applications will still be accepted, but there is no guarantee that they will be processed in time for the March 2009 policy implementation.

For more information on applying for a sponsorship licence go to:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/points/sponsoringmigrants/applyforlicence/>

The Register of Sponsors is now live at:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/pointsbasedsystem/pbsregisterofsponsors/>

BBC INVESTIGATION INTO FAKE DEGREES

A FAKE ONLINE UNIVERSITY IN AMERICA has fooled thousands into buying phony academic qualifications, a recent BBC investigation found. Radio 5 Live's Donal MacIntyre programme revealed that nearly 10,000 fake credentials had been issued by the bogus St Regis University, including certificates in medicine and nuclear engineering.

Many of the 150 or so British graduates of St Regis had no idea that the degrees and university were anything but genuine, despite clear warning signs. In most cases students would simply have to submit coursework to obtain a St Regis qualification, there would be no tutor contact, and students could choose their graduation date or even backdate their degree. More details of the investigation can be found at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7600651.stm>

The report shows the worrying ease with which potential students can be conned into paying substantial sums of money for completely worthless qualifications. Alongside these organisations are the websites which cater for those dishonest students who wish to pay for fake degrees in order to fool potential employers. One website even attempts to justify the sale of fake qualifications by describing the fun you can have fooling friends and family with a 'novelty' degree and how it can be used as an 'amusing conversation piece'.

An earlier 2004 report on the Guardian website focused on a British website which openly advertised fake degrees from a number of top UK universities. The Guardian was able to obtain certificates from the website, including a bachelor of arts from Strathclyde University;

when the document was shown to the university's secretary, Dr Peter West, he was surprised by how 'real' the degree looked. Although the man behind the website was being investigated at the time of the report he was never charged and his website is still up and running.

Not only do these fake degrees threaten the integrity of genuine qualifications but they also pose a problem for employers. Although many employers ask to see an original document when checking qualifications, they may well be fooled by a convincing forgery, and should ensure that they make further checks if there is any doubt.

The consequences for those involved in fake degree scams can be far-reaching, regardless of whether the student was aware of the deception. Authorities in the United Arab Emirates recently moved to ban anyone from working in the UAE for life if they are caught using a fake certificate or degree. A bit closer to home, 50 students were recently expelled from Newcastle University after it was found that qualifications used to gain entry onto business studies courses at the university had been forged; the forgeries included English language qualifications and degree certificates from other universities. Newcastle University said that many of the students were the victims of bogus agents in China and the UK who submitted forged documents on their behalf. The university regretted that these students still had to be expelled in order "to protect the interests of hundreds of properly qualified students". The full article can be found at:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/tyne/7722943.stm>

BAC STAFF PROFILE - FIONA ANDERSON

“If you can't get any sense out of anyone else at the BAC,” says Stephen Vickers, Chief Executive, “Fiona is the one to turn to.” Anyone who has been in touch with the BAC in the last year or so is likely to have come across Communications Administrator Fiona Anderson, who joined the BAC in January 2007. Since then, she has dealt with a host of student complaints, attended numerous events on behalf of BAC, and is now in charge of our HR procedures.



Having got an HND in Jewellery, Silversmithing and Allied Crafts from the London Guildhall University (now London Metropolitan University), Fiona went on to study Mokume Gane which is an ancient Japanese metal layering technique. She used to run her own jewellery company creating handmade pieces designed around the individual, and still often wears her own unique creations to the office, exciting admiration from all around. As a result there are occasionally lunchtime jewellery-making sessions in the BAC offices, which even involve a male member of staff from time to time.

Fiona's other passions include chocolate, Morris dancing and, as you will probably know if you have met her, the colour purple. The first person to notify the office of the impending London chocolate week, she also has a blog which was recently full of praise for a particular recipe for chocolate mousse cake. Fiona is a member of the all-female London Morris group called New Esperance, and attends many festivals throughout the year with the group. She is not, however, the only folkie at BAC; during the summer both she and the Information Officer can be seen having a great time in a field at various Folk Festivals.

If you have attended an event at the BAC offices you will no doubt have met Fiona. In her role of Communications Administrator she is the welcoming face of BAC and will very often be behind the smooth running of events, providing tea, coffee, advice and information. Recent changes to the points-based system have caused many people great confusion, but Fiona has been working to keep us all updated; this included trawling through the Statement of Intent for Tier 4 when it was published earlier this year. She does it, so we don't have to...

So ladies and gentlemen, a big hand please, for the BAC's only purple-loving, jewellery-designing folk dancer, our very own gem, Fiona Anderson.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at BAC!



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