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**Diary**

19-20 February 2008

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Brighton, UK

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[www.iienetwork.org](http://www.iienetwork.org)

18 March 2008

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[www.strategicforums.com](http://www.strategicforums.com)

**Making it easier for international students to stay**

Many governments appear to have accepted the view that international students, especially postgraduates, can be of great economic benefit when they stay to work after graduation. The ongoing tweaking of immigration systems to attract and retain skilled persons is a response to this.

In the UK, Scotland's **Fresh Talent** scheme, introduced in 2004 and a notable instance of policy divergence under devolution, is to be applied to the rest of the UK. Non-EU students will be able to apply for leave to remain in the UK to work for up to two years without having secured a job sponsor in advance.

This development is part of the new **points-based UK immigration system**. The first phase, '**Tier 1**', is for 'highly skilled' migrants and will be implemented in the first quarter of 2008. As applied to graduating international students, it will supersede Fresh Talent and the **International Graduates Scheme** (itself less than a year old). Other parts of the points system, including that for international students generally (Tier 4) are to be rolled out over the next 18 months. **Universities UK** welcomed the announcement of the points system in 2006 but opposed the accompanying plans to abolish the right of appeal for those refused entry.

While Tier 1 is characterised by the **Border & Immigration Agency** as a means of attracting talented migrants who will boost the UK economy, there may be some concern north of the border, as the changes will nullify any competitive advantage Fresh Talent provided to Scotland, relative to the rest of the UK.

In Canada the rules have similarly been relaxed. Eligible international students attending publicly funded HEIs have been permitted to work off-campus since 2006. Spouses and common-law partners of international students are also allowed to apply for a work permit. Graduates may work for one year in their field of study – two years outside Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The ability to work off-campus during study can be critical in gaining the required work experience for

the skilled-worker permanent residence application.

Although there is no data on how many international students actually stay in Canada after graduation, a **2005 survey** by Statistics Canada optimistically claimed that 60% of them intended to do so. A new and rather critical **report from the CBIE**, however, claims that only a third of international students attempt to stay in Canada to live and work. It adds that Canada's lack of a federal education ministry has led to inconsistent and confusing policies which act as a deterrent.

In Australia, all student visas are initially issued with no permission to work; applying for such permission is done only after studies commence. A working visa permits international students to work up to 20 hours per week during semester.

One route for staying in Oz after graduation is to apply for permanent residency through the **General Skilled Migration** programme. Since 2001, graduating international students have been able to do this without having first to first leave the country. The **number of permanent residence permits** issued to former students doubled from 8,000 in 2002-03 to 16,000 two years later. Another option is a Temporary Business (long-stay) visa, valid for up to four years.

In 2007 the previous Australian government appeared both to relax and tighten the rules. They **lifted a restriction on student visa holders** from changing HEI in the first year of study (emulating a change in Canada in 2005). And again echoing practices in the UK, US and Canada, they introduced a new '**mateship**' (**citizenship**) **test** and stricter English-language requirements for immigrants in October. Although the reason for this was explicitly to seek to redress the balance between diversity and social cohesion, the government acknowledged the impact on international students and said the changes would help maintain the international reputation of Australian universities. **(continued on Page 2...)**

From page 1...

Unlike the UK and Australia, the US presents restrictions to off-campus work for international students and offers no direct path to post-graduation work unless employer sponsorship is obtained. Some are eligible for **Optional Practical Training**, which allows employment related to one's area of study for only one year. After graduating with at least a Bachelor's degree, another option is to become an **'H-1B alien'**, the visa for which also requires employer sponsorship but allows employment for up to six years in a 'specialty occupation'. In 2007, there were twice as many applications for undergraduate-degree H-1Bs than there were available and they were distributed by lottery.

A recent report from the **US Government Accountability Office** argued that tightened visa policies and procedures after 9/11 posed barriers for international students and contributed to the fall in global market share. International applications dropped by 28% in 2004 (notably from the Middle East) and 5% in 2005. In spite of being behind the curve in terms of loosening restrictions, numbers have recovered and fewer applications are being refused than before 9/11.

If one assumes post-graduation employment opportunities influence the choice of where international students study (direct evidence is lacking, though international student surveys suggest that relevant work experience is important), then a direct benefit to HE sectors is an enhanced attractiveness to prospective international students.

At the moment, the UK appears to be in the vanguard of this dynamic. Further responses from competitor countries are inevitable.

## Recruitment

### International student enrolments up at UK universities

The number of international (non-EU) students enrolling at UK universities rose 7% last year, in contrast to enrolments from UK students, which remained static.

The figures from the **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)**, show that almost 240,000 international students attended UK universities between 2005/06 and 2006/07.

UK-domiciled student enrolments remained the same at around two million, suggesting that the government target of 50% of 18-30-year-olds in higher education by 2010 might be missed.

Bill Rammell, minister of state for lifelong learning, further and higher education, **quoted in the Guardian**, said the rise in overseas and EU students choosing to study in the UK demonstrates the UK to be 'one of the leading international destinations for students looking for a quality higher education experience.'

Number of enrolments at UK universities 2005-2007

	Enrolments 2005/06	Enrolments 2006/07	% change
UK	2,006,035	2,011,345	0%
Other EU	106,225	112,260	6%
Non-EU	223,855	239,210	7%
Total	2,336,110	2,362,815	1%

In England, international student enrolments increased 5% to just over 200,000. In Scotland, numbers rose by 17% to almost 25,000, followed closely by Wales with a 16% increase. Northern Ireland saw enrolments rise by 1%.

Almost 20% of UK HE qualifications awarded in 2006/07 went to non-UK students, of which 50,000 were undergraduate and 75,000 postgraduate.

### Foreign students face tax problems under new government legislation

Overseas students in the UK could face complicated and needless tax paperwork under new rules for non-domiciled individuals due to be brought in by government this April.

Legislation to target a small number of the more wealthy overseas residents could inadvertently affect those on low incomes and temporary visitors to the UK.

From April, non-doms living in the UK will be required to pay tax on their worldwide income or a £30,000 fee.

Overseas students could find that income earned abroad would be subject to UK tax for which they would have to claim double tax relief. Failure to do so would breach UK tax laws.

Although the Treasury is restricting the new rules to people with more than £1,000 of foreign income per year and to those resident in the UK for more than seven years, critics argue it is not enough.

The **Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG)**, a campaign organisation funded by the Chartered Institute of Taxation, argues that the **threshold is too low** to stop students being affected.

The LITRG cites the example of a student who studies in the UK, but then earns over the £1,000 threshold working in a ski resort during winter break. Even though the student would not end up paying any tax in Britain, they would still need to complete complicated self-assessment forms and claim double-tax relief.

## Research & Collaboration

### Cambridge VC launches Indian business centre and professorship

Cambridge University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alison Richard, announced the creation of a Centre for Indian Business during a visit to the country this week.

The Centre, based at Cambridge's **Judge Business School**, has £500,000 backing from global energy giant, **BP Group** and its initial research will focus on technology innovation and emerging global economies.

Professor Richard also announced the launch of the **Jawaharlal Nehru Professorship of Indian Business and Enterprise**, backed by a £3.3 million fund from the Indian government. The creation of the professorship marks the centenary of Nehru's arrival at **Trinity College**, Cambridge.

'The professorship will help forge closer links with between India and other international economies and promote an understanding of India's business interests and its place in the global economy,' said Professor Richard.

The Vice-Chancellor is currently visiting the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bangalore to explore partnership opportunities with Indian universities.

### Nottingham opens Policy Centre at Malaysia campus

The **University of Nottingham's Leverhulme Centre for Research on Globalisation and Economic Policy (GEP)** is to open a new branch in Asia.

GEP in Malaysia will be officially opened today (16 January) at the university's **Malaysia campus** in Semenyith, near Kuala Lumpur.

Professor David Greenaway, Director of GEP, said, 'Opening up a branch of GEP in Malaysia will help us develop exciting research opportunities for

GEP staff to generate and study new sources of data in **Malaysia** and South-East Asia that could shed light on issues that affect many other countries in Asia and across the world.'

Since its establishment in 2001, the Centre has built an international reputation with academic staff advising the Treasury, the OECD, the World Bank and WTO.

The University of Nottingham's purpose-built Malaysia campus opened in 2005 and now has 2,650 students from more than 50 countries.

### Unprecedented number of bids received for PMI2 funding

Four-hundred proposals totalling £14.6 million were submitted by UK institutions to receive funding under the second **Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI2)**.



Bids were invited to support the development of partnerships between UK institutions and their counterparts in priority countries and develop innovative pilot schemes to encourage outward mobility of UK students.

After an initial sift in December, proposals were sent for peer review and selection panels will meet this month. Universities will be notified of results in February. A total of £3 million in funding has been allocated to research co-operation and joint collaborative programme bids.

Pat Killingley, Director of Education Services at the **British Council**, said, 'This is an absolutely astounding response from the sector. From the moment the bid call went out in September, there was enormous interest. We had nearly 15,000 hits on the website and over 500 people signing up for the PMI2 Connect bulletin. The majority are really high-quality proposals which show potential to form the basis of excellent

long-term partnerships for the UK.'

A second call for bids will go out in May. Anyone wanting to receive updates on this and other opportunities should subscribe to the PMI2 bulletin.

Email your name, institution, department and contact details to [pmi2.connect@britishcouncil.org](mailto:pmi2.connect@britishcouncil.org)

### Durham signs agreement with Qatar

**Durham University** has signed an agreement with **Qatar University** to strengthen academic links between the two institutions.

Professor Sheikha Abdulla Ali Al-Misnad, President of Qatar University and a leader of educational reform in the country, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Durham University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Christopher Higgins.

Professor Al-Misnad, who gained a PhD in Education from Durham in 1984, took part in the signing ceremony on the same day that she received an honorary Doctor of Civil Law Degree from her alma mater.

The Memorandum will strengthen research links between the two universities, initially in international relations and Islamic studies but extending also into education, geography and environmental sciences, law, finance and energy.



*Durham Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Higgins, Prof Sheikha Abdulla Ali Al-Misnad of Qatar University and Durham Chancellor Bill Bryson*

Professor Higgins said, 'This agreement allows us to develop collaborative research projects across a number of disciplines.'

# Rethinking Higher Education: The Practice of Internationalisation

13<sup>th</sup> March 2008

1 Victoria Street Conference Centre, London SW1



The UK Higher Education International Unit, with Universities UK and i-graduate, presents the first in a series of **'Rethinking Higher Education'** conferences

The focus will be on the practical implications of the changing international economic and social operating environment for managers concerned with delivering international strategies.

Key speakers have a strong track record in research, analysis and delivery of international higher education strategies at both institutional and national strategic levels.

**In particular the conference will present recent research findings in key areas:**

**In addition to the plenaries there will be focused workshops** aimed at ensuring delegates can explore the practical implications and likely consequences of these new developments, in particular:

- International Unit research into the effectiveness of different approaches to the management of international operations within HE institutions;
- i-graduate research on the identification of New Learning Tribes, presenting a new framework for understanding the student experience, particularly to assist marketing in Asia;
- Understanding the new, more demanding and discriminating consumer; the emergence of a different type of international student;
- The growth of the private sector as an HE provider internationally, and the likely impact on both public and private sector institutions.

- The changing needs of HE students globally and the implications for institutional policies;

- The evolving range of public-private partnerships internationally and possible implications for both public and private sector providers;

- The effectiveness of institutional management systems in delivering comprehensive international strategies.

## Confirmed speakers include:

**Will Archer**, Director, i-graduate

**Dr. Robert Coelen**, Vice President (International), University of Leiden

**Prof. Kelvin Everest**, PVC, University of Liverpool

**John Fielden**, CHEMS Consulting

**Prof. Colin Gilligan**, Visiting Professor of Marketing, Northumbria University & Emeritus Professor, Sheffield Hallam University

**John Hedges**, Coordination Director, Santander Universities

**Dr. Neil Kemp OBE**, Professional Adviser UK-India Education and Research Initiative

**Prof. Robin Middlehurst**, Kingston University

**Tim O'Brien**, Designate Managing Director, INTO UK University Partnerships

**Dr. John Pugh**, Senior Academic Consultant, UWIC

**Dominic Scott OBE**, CEO, UK Council for International Student Affairs

As there are a limited number of places at this event, early applications are advisable.

To register, please complete the attached form or register online at [www.i-graduate.org/events/rethinkingHE.html](http://www.i-graduate.org/events/rethinkingHE.html)

**09:00** Registration and refreshments

## Session One

**09:45**  
**Welcome and Introduction**

**10:00**  
**The Management of International Activities in UK Universities**

**John Fielden**, CHEMS Consulting  
Presents the report on a research project for UK HE International Unit regarding the organisation and management of international operations in UK higher education institutions

**10:30**  
**Glimpses of the Future: Internationalisation and Students**  
**Students go Supranational: the World's Learning Tribes**  
**Will Archer**, Director, i-graduate

Identifies the New Learning Tribes; international student characterisation by motivation, behaviour, influence and ambition

**Internationalisation: competitiveness & the new youth market**

**Prof. Colin Gilligan**, Visiting Professor of Marketing, Northumbria University & Emeritus Professor, Sheffield Hallam University

Explores the ever-increasingly demanding and discriminating youth market, and the implications of these changes for internationalisation strategies

**11:30** Refreshments

## Session Two

**11:50**  
**Internationalisation and Public-Private Partnerships**  
**Investments, Mergers, Partnerships and Acquisitions: The Changing Face of International HE**  
**Dr. Neil Kemp OBE**

Explores the recent rapid growth in the number of students studying at private sector institutions. Why has such growth occurred, who are the current and emerging main players and what might the implications be for institutions and governments?

**New Approaches to International Delivery: The Liverpool-Laureate Partnership**

**Professor Kelvin Everest**, PVC, University of Liverpool  
Explores the new and innovative relationship between Liverpool with Laureate Education (USA), including a new university in China and a suite of wholly online taught Masters programmes

**Beyond Wales: UWIC's International Partnerships**

**Dr John Pugh**, Senior Academic Consultant, UWIC  
What can be learned from the success of UWIC's unique partnership with the London School of Commerce?

**13:00** Lunch

## Session Three

**14:00**  
**Working Groups**

Delegates should attend one discussion seminar:  
**A : Building Success – The Role of Private Sector Partnerships**

**Tim O'Brien**, Designate Managing Director, INTO UK University Partnerships  
**Dr. Neil Kemp OBE**

**B : Students In and Students Out – Managing and Exceeding Expectations**

**Dominic Scott OBE**, CEO, UK Council for International Student Affairs  
**Prof. Colin Gilligan**  
**Will Archer**

**C : Institutional Management Structures to Enhance Delivery of Internationalisation**

**Prof. Robin Middlehurst**  
**John Fielden**

**15:00**  
**Feedback from Working Groups and Discussion**

**15:35** Refreshments

## Session Four

**15:50**  
**New Thinking – New Partnerships – New Internationalisation**  
**New Approaches to Partnerships**

**John Hedges**, Coordination Director, Santander Universities

Explains why HE is important to Banco Santander and the variety of scholarships, sponsorships, collaboration and exchange programme opportunities Banco Santander offers universities across its global network

**UK HE and Internationalisation: Thoughts from Abroad**

**Dr Robert Coelen**, Vice President (Internationalisation), University of Leiden

**16:30 – 17:30**  
**Close and drinks reception**

## To Register

Delegate fee (including refreshments, lunch and delegate pack) **£295 +VAT (£338.95)**

To register, complete the attached booking form or register online at [www.i-graduate.org/events/rethinkingHE.html](http://www.i-graduate.org/events/rethinkingHE.html)

Programme and speakers are subject to change and we reserve the right to amend details of programme and speakers prior to the event.

## Markets & Intelligence

### International Unit launches Country Briefing series

The International Unit today launches its new **Country Briefing series** on the secure area of the website. Based on the existing Country Profiles on the **International Unit website**, the new series is specifically tailored for Vice-Chancellors and senior university officers for use during their overseas visits. Each briefing provides background information on market, legal and regulatory developments within key countries, as well as material on current HE links with the UK. The first two country briefings to be published are on **China** and **India**, with other key countries available throughout the year.

### American universities told to spend endowments

As mentioned in the last edition of **International Focus**, American Ivy League universities quite literally have an embarrassment of riches. Their endowment funds, which run into billions of dollars, are growing at an extraordinary rate yet the fees charged to students continue to rise above inflation - a situation that has not escaped American lawmakers.

Under pressure from politicians and the **media**, American universities have been asked to explain why they are not using the returns on their endowments to ease the financial pressure on students and their families. Tuition fees at US universities rose by more than double the rate of inflation last year, **according to statistics from the College Board**, while **Harvard** currently charges a whopping \$45,000 per year for undergraduate courses. At the same time, **Yale** earned a 28% return on its endowments, Harvard 24%. By comparison, the S&P 500 index returned 18% in 2006-07.

In the **United States**, tax-exempt charitable foundations are required by law to spend 5% of their endowments per year. University endowments, which are also tax-exempt, have no such requirements. Harvard aims to

pay out 5%, but has only met this goal once in the last decade (in 2003 when investment returns dipped to a measly 12.5%).

Now a number of American politicians are calling for universities to be mandated to spend 5% of endowments per annum or lose their tax-exempt status. According to **Senator Charles Grassley**, a member of the Senate Finance Committee, 'The donations to these endowments and the endowments themselves are all tax-exempt. American taxpayers are subsidising that tax-exemption, and they deserve public benefit in return.'

In recent weeks, a number of American universities have responded to these criticisms with new financial aid packages. Harvard, the world's richest university with endowments of \$35 billion, **announced a new financial aid programme** in December. Harvard currently offers free education to students from families with an income of less than \$60,000, which it argues boosts the number of students from low income and minority backgrounds. Under its proposed initiative, Harvard will now use its endowments to increase financial aid to middle class families earning between \$120,000 and \$180,000 a year. Students from these families will be asked to pay no more than 10% of their income for university.

Harvard's initiative has put pressure on other US universities to follow suit. Earlier this month, **Yale University** **announced** that it intends to spend \$1.15 billion of its \$22.5 billion endowment fund in the next fiscal year to "increase dramatically" the level of financial aid it gives to its students. Yale President Richard Levin said the \$307 million budget increase would go on **financial aid**, expanding scientific research and increasing the size of Yale's undergraduate body. Dr Levin acknowledged the political pressure on Yale: "The folks in Washington are saying you're hoarding money, and we felt uneasy about it ourselves".

Dr Levin argues that universities must be allowed to determine how much of their long-term assets it would be prudent to spend. 'You wouldn't want to mandate a spending rate' he said. American universities do not like the government telling them what to do, but the affordability of university is a

growing political issue in the USA as more families are affected by the economic slowdown.

Although endowments promise universities greater financial autonomy from government, it would appear that you can have too much of a good thing. While British universities may look somewhat enviously towards the size of the assets held by their American counterparts, it is clear that investment success brings different political pressures - a requirement to demonstrate that funds are spent, and are spent for the 'public good'.

### Ulster receives Saudi cash boost

The **University of Ulster** has received a cash boost from **Saad Group**, a leading educational investor in Saudi Arabia, to introduce a pharmacy degree at its Coleraine Campus.

The gift of £3 million will fund the creation of a state-of-the-art centre for pharmacy at the campus and support the development of Ulster's internationally renowned diabetes research team who will share the facility.



*Ulster Vice-Chancellor, Professor Richard Barnett receiving the donation from Mr Michael Beckley of the Saad Group, accompanied by Professor Carol Curran and Mrs Jackie Simpson of the University*

The new venture builds on an existing partnership between the University and Saad, through which an Ulster degree programme in nursing is offered in Al-Khobar, Saudi Arabia. This partnership amounts to £40 million over 10 years.

Ulster V-C Professor Richard Barnett said, 'It is a mark of Ulster's international standing in nursing and biomedical sciences that such a highly regarded institution has chosen to partner with us and to support us financially.'

# In Focus: HE in the UAE



## EVERSHEDS

### UK HE International Unit & Eversheds launch new Legal Series

Today, the **International Unit** launches a new secure section on its website hosting documents designed to give UK universities a competitive advantage over international rivals. In association with **Eversheds** law firm, a new Legal Series will provide an overview of the legal requirements for overseas collaboration, student exchange programmes and engaging overseas representatives. A due diligence checklist for International Officers will also be published. Access to the area will be given to the Heads of International Offices at member institutions. The secure area will also include research reports commissioned and published by the International Unit.

Accompanying the Legal Series will be quarterly articles by Eversheds, the first of which focuses on the **United Arab Emirates**. These aim to provide an overview the HE system and the options available to a UK university interested in setting up a campus in the country.

### Higher Education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE comprises seven individual emirates at the north-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula comprising a total area of 33,000 square miles. It is bordered to the south and west by **Saudi Arabia**, and to the south-east and north-east by **Oman**; the UAE separates the main portion of Oman from its possession of the Musandam Peninsula. The principal cities in the UAE (in terms of prominence) are Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Abu Dhabi city is situated on an island measuring about ten by seven miles. It is also the administrative centre and diplomatic capital of the UAE. However, Dubai is recognised as the commercial hub of UAE.

Within the UAE there are two main types of higher education institutions: Universities and Higher Colleges of Technology. Universities may be public or private. Private universities are licensed and accredited by the **Ministry of Higher**

**Education and Scientific Research's** Commission for Academic Accreditation. At present there are 34 licensed, accredited private institutions operating in the UAE. The academic year runs from September to June, as in the UK. The main languages of instruction are Arabic and English.

Candidates need the secondary school certificate (Shah Al-Thanawiya Al-Amma) to enter a public university. Foreign students should hold a general secondary school certificate and obtain the correct visa. Proficiency in Arabic is necessary for all courses in public universities except Engineering and Medicine which are taught in English.

Private universities offer post-secondary technical and vocational courses. They are operated by the national government through the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. They only accept UAE national, although exceptions may be made in some cases. Again, the entry requirement is the secondary school certificate. The colleges teach in English and are intended to produce skilled para-professionals in the fields of engineering, business, health and communication technology.

### Options available to UK universities interested in setting up a campus in UAE

Although there are a number of different ways in which campuses can be established in the UAE, a general distinction is made between establishing a presence 'offshore' in one of the Free Trade Zones (FTZ) and 'on-shore' in the UAE.

To operate to operate 'on-shore', a university can set up either a limited liability company (LLC - of which a minimum of 51% of the company must be owned by one or more UAE nationals of company) or as a branch of a UK university. A branch does not require participation from a UAE national, but must instead appoint a UAE national as its 'local service agent'.

Before either a LLC or branch can be established on-shore, the university must first obtain a Trade License that will be issued by the Economic Department after a successful review by

the Commission for Academic Accreditation. The Commission provides a comprehensive and detailed framework for educational establishments wishing to set up in the UAE.

Offshore Free Trade Zones (FTZs) are deemed to be based outside the judicial boundaries of the UAE and, as such, are often subject to specific laws and rules that operate in that FTZ. The options available to a university to set up in an FTZ are the same as those when setting up on-shore. However, the main difference is that a limited liability company (LLC) can be 100% owned by a foreign shareholder. There is no requirement for UAE involvement.

The two most well-known FTZs are the **Dubai Knowledge Village** and the **Dubai International Academic City**. Universities operating within the Knowledge Village must be branch campuses of accredited universities in their home countries. They do not need to comply with the UAE licensing and accreditation requirements. However, to set up in the Academic City, a university license is required. This is given to reputed and ranked international universities/colleges to those accredited by the Higher Education Authority in the UAE.

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## Laws & Regulations

### Officials told not to deport overstaying foreign students

Immigration officials have been told not to enforce new rules for deporting students whose visas have expired unless they have broken the law, according to a leaked memo from the Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA) last week.

The memo described a rule change that enforced automatic deportation proceedings against any international students deemed to be even a day late with their application. The BIA's position came to light after the agency's head stepped in to stop the removal of a Chinese who had paid her visa extension fee two days late.

Lin Homer, Chief Executive of the BIA, said, '[It] seemed to me to be us taking our toughness a stage too far.' She stressed, though, that deportation would be immediate if there was evidence of corruption or fraud.

Responding to the news reports, **Universities UK** issued a statement calling for students to be treated fairly and flexibly. Diana Warwick, Chief Executive, said, 'Universities work hard to ensure international students get their applications in as early as possible. There must however, be scope for discretion where there have been legitimate reasons for delays in the visa extension process.'

However, Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, quoted on **BBC News Online**, said, 'It is astonishing that warped government priorities are dictating that our immigration authorities turn a blind eye to those with no right to stay in the UK.'

### Irish government considers legal action following bogus university investigation

The Irish government is considering legal action against the **Irish International University (IIU)**, revealed by a BBC investigation last week as an unaccredited institution awarding fake degrees.

The government claims the 'university' is damaging the reputation of Irish education abroad and its Department for Education and Science is considering its legal position with regard to IIU. A spokesperson said, 'Irish International University has no standing as an education institution in Ireland and has not received approval under the 1997 Universities Act.'

IIU has hired rooms at Oxford University for its graduation ceremonies and its Honorary Chancellor, listed as His Excellency Baron Knowth, is actually Jeffrey Woller, a chartered accountant from London who spends much of his time living in Monaco.

The BBC investigation has called into question the UK government's approval process for private colleges, even though a register of accredited education providers was created in 2005 in an attempt to prevent incidences such as IIU.

However, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) said that since 2005 it had inspected 256 colleges and struck off almost half for failing to meet government standards. It said that the accuracy of the list is taken very seriously.