

## International students feel unwelcome

NUS survey examines response to proposed new immigration legislation

By V. S. Wells, Deputy News Editor (2013/14)

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The majority of international students studying in UK institutions feel unwelcome, according to a new survey by the National Union of Students (NUS).

The survey was undertaken in response to the proposed new UK Immigration Bill, which would charge international students a £150 NHS levy, and force landlords to carry out checks on the immigration status of students.

The responses, from 3135 international students in further and higher education, found that 50.7 per cent of non-EU students felt the UK government was either “not welcoming” or “not at all welcoming” towards international students.

PhD students were the most likely to feel unwelcome in the UK (65.8 per cent), and numbers were also higher among students from Japan (64.5 per cent), Nigeria (62.8 per cent) and Turkey (61.3 per cent).

David Sanin, York Graduate Student Association Welfare Officer, said: “International students are about 43 per cent of the students the GSA represents. As a result of that, the issue of the proposed changes in the immigration bill was discussed in the last GSA council meeting in January.

“It was the consensus of the group that these changes reflected an increasingly negative attitude the UK government has towards all immigrants.

“It was clear to council that if these measures were to take effect, the postgraduate community would be badly affected and the ability of the UK to attract international students, who already face extremely high fees, would be put at risk.”

Almost a fifth of students surveyed from non-EU countries (19.7 per cent) would not recommend the UK as a place to study, while this figure rose to over a third for students from Pakistan, Nigeria and India.

George Offer, YUSU Welfare Officer, said: “These figures are completely unsurprising: the UK Border Agency have been dodging their responsibilities for years. Right now, HEIs [Higher Education Institutions] have to monitor foreign nationals; soon it’ll be landlords as well.

“The University is in complete agreement with us, that it’s not their job, and they don’t want to implement any of the monitoring measures which make international students feel so unwelcome.

“Sadly, they have a legal responsibility to do so, and we’re grateful for the help they gave in getting respondents to this survey, so that we have a better understanding of our own international students.”

According to the Higher Educational Statistics Agency (HESA), there are 425,265 non-EU students in higher education in the UK, making up 18 per cent of total students.



## 2 comments

lgjhere

5 Mar '14 at 3:47 pm

I'd say that perhaps the opposite is happening here in the US where we pull out all stops to welcome international students. Still, being an international student isn't easy, given our complex culture and language. Assistance comes from various sources. A new award-winning worldwide book/ebook to help anyone coming to the US is "What Foreigners Need To Know About America From A To Z: How to Understand Crazy American Culture, People, Government, Business, Language and More." It paints a revealing picture of America for those who will benefit from a better understanding, including international students. Endorsed worldwide by ambassadors, educators, and editors, it also identifies "foreigners" who became successful in the US and how they contributed to our society, including students.

A chapter on education identifies schools that are free and explains how to be accepted to an American university and cope with a new culture, friendship process and classroom differences they will encounter. Some stay after graduation. It has chapters that explain how US businesses operate and how to get a job (which differs from most countries), a must for those who want to work for an American firm here or overseas. It also has chapters that identify the most common English grammar and speech problems foreigners have and tips for easily overcoming them, the number one stumbling block they say they have to succeeding here.

Most struggle in their efforts and need guidance from schools' international departments, immigration protection, host families, concerned neighbors and fellow students, and books like this to extend a cultural helping hand so we all have a win-win situation. Good luck to all wherever you study!

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Tom

7 Mar '14 at 1:34 pm

Of course, the solution to every unsettled International student: An instruction manual...

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