

Inspection Report Published: An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to the Higher Education sector

News story

This inspection examined how the immigration system serves the needs of the higher education sector, rather than focusing narrowly on the operational functions within the Home Office.



Publishing the report, David Neal said:

I welcome the publication of this report, which looks at how the immigration system relates to the Higher Education sector. To facilitate the movement of international students and staff, the higher education sector is reliant on the Home Office for an efficient and effective immigration system.

The inspection found that the Home Office was performing well overall and has developed good levels of engagement with representative bodies and higher education institutions. Collaborative working and consultation with external stakeholders has fed into the development of new routes, Simplification of the Immigration Rules and changes to associated guidance.

However, the Home Office should look to review the services provided by the Premium Customer Service Teams. Currently there is a disconnect between what the Home Office envisaged the service offer to be and what the higher education sector expected from that offer. This could be resolved through engagement between both parties to draw up a collaborative and agreed set of service expectations.

Also, compliance requirements were considered by stakeholders to be overly burdensome. The Home Office should reassess whether their current expectations are proportionate with the risks posed by international students.

I made three recommendations in this report. I am pleased that the Home Office accepted all of these recommendations in full and that work is already underway to tackle the issues raised.

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