



Education New Zealand Aide Memoire

02 AUG 2018
Office of Hon Miplos

Title:	Additional information on the Education New Zealand Recognised Agency Programme		
Date:	2 August 2018	ENZ ID no:	1819-028

Purpose

1. The purpose of this briefing is to provide further information and context regarding the refreshed Education New Zealand Recognised Agency (ENZRA) programme. This follows an earlier briefing on the refreshed programme (ENZ 1819-014 refers).

Background

2. Despite the general negative perception of education agents, the vast majority of education agents are ethical and many are providing high quality students to New Zealand. They therefore remain a critical promotional channel for most education providers seeking to recruit international students.
3. Approximately 50% of international students engage with an education agent before their arrival in New Zealand. As education agents are such a significant recruitment channel for the New Zealand international education sector, the ENZRA programme is designed to identify and increase engagement with high-quality education agents, giving them more tools and resources to effectively promote New Zealand as a quality study destination.
4. Seeking further engagement with high-quality agents is necessary as they are key influencers regarding the choice of country of study for many international students. Research indicates that the more Education New Zealand (ENZ) and New Zealand education providers interact with education agents, the more likely education agents are to promote New Zealand as a study destination over our traditional competitor countries.

Education New Zealand Recognised Agency programme

5. After the ENZRA programme was launched in July 2014, some concerns from stakeholders resulted in the programme being put on hold and reviewed.
6. Stakeholders' concerns regarding the prior ENZRA programme was centred around the lack of resources and administrative oversight of the programme by ENZ. Those concerns have been addressed as there is now a dedicated resource in regard to agent engagement and the administration of the refreshed ENZRA programme.
7. The monitoring of agent performance is a strong feature of the ENZRA programme. Generally, high-quality education agents retain their quality over the long-term. This is because quality agencies are profitable, are conscious of preserving a high reputation across the industry and seek to maintain strong relationships with quality education providers. However, the ENZRA programme does have a monitoring mechanism to provide oversight of agent conduct and behaviour. Data will be received by ENZ from Immigration New Zealand on a regular basis to monitor agent performance. There is also

an avenue for stakeholders to raise concerns regarding the performance of Recognised Agents if necessary.

8. The ENZRA programme is not a regulatory programme, it is designed to assist in the promotion and marketing of New Zealand as a study destination. ENZ will be very clear about the goals and intention of the ENZRA programme in our communications to stakeholders. The current ENZRA logo is being re-developed so that it is distinct from the formal ENZ logo, creating further separation from any unintended perception that it is a government regulatory programme.
9. Recognition programmes such as these are fairly common amongst education agencies and travel agencies. For example, Tourism New Zealand uses a similar model with their 100% Pure New Zealand Specialist programme. Stakeholders within these industries are used to these types of programmes, and they are broadly perceived as incentive programmes that assist their business rather than seeing the programme as a regulatory programme.
10. An annual review period has been implemented. This will ensure that prospective international students and education providers have higher levels of confidence that when they engage with a Recognised Agency that the agency has demonstrated a commitment to promoting New Zealand as a study destination and are successfully placing students at New Zealand education providers.
11. The new programme will require education agents to meet three core objectives to gain or retain Recognised Agent status, they are: points, conduct, and training. Education Agents will be required to meet all three objectives on an annual basis to retain Recognised Agent status. An annual review will ensure the cohort of Recognised Agents is contemporary, and is useful to both prospective students and education providers when considering which education agents to engage with.
12. A points based earning system will measure agent output and better align their behaviour with ENZ's strategic objectives. Agents will earn points for every successful placement of a student at a New Zealand education provider. Assigned points will vary depending on the value of the course the student is studying, additional points will be awarded for students studying outside of Auckland. Each agent will have a points target that they need to reach to successfully achieve the points objective. The targets vary from country to country depending on current approved Student Visa volumes and the desirability of New Zealand as a study destination in local markets.
13. Education Agents will also be required to have a minimum visa approval rate for all applications they submit on behalf of a student. This will vary from country to country depending on historical approval rates. Recognised Agents will need to maintain an approval rate above the country average to meet the objective.
14. Any potential dissatisfaction from education agents if they are exited from the programme is a risk that ENZ has accepted based on the need for the cohort of Recognised Agencies to be demonstrating their commitment to effectively promoting the quality of a New Zealand education on a sustained basis. It is anticipated that most education agencies will not lose their Recognised Agency status after an annual review period, and that the cohort of Recognised Agencies will increase over time.

Proactive release

15. ENZ intends to proactively release this briefing as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

Education New Zealand recommends that you

- a. **note** that stakeholders' concerns regarding the prior ENZRA programme was centred around the lack of resources and ENZ's administrative oversight of the programme
- b. **note** that ENZ will use Immigration New Zealand data to monitor agent performance and stakeholders will be able to raise concerns regarding the performance of Recognised Agents
- c. **note** that ENZ will be clear in its communications that the ENZRA programme is designed to assist in the promotion and marketing of New Zealand as a study destination

Noted

- d. **agree** that this briefing is proactively released as part of the September 2018 release

Agree / Disagree



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Hon Chris Hipkins
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4 / 8 / 18

I would like evidence that this revised programme has addressed sector/provider concerns and they now have confidence in it.