

Meeting of the Entry Clearance User Panel 10.00 hours Tuesday 2 November 2004

Present:

User Panel

Mohammed Akram	Council of British Pakistanis (Scotland)
Helen Carson	Refugee Legal Centre
Azhar Chohan	Paddington Law Centre
Indrani Currie	Coventry Law Centre
Meena Devlukia	University of Warwick
Maria Fernandes	National Organisation of Asian Businesses
Don Flynn	JCWI
Kate Handforth	UKCOSA
Samina Kausar	IAS
Sedi Keshavari	UNHCR
David Main	Association of Regulated Immigration Advisers
Paul Morris	South Manchester Law Centre
Julia Onslow-Cole	International Bar Association
Susan Rowlands	ILPA

UKvisas/IND

Robin Barnett (Chair)	UKvisas – Director
Sue Davidson	UKvisas – Deputy Head, Operations
Lorraine Fussey	UKvisas – Head of Policy
Steven Walker	IND Appeals Directorate
Jackie Colton	UKvisas – Head of Communications (Secretary)

1. Introduction

- Robin Barnett welcomed Members.
- He outlined the current situation in respect of rising global demand for visas, with applications up 14% in 2003-4. There was no indication of any let-up in the rate of increase. This meant a continuing need to re-assess and reform the way we work. There was also a need to think ahead and to build in resilience. UKvisas was now working to produce a new updated strategy, including some innovative thinking on processing applications and call-handling. We were committed to the EU directive on incorporating biometrics into the visa application process by 2008, and were working to ensure this would not impact adversely on service standards. In the longer term, UKvisas is fully engaged with partner agencies on the IND e-Borders Programme to develop an integrated electronic border control system.

2. Action Points from previous meeting

Item	Action	
2.1	Circulate summary of action points from last meeting.	Attached to April minutes
2.2	Circulate contact details for Ian Full and Tom Wilkie.	Attached to April minutes
3.2	Re-circulate guidance to ECOs on intention to live together	Attached to April minutes
2.4	All e mails to User Panel members to contain a list of attachments so that members can confirm they have received them all	Now standard practice. No reports of attachments not received.
3.1	UKvisas to supply copies of any guidance produced for Fedex in Pakistan and VFS in Bangladesh	SD will address under item 3
3.2	Write to Mahmud Quayum on the handling of postal applications in Dhaka.	SD wrote to MQ on 1 October
3.3	Investigate delays in sending documents from Beijing by diplomatic bag.	SD to respond in the meeting
3.4	Confirm that Fedex are not accepting and stockpiling applications in advance of full service resumption on 4 May.	RB wrote to members on 30 April
4.1	Check whether refusal notices have been amended to reflect new funding arrangements under the 2003 Act.	Amended refusal notices sent to Posts on 7 May
4.2	Investigate the possibility of written notification to sponsor/rep once the determination is sent for cases where the decision is not to be appealed.	Steven Walker to respond in the meeting
4.3	Ensure that published telephone and fax numbers are correct, and to investigate providing updated contact details for "crisis" Posts (Turkey, Morocco, Algiers)	JC wrote with updated contact details on 15 July
4.4	Any guidance issued to ECMs on reviews to be copied to Panel Members.	None issued
5.1	Updates to future meetings as necessary	Nick Astbury
6.1	Forward to UKvisas examples of unsuitable standard paragraphs used in refusal notices	We are grateful for members' contributions
6.2	Raise with ECMs in Mumbai and Dhaka the use of out of date refusal wording for Working Holidaymaker applications.	Guidance re-circulated in April
7.1	Inform User Panel members of publication date for NAO report	RB wrote to members on 10 June
8.1	Write to Robin Barnett by 10 May with specific concerns on procedures followed by Gerry's/FedEx staff in Pakistan. Robin to report back to the next meeting on his visit to Pakistan.	Robin to respond under item 4

8.2	Issue clarification to UKvisas' Public Enquiry Unit staff on arrangements for correcting erroneous visa endorsements.	Issued 22 April 2004
8.3	DSP Guidance on DNA testing will be updated at the end of April. Guidance to ECOs to be copied to Members when this is issued.	Updated DSP Chap 14 published in May 04
8.4	Add Harare and Addis to Post waiting times published on website.	Added June 04

- There were no comments arising from the action points

3. Operational Overview

Sue Davidson reported on the following issues:

- **ECAA Applications in Romania and Bulgaria**

Following the publication of the Sutton Report on 17 June, new guidance and procedures have been introduced for ECAA applications, and the visa sections in Bucharest and Sofia have been accepting new applications since 1 September. The main changes were that cases are now being decided by ECOs at Post, and all applicants were now being interviewed to assess the credibility of their business plans.

- **Working Holidaymaker applications**

For operational reasons several Posts including India and Sri Lanka are now operating separate queues for WHM applications as a result of large increases in the numbers of applications. The WHM scheme was currently under review by the Managed Migration Task Force, and changes would be announced shortly. Panel members expressed concern that applicants from different cultural backgrounds were being treated differently. Robin Barnett undertook to write to User Panel members once the details of any proposed changes were known. We will also supply application and refusal figures.

- **Guidance to outsource partners**

We are aware that there had been some concern that the staff of our outsource partners may be going beyond their remit in advising applicants. Dhaka and Islamabad had been mentioned in this respect. Both Posts have now drawn up Service Level Agreements with their outsourcers, and we will provide panel members with copies of these. More generally all contracts with outsource partners are kept under review by the ECM, whose role is the ongoing management and oversight of the relationship. We are currently revising the guidance UKvisas provides for Posts. Outsourcing has been a proven success and we are planning to roll it out to other locations, but it would not be suitable for all Posts.

- **Diplomatic bags from Beijing**

There had been no reported instances of delays to bags from Beijing.

- **East Africa**

Sue asked Lorraine Fussey to report on her visits to Dar Es Salaam, Addis Ababa and Nairobi in August, with a colleague from the Home Office's Referred Cases Unit. Nairobi now had a specialist Family Reunion Team which had developed a good deal of expertise in this area. UKvisas are planning to set up an online discussion group for staff from a range of Posts doing significant amounts of FR work to share good practice. The interview queue in Nairobi is now down to 3 months for new applicants. The queue in Addis is longer but is now falling. Following Lorraine's visit they are now looking at separate procedures for admitting those wishing to lodge new FR applications.

?IND have now issued new guidance to ECOs on what constitutes exceptional compassionate circumstances.

There is currently no prospect of expanding the visa and consular network in East Africa, for example into Somaliland, as security and cost issues prevent this.

Target response times for Cellmark are 35 days from the date of both samples reaching Cellmark. Enquiries on DNA tests must be made to the ECO rather to Cellmark.

Action points:

- 3.1 Provide copies of the Service Level Agreements for outsource partners in Dhaka and Islamabad.
- 3.2 Write to members once details of changes to the WHM scheme are announced
- 3.3 Provide figures on application and refusal rates for WHM applications
- 3.4 Consider new guidelines for the admission of spouses to marriage/settlement interviews

4. Pakistan

Robin Barnett outlined developments in terms of service levels in Pakistan since the April meeting. The current situation is that applications are not being accepted from first-time non family visitors under 25, although applicants are able to register and these will be dealt with in date order when we have the capacity to do so. Backlogs are now reducing across most categories and settlement applications are now being processed within target times. A substantial increase in staff numbers is planned for both Islamabad and Karachi once new accommodation is ready.

He then reported on his visit last May which had included talks with Gerry'/FedEx management to seek real improvements in their service. An action plan was now in place, being overseen by Alex Pond, and including additional training for Gerry's staff. A number of members agreed that there has been an improvement in service, but that there still remained problems, including with the adequacy of Gerry's premises which were not designed to cope with the volume of callers.

Robin confirmed that in respect of deciding the date an application is considered to have been made ECOs are encouraged to be pragmatic and use common sense.

Action points:

- 4.1 Write to members on problems with ECM reviews and acknowledging appeals in Islamabad
- 4.2 Chase up with IND the guidance on endorsements promised at the November 03 meeting
- 4.3 Arrange for Alex Pond to visit Scotland on her next visit to the UK.
- 4.4 Inform Jackie Colton if members would like to meet Alex Pond during her visit from 15-20 November.

5. Single Tier Appeals

Lorraine Fussey reported on work with IND and DCA colleagues in preparation for the introduction of single tier appeals on 4 April 2005. In May and June 2004 UKvisas audited the backlogs of appeals at Posts. This stood at around 11,000 cases at various stages. Additional resources have been devoted to appeals and most of the backlogs will be cleared by the end of the year. This has meant a corresponding bulge of cases to be dealt with at the processing centres. We are now addressing with DCA the issue of lodging, and whether this should be overseas or with the AIT. UKvisas has no strong view either way, provided that there is clarity for appellants and their reps. This issue is addressed in the DCA consultation process currently underway and members are encouraged to feed in their views. Work is also underway on IT issues, and IND and Tribunal staff have been offered access to the CRS visa database to assist in tracking applications.

The next step in implementation would be a series of workshops and a walk-through to test the new processes.

Action points:

None

6. National Audit Office Report

Robin Barnett reported that the NAO study of UKvisas was published on 17 June. Copies can be downloaded from the UKvisas website. The report was broadly positive and made a number of recommendations in areas where our performance could be improved. Robin briefly outlined the recommendations and the work we were doing to implement them. A summary is attached at Annex A.

Action Points

None

7. Independent Monitor's Report

Lorraine Fussey said that the Independent Monitor's report has been thorough and wide-ranging and UKvisas is working to implement a number of the recommendations made in the report. There were others that we disagreed on. The main concern had been applicants being incorrectly denied a right of appeal. We were examining all the cases identified, and while in some cases we agreed with the Monitor's view, in others we didn't. In many cases these concerned students attending short foundation or language courses prior to a longer course. In such cases our view is that if a student must be successful on the shorter course before being admitted on the longer course, then a right of appeal is not appropriate, but that short modular courses adding up to a single long course would attract a right of appeal. Another group at issue was those with family members in the UK but primarily visiting the UK for another reason. Our position is that these are not family visits so do not attract the right of appeal, but that where cases are borderline ECOs are encouraged to give the benefit of the doubt. We would provide further guidance on this to ECOs shortly.

A telegram had gone out to all Posts summarising the recommendations in the report and the necessary action required.

We are looking forward to receiving the report on 2003 cases which should be published shortly.

Action points:

None

8. Review of visa fees

Robin Barnett reported that as a result of the work he had outlined in his introductory remarks, UKvisas' cost base was rising. There was now a need to review fees, the first time since 2002. Any increase in fees would be in order to cover costs. There was no link to the forthcoming increase in IND fees, and the increases would not be of the same order. We will maintain global fees rather than differential fees for Posts. Our other aim was to simplify the fee categories as much as possible. No decisions had yet been made and proposals would have to be agreed by Ministers. Robin undertook to keep members informed and asked them to let him have any views on the issue.

Online payment was now available at six Posts and was popular: 75% of applications in the USA are now made and paid for online.

Action points:

8.1 Write to Robin Barnett with any views on the fee levels and structures

8.2 Keep members informed of progress of the fee review

9. UKvisas User Panel: Next steps

Robin Barnett reminded members that the User Panel had now been existence for more than four years. In order to ensure that it continued to meet members' needs there was a need to review the membership and how it works. It was noticeable that some members rarely attended the meetings and it might be possible to look at some

form of “virtual membership” to better serve their needs. There might also be a need for new members to enhance both effectiveness and diversity.

Jackie Colton will produce a paper on this for circulation to members by 31 December. Members’ views are very welcome, and should be sent to Jackie by 15 December.

Action points

9.1 Members to send views to Jackie Colton by 15 December 2004

9.2 Report to members by 31 December

10. Members Forum

Responses to questions raised by members had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Members were happy for this practice to continue. A copy of questions and responses is attached at Annex B. Members sought clarification on a number of points.

Action points

None

11. Any other business

None

12. Date of next meeting

April 2005. Date and location to be advised

Jackie Colton
Communications Section
10 November 2004

Annexes:

- A – Summary of action points
- B – Implementation of NAO recommendations
- C – Members Forum questions and responses
- D – Telegram 166 on Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme
- E – Telegram 167 on Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme

ANNEX A

Summary of Action points November 2004

Item	Action	Owner
3.1	Provide copies of the Service Level Agreements for outsource partners in Dhaka and Islamabad	Sue Davidson
3.2	Write to members once details of changes to the WHM scheme are announced	Robin Barnett
3.3	Provide figures on application and refusal rates for WHM applications	Sue Davidson
3.4	Consider new guidelines for the admission of spouses to marriage/settlement interviews	Lorraine Fussey
3.5	Circulate summary of action points from last meeting	Attached to these minutes
4.1	Write to members on ECM reviews and acknowledging appeals in Islamabad	Sue Davidson
4.2	Chase up the guidance on endorsements promised at the November 03 meeting	Lorraine Fussey
4.3	Arrange for Alex Pond to visit Scotland on her next visit to the UK.	Jackie Colton
4.4	Let Jackie Colton know if members would like to meet Alex Pond during her visit from 15-20 November.	Panel members
8.1	Write to Robin Barnet with any views on the fee levels and structures	Panel members
8.2	Write to members on progress of the fee review	Robin Barnett
9.1	Forward ideas on the future of the User Panel to Jackie Colton by 15 December 2004	Panel members
9.2	Report to members by 31 December	Jackie Colton
12.1	Advise date and location of next meeting	Jackie Colton

ANNEX B

NAO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation A

UKvisas should conduct a detailed evaluation of the impact of its streamlining initiatives to highlight the benefits, but also to explore further any unintended (such as where the use of standard wording on refusal notices was not specific enough to provide a robust defence at appeal) consequences and the effect on the consistency of decision-making. The evaluation should cover the impact of different approaches on efficiency and on performance against targets. The resultant lessons should be disseminated to inform posts and encourage those, which have been unwilling or unable to implement measures to-date. Specific attention should be paid to the needs of small posts.

Action

We agree and a review is underway. Staff from posts overseas will take a full part in the review. We need to spread best practice. It is very much a work in progress. Many of the glitches identified have already been fixed, including problems with the standard wording on refusal notices, which occurred at a limited number of posts.

NAO recommendation B

UKvisas should adapt its targets to ensure that its twin aims are adequately reflected and, in doing so, give sufficient emphasis to control issues. UKvisas, as part of the 2004 Spending Review, should ensure its efficiency targets reflect the nature of its business, and set explicit performance measures on the application of the control.

Action

As part of SR 2004, we are amending our scorecard targets and technical notes to reflect changes in the way we deliver services and to allow more time to carry out checks. We will also try to identify more effective measures on our performance on control issues. But it will not be easy to set explicit control performance measures without more information about whether visa holders comply with their visa and leave the UK. Once new arrangements for student registration are in place, this may provide an opportunity to introduce one such measure

NAO Recommendation C

UKvisas should improve the range of its performance information, particularly on the quality of its decision-making. UKvisas should analyse variations between posts on the types of application, refusal rates, and the outcome of appeals. This would provide UKvisas with more information on the accuracy and consistency of decisions, the impact of seasonal demand and the implementation of streamlining initiatives.

Action

UKvisas has access to management information but there is a need to capture and analyse more of it to take account of changes in the way we operate. We plan to do this cost-effectively through IT, for example by making full use of the new Central Reference System (a database of all visa applications) and statistical returns from Posts. Raw data alone does not tell the whole story: there are a number of reasons for varying refusal rates. A range of factors can also influence the outcome of an appeal, so while appeal outcomes are an indicator of quality of decision-making, they should not be seen in isolation. Our aim is to ensure that ECOs apply as a consistent standard as possible of decision-making on a global basis.

NAO Recommendation D

UKvisas, together with the Home Office, should make use of available information on breaches of immigration rules to better inform their approach to risk analysis. There is scope to carry out more follow-up exercises to establish whether applicants have complied with the terms of the visa. UKvisas should also consider whether the resources devoted to forgery and intelligence work at posts are commensurate with the risks to control.

Action

We are putting in place systems to improve the speed of response to posts. Risk Assessment Units will receive laptops giving them access to the IND Casework Information Database, which includes data on immigration offenders and asylum claimants. We are planning more follow-up exercises along the lines proposed in this report. Risk assessment units are being established at key Posts to analyse intelligence, identify trends and share information with the UK to inform the decision-making process.

NAO Recommendation E

UKvisas, together with the Home Office, should disseminate to posts all relevant UK based information, such as immigration related crime, use of forgeries and other abuses. UKvisas, together with the Home Office, should disseminate to posts all relevant UK based information, such as immigration related crime, use of forgeries and other abuses.

Action

One of the priorities of the Control Strengthening Unit at UKvisas is to take forward work on improved dissemination of information forward with the IND Intelligence Service (INDIS). A secondee from INDIS works in the Control Strengthening Unit. Data will take the form of risk assessments, forgery finders and bulletins, employment related reference material and other relevant intelligence. The aim is to inform the decision making process as accurately as possible. Good links have also been

established with other bodies working to tackle terrorism, people smuggling and organised crime.

NAO Recommendation F

UKvisas should consider more explicitly the implications of increasing demand and possible developments in immigration policy for its service delivery in the future. UKvisas and the Home Office should also evaluate the costs and practical implications of policy issues for the delivery of visa services. UKvisas should build on the benefits arising from recent improvements in information technology to explore opportunities for improving the control and providing a more efficient service in the future.

Action

The NAO report records the steps UKvisas have already taken and how the service we provide compares favourably with other countries. We have long worked with colleagues in other Departments to discuss the operational impact of changes in policy. UKvisas is represented on the Task Forces established following the No10 summit earlier this year and this has helped to reinforce the channels of communication.

Measures already underway include increasing the use of remote application methods especially outsourcing, boosting productivity with the help of more training, using a more intelligence-led approach to decision making, increase use of IT in the application and payment process and making the best use of existing buildings.

NAO Recommendation G

UKvisas should develop further its approach to handling appeals. Posts should be more proactive in managing any backlog of appeals awaiting despatch. UKvisas should also explore further the use of electronic confirmation of appeal decisions to enable faster issuing of a visa after an appeal has been awarded in the appellant's favour. UKvisas should analyse the outcome of appeal decisions to better understand the reasons why decisions are over-turned; and ensure that the original decision is subject to rigorous quality review.

Action

Much of this helpful recommendation ties in with ongoing work to prepare for the proposed single tier of appeals to be introduced by clause 14 of the new Asylum Bill. UKvisas is working with posts to clear backlogs of outstanding work by December. We are working with the Home Office on electronic forwarding of determinations and have successfully piloted this for Tribunal determinations. Adjudicator appeals are more problematic. These are not available electronically and the Home Office does not have the IT to convert them.

ECMs are instructed to read determinations and analyse the reasons why appeals are allowed. We will reinforce this point with them as part of their training as they are best placed to spot emerging trends.

NAO Recommendation H

UKvisas should provide an enhanced programme of refresher and specialist training to develop the skills of entry clearance staff and should seek to retain skilled staff in entry clearance work. This report identifies a number of lessons that UKvisas should incorporate in its training courses, including the better use of evidence in supporting refusal decisions. We encourage UKvisas in its efforts to improve career opportunities in entry clearance work in order to encourage staff to devote a greater proportion of their career to this work.

Action

We recognise the fundamental importance of training in properly equipping entry clearance staff to operate effectively. The NAO acknowledged the high quality of induction training and we agree that we must build on this. We have boosted our training team, which moved into an enhanced facility in August. In developing new training modules, we plan to draw on the experience of other countries, like the US. Refresher training in Europe and India has already taken place.

NAO Recommendation I

UKvisas, together with the Home Office, should promote a more joined up approach to evaluating applications for entry to the United Kingdom from Bulgaria and Romania under the ECAA scheme. The approach, consistent with the relevant European Union and United Kingdom laws, would include clearly defined and agreed roles for Home Office and entry clearance staff and an agreed common standard for entry, set out in clear guidance and informed by a review of whether those who have entered the United Kingdom under the scheme in previous years have met the objectives of the scheme. It would also focus on improved arrangements for communication between the Home Office and entry clearance officers including improved feedback from the Home Office as technology permits and the use of risk management techniques to flag up potential issues early on.

Action

UKvisas will implement fully those recommendations in the Sutton Report that impact on its operations. New guidance for the consideration of ECAA applications was agreed with IND colleagues and published on 11 August. Sofia and Bulgaria have been accepting new ECAA applications since 1 September and are also working to clear cases submitted before suspension. Risk Analysis techniques will be employed to help inform decision-making as effectively as possible.

Robin Barnett is already a member of the IND Joint Programme Board and a range of steps have been taken to ensure that the views of UKvisas are fully reflected in decision making processes. Chris Mullin is joining the IND Ministerial Strategy

Board of which Des Browne and a DCA Minister are existing members. This will provide a forum for rapid action if issues like ECAA emerge in future.

ANNEX B

MEMBERS FORUM

STUDENTS

1. Meena Devlukia

The High Commission in Malawi is advising students not to bother with applying for entry certificate/clearance prior to coming to the UK. They have advised a number of students that they would be able to obtain full period of leave to enter by the immigration officer when they arrive in the UK. Obviously, when they came over here they were only given six months maximum leave to enter as a student. They will now have to apply for an extension and pay £155 that is much more than £30 - £38 abroad.

Would the FCO pay for the application fee because of the high commission's incorrect advice?

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We have spoken to Lilongwe and they are now giving the correct advice. The student or student's reps should write to the Home Office at the following address:

The Student Team
P.O. Box 3468
Sheffield S3 8WA

to explain the problem and should enclose the passport (retaining a complete copy first). The enquiry will be referred to Lilongwe who will issue a letter confirming that the wrong advice has been given to this applicant and, upon receipt of that confirmation Sheffield should then be able to extend the LTR for the appropriate period, free of charge.

2. Meena Devlukia

We have been taking part in the correction of visa scheme initially set up by UKvisas and now run by the Home Office. Unfortunately a number of posts overseas seem to be completely ignoring the requests for corrections despite various reminders by the caseworkers running the scheme at the Home Office, Sheffield. They are Shanghai, Beijing, New Delhi, Bombay, Guangzhou to name but a few. In all cases requests for corrections have been made in middle of June 04 – it has been over 4 months. The irony is that despite this exercise to correct entry clearance mistakes, new students who are coming in this year still have not been granted the correct period of leave.

The programme to correct errors in students leave to was transferred to Sheffield in July this year and in the quarter July to September 2004 a total of 1157 cases were referred to that unit from student advisers. By the end of September some 381 replies from posts were still awaited. Of those 381 outstanding cases, 207 date from July. We have identified a number of Posts who are not responding quickly to queries and have issued instructions to them on the importance of this work. We have also

recently again issued a reminder to ECOs on the importance of issuing student and work permit entry clearance for the correct period.

3. Mohamed Akram

Jack McConnell the First Minister for Scotland has consistently over the past year claimed that he has an agreement with the Home Office whereby overseas students after graduation can stay in Scotland for two further years while seeking work. Can you please confirm the exact nature of the arrangements between the Home Office and Scotland and particularly what instructions have been given to ECOs abroad to take this into account when assessing the student's intention to return. It would also help if you could indicate if the concession only applies to graduates or does it apply to diploma students such as HND.

This refers to a proposal that the HO plan to introduce next summer. Overseas nationals who graduate from Scottish universities will be permitted to remain in the UK for employment (without a work permit) for up to 2 years to seek employment. This is similar to the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme which came into effect on 25 October this year. Full details of the scheme have not yet been finalised and Posts will be advised when the final scheme has been agreed.

4. Kate Handforth

What guidance has been issued to ECOs on the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme in general?

Guidance was issued by telegram on 20 October. Copies of both telegrams are attached. DSPs will be updated shortly.

5. Kate Handforth

An applicant for entry clearance as a Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme participant is required to have "completed his degree, masters or PhD in the approved subject in the last 12 months" (paragraph 135O(iv) as inserted by Cm 6339). What guidance has been issued on deciding what date an applicant "completed" a degree, masters or PhD?

Please see para 7 of attached telegram 166 of 2004

FAMILY REUNION

4. Stanislaus Saverimuthu

Most of the Entry Clearance Officers are unaware of the rules applying to the family reunion policy under the Immigration Rules. They have been asking the spouse or the children of a recognised refugee to satisfy maintenance and accommodation requirements which is not required for dependants of a recognised refugee in the UK. Without perusing the Grant of Refugee status paper of the sponsor the ECO requests the applicants to pay entry clearance fees and other charges which are normally waived in family reunion cases. We have been continuously writing letters to bring this to the attention of the ECO.

Guidance on family reunion policy is available to Entry Clearance Officers, including details online in the DSPs. These include specific advice about fees and also the rights of pre-existing families of a recognised refugee. Spouses who married after the sponsor left his, or her, normal country of residence to seek asylum must however meet the normal spouse settlement requirements. Any "post-flight" dependants must also qualify under the relevant "dependant" paragraphs of the Immigration Rules. In such cases, the normal settlement fee will apply and the fee paid for any GV3 issued. We would be grateful for specific details of any Posts which appear to be a problem in this respect so that we can consider what additional guidance or training they may need.

5. Susan Rowlands

It still takes a year to get an appointment at Addis. This has been the situation for 2-3 years and whilst improvements have been made at other posts, none are discernible at Addis. Would it not be possible for staff to be re-allocated from less busy posts?

We acknowledge that the interview queue for family reunion applicants in Addis has been longer than we would have liked for some time and Panel members are aware of the reasons for this. But real improvements are now being made. Addis undertook a paper sift exercise in March/April this year, which freed up a large number of interview slots. The creation of these slots has enabled the Visa section to advance interviews on compassionate grounds when these had been requested by sponsors or legal representatives. They continue to be able to provide expedited interviews on compassionate grounds.

Settlement applicants are no longer automatically being put into the T4 queue. Where all necessary valid documentation is to hand at the time of application, then that application can and will be dealt on papers at the counter. Original interview dates for T4 applicants for whom no representations have been received have been left unchanged. Post's view was that there would have been major difficulties in contacting applicants, resulting in earlier slots being missed. Applicants requiring T4 interviews who applied on 14 October would have been offered interview dates in week commencing 20 Dec 04. As at 14 October 2004, the last interview slot occupied was in May 2005.

6. Susan Rowlands

Kenya: delays in dealing with family reunion applications. This is a longstanding problem, is anything being done to improve the situation. Example: application made in January 2002 - invited to an interview in December 2004.

A dedicated Family Reunion team was set up in Kenya in January 2003, and there are now three ECOs doing only FR work. They have now managed to deal with all applications up to and including 2000 and a number, though not all from 2001 and 2002. They are also taking in new applications. The turnaround time for new applications is around 7 months. But it is possible that applicants who lodged applications in 2002 are receiving interview dates for 2004. The aim is to have reduced the backlog of pre-2004 cases to under 400 by the end of this year. Nairobi are processing applications strictly in order of date of receipt. However if compelling compassionate reasons are advanced they will endeavour to expedite individual applications.

7. Susan Rowlands

Ghana: two years and 2 months from refusal of an application for family reunion to appeal.

We agree that this would appear to be an unacceptable delay. It is not clear from the question at what stage(s) of the process the delay occurred, and of course some of these will be beyond Accra's influence. We would be happy to take this up with Accra if you provide Jackie Colton with full details.

APPEALS

8. Susan Rowlands

Is there a routine for posts to follow when acknowledging appeals? Can it be published?

Entry Clearance Officers are instructed to acknowledge the receipt of appeals to applicants when they are made. The appeal will then go through the normal procedures. This is published in DSP Chapter 27.

9. Stanislaus Saverimuthu

When an appeal is lodged following a refusal of an entry clearance in many cases the British High Commission does not acknowledge the receipt of an appeal. E.G. Recently I lodged an appeal on behalf of Mr X's over 18 daughter who was refused entry clearance to join her father in the UK along with her mother and sister even though she qualifies under the compelling and compassionate circumstances". This appeal was lodged before four months – still the BHC in India has not acknowledged receipt of the appeal. When inquired about the progress of the appeal we were answered that it will take its usual time.

See response to Q 8

10. Susan Rowlands

Outstanding appeals: are they likely to be processed before April 2005?

To be dealt with under agenda item 5

11. Susan Rowlands

Implementation of adjudicator determinations: It is difficult to understand the inability of the HOPO or the Home Office or the IAA or anyone to send a copy of the determination to the ECO in post appeals. See below an email that copied to Wilson & Co from the ECO in Kampala to Lorraine Fussey. At a meeting with ILPA on 15 September, Lorraine said that UK Visas were trying to get visas issued within a month of the Adjudicator determination. That is simply not happening.

Please describe the current procedures for HOPOs dealing with the determination if it allows the appeal. Is scanning and e-mail technology now available to Presenting Officer Units? If not, why not and when will it be available?

" regarding ref 113009 - Mrs D A E we have received no notification from the Home Office / Appellant Authority to issue, or been sent a copy of the determination. Our standard procedure is to wait for this before we overturn decisions and issue visas.

However, if you can confirm to us in an email that the appeal is allowed and that we are directed by the adjudicator to issue, I can attach that to the file and issue the visa. Could you also shed any light on why the appellant and their solicitors received the determination in June yet we have received nothing? This is a situation which causes successful appellants and staff in the visa section continuous problems and has been on going for some time. It seems that we rarely receive a determination within a month of the appellant getting their copy and often - like in this case - it is several months later. It would help if we could get the determination at the same time as the appellant, whether the appeal be allowed or dismissed. "

The Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA) forwards copies of determinations to the relevant Presenting Officers Unit (POU) of the Home Office. It is for the POU to notify Posts as soon as possible when an appeal has been allowed, and for the IAA to do so when an appeal has been dismissed. Unfortunately, delays do sometimes occur, but an Entry Clearance Officer (ECO) cannot issue an allowed appeal without prior notification from the POU.

We are trying to improve the current system to speed up the process from our side. We are pressing for more determinations to be produced electronically and we are also exploring options as to how these can then be e-mailed directly to Posts. But there is a Home Office-wide problem in that their IT system will not support scanners to facilitate this process. However, Angel Square POU has, this week, taken delivery of a scanner which will be attached to a stand-alone lap-top. This will therefore allow them to scan-in allowed Adjudicators' determinations and email them direct to Posts overseas. We have asked five Posts (Lagos, Islamabad, New Delhi, Mumbai and Dhaka) to take part in a pilot scheme (starting on 8 November) to trial the system before we consider rolling it out worldwide. If the pilot is successful at Angel Square, it will be extended to Feltham and onward to regional POU's.

12. Susan Rowlands

Time limits: We ask for it to be minuted that UKvisas accept that they only have 28 days from the date of determination to appeal and that they accept that service occurs in the UK and so they do not get the additional 28 days. This information should be forwarded to POU's, the IAA and posts as some ECO's are still saying that they have the full 56 days to appeal – and the IAA says that too.

In cases where an applicant has an appeal allowed by the adjudicator and the Home Office seeks leave to appeal to the Tribunal, the time limit to do this is 28 days from the date of determination.

We are currently reviewing our handling of refusals and appeals in response to the issues identified in the NAO Report and proposed changes to legislation. We shall be issuing, in consultation with key stakeholders, revised guidance to ECOs in the coming months.

DNA AND MEDICAL EXAMINATION

13. Susan Rowlands

Age assessment in Dhaka: Why are detailed medical examinations of minors permitted and what guidelines are there for such examinations? Are they undertaken at other posts?

Age assessments can be a useful tool in determining the age of a child if there are doubts in a particular case. However, age assessment medical examinations are not currently being carried out in Dhaka on any applicants, including minors. Decisions on medical examinations are made with regards to the particular circumstances of the country involved. Any examination would follow the established medical practices of that country.

The situation in Dhaka was that, previously, there were a very few age assessment medical examinations carried out and these rarely involved minors. These have now ceased. Also settlement applicants are not medically screened in Dhaka. (This differs from other posts, for example Delhi where there is a much higher occurrence of TB than in Bangladesh.)

14. Susan Rowlands

Guidelines about when DNA testing is required for children: Are they published? Are there published statistics about where and how frequently such tests are required and the results of the tests? What are the implications for fees of requiring tests?

General guidelines on DNA testing are published online in DSPs Chapter 14. In all cases DNA tests are not compulsory – persons cannot be required to take a test against their will. If an applicant declines a test, that alone will not be grounds for refusing an application although the ECO will record the fact together with the reason given (if any).

UKvisas collects statistics about the number of applications made by Posts for DNA tests and the results of the tests. It is not recorded in the statistics whether the applicant was a child or an adult.

UKvisas has a budget to cover the costs of DNA testing which means that no fee is required from the applicant for the test.

OUTSOURCING

15. Susan Rowlands

Has there been consideration of tendering for outsourcing services? The issue of monopoly service is raised when UKvisas outsources visa applications to a commercial firm like Gerry's/FedEx in Pakistan. What quality control do you have, what incentives are there to provide good service, what do you do about allegations of corruption in the firm. If the government is pressing for competition in other areas, shouldn't there be competition here too?

There is competition in the area of outsourcing. Contracts for outsourcing partners are put out to tender in accordance with government procurement rules. All are subject to scrutiny by procurement section, legal advisers, Internal Audit and UKvisas before they are agreed. Quality control measures are built into contracts. One of the key roles for the visa section is to monitor the quality of service, to conduct 'mystery shopper' surveys, and to hold regular monitoring meetings with their business partner to ensure that service standards are being met and propriety maintained.

16. Azhar Chohan

When applications are handed to the courier company surely they are valid from that date. If not why not. I have a case where an applicant applied in the Philippines via the CAVA before his 18th birthday to join parents in the UK. He has a receipt. The

British Embassy then sent the application back because his cheque was for too much money. The British Embassy could have refunded the difference at a later date. When the application was received by the applicant he was already over 18. He resubmitted the application. Surely on such tight deadline cases the ECO / ECM should exercise discretion favourably. The British Embassy in their refusal state that he was over 18 at the date of application. This is unacceptable because the application was put in time and the money amount was the amount the courier company advised on.

The general principle is that the application is considered lodged once the paperwork has been submitted and fee paid, whether this is direct to a visa section, or to an outsourcing partner. Eligibility should be based on this date, not when a decision is taken. Discretion should be exercised where there is a delay, such as in the case quoted, because of an incorrect fee payment. We would need to show that we had acted reasonably (after all that would be the test if we were JR'd), and of course each case would need to be considered on its merits.

Without applicant details Manila is unable to comment on the case quoted, but have commented that this particular decision would attract a right of appeal and would be reviewed if/when the appeal is received.

PAKISTAN

17. Mohamed Akram

Due to the security situation in Pakistan the first time visit applicants are waiting more than three months before their applications are processed. Many of those are the ones who have missed family weddings they had intended to come to. Many such families in the UK have postponed part of their ceremonies in anticipation of the late arrival of their guests. Can UKvisas confirm that such applications would be processed as if the applicants were coming to the wedding itself.

EC staff in Islamabad have the following instructions:

Please treat wedding visitors who have missed the wedding because of our backlogs as visitors to family or friends. Do not refuse simply because the wedding has passed and if refusal is appropriate, mention that although the application was originally to attend a wedding, the fact that the date has passed has not influenced your decision in any way. Issue if they meet the requirements of the Rules in all other respects.

18. Susan Rowlands

What is being done to stop the growth of queues and the inability to review cases in Pakistan . When will working holidaymaker applications be accepted there? General problem of delay.

To be dealt with under agenda item 4

GENERAL DELAYS AT POSTS

19. Stanislaus Saverimuthu

Mrs Y is a Gambian national and a nurse who has been granted work permit employment in the UK. She instructed us to assist her in sponsoring her husband from Gambia in 2002. At that time she was heavily pregnant with her first baby. The

application was refused and we lodged an appeal. Subsequently we did not hear from the BHC and after waiting for more than six months we contacted the BHC regarding this matter. We received a fax from the BHC Gambia that the appeal forms and the supporting documents have been misplaced and requesting us to send them again. Even after this we did not have a response from the BHC. We sought the intervention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office with no success. Now the child of the client is one year and six months old. Still no progress and now we have sought the intervention of the local MP in this matter.

Without further information we are unable to comment on this specific case, but we would be happy to take this up with Banjul if you provide Jackie Colton with full details.

In general terms we are aware that over the last year or so Banjul have introduced several changes to procedures including "streamlining", have recruited additional staff and extended the visa section. Hopefully such a situation as described will not re-occur.

Susan Rowlands

20. Delays in dealing with working holidaymaker applications.

To be dealt with under agenda item 3

21. Susan Rowlands

Kingston: no response to representatives re requesting a review of a decision and for providing original documentation and availability of sponsor for interview.

It is the policy of visa staff in Kingston to review and respond in full to representations made on individual cases. They have a very heavy caseload in this respect, and if a case has been overlooked as a result they offer apologies. Again if we can details of the case Kingston will investigate.

OTHER

22. Susan Rowlands

Entry Clearance Monitor's report: What has been the response of UKvisas and are recommendations being dealt with?

To be dealt with under agenda item 7

23. Kate Handforth

What is the current policy on 'sifting' potential entry clearance applications before they are made? Does it vary from post to post? Is form GV56 ('Information for visa applicants who have decided not to proceed with an application') still in use?

Our guidance to Posts is that it should never be standard practice to pre-assess applicants, and that its use should be minimised. But clearly there are circumstances which call for a sensible approach, for example where an applicant would clearly qualify for entry but has forgotten to supply one crucial piece of evidence. Advice is published in DSPs Chapter 8.

24. Kate Handforth

When will the 'specified nationals' list be expanded to cover all those non-visa national countries that were not included in phase one?

We will be extending the entry clearance requirement for all those seeking entry for more than six months to all other non-visa nationalities during 2005. We will ensure as far as possible that implementation is timed to avoid the main summer student season.

25. Azhar Chohan

The guidance leaflet / notes as agreed over a year ago on the interpretation of visa endorsements by the ECO. Recently I have come across a lot of problems of interpretation. Airlines are refusing to fly people back because they do not understand the endorsements and Benefits Agency staff are having problems.

Preliminary work was done. We now need to follow up with the Home Office. The UKvisas Public Enquiry Unit, or our visa staff overseas are happy to answer any questions that Benefits Office staff or airlines may have.

26. Azhar Chohan

Who is dealing with mistakes on entry clearance endorsements once the applicant arrives in the UK? This information needs to be clarified.

See response to Q 1

27. Azhar Chohan

- i) What are the guidelines for the UKvisas to acknowledge correspondence?
- ii) What is the timescale for action on resolving issues?

i) We do not as a matter of routine acknowledge correspondence. The reason for that is that we do not have the resources to do so and to acknowledge every one of the large amount of correspondence we get in would be too time consuming. Instead, we have varying levels of target response times.

ii) Target times for replying to non-MP and non-Ministerial correspondence is 20 days. Although we meet our targets in the overwhelming percentage of cases, there may well be some occasions when we cannot due to conflicting priorities and other areas where we are awaiting further information.

ANNEX D Telegram 166 of 2004

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING GRADUATE SCHEME

SUMMARY

1. New scheme, to commence on 25 October, allowing non-EEA science and engineering graduates of UK educational institutions to enter / remain in the UK for 12 months in order to seek/take employment.

DETAIL

2. The Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme (SEGS) is to be launched on 25 October with the aim of encouraging non-EEA national science and engineering graduates of UK educational institutions to pursue a career in the UK. The necessary changes in the Immigration Rules will come into effect on that date (paragraphs 135O-135T refer).

3. Non-EEA nationals who graduate from UK further or higher educational establishments with a bachelors degree (second class honours or above), masters degree or a Ph.D in an approved subject will be allowed to enter / remain in the UK for 12 months in order to seek/take employment. A list of approved subjects will follow in a separate AECIP. Participants must intend to work during their stay and may take any employment in any sector of the UK economy. Those seeking to enter (i.e. return to) the UK under the scheme must have completed their studies in the last 12 months. Those seeking to remain under the scheme (switch) must have extant leave to enter or remain as a student. Participants may switch into another employment/self employment category at any point during their stay under the scheme. Those not granted leave to remain in another category must leave the UK at the end of their stay.

4. Entry clearance will be mandatory for those seeking leave to enter under the scheme (except where the applicant is a British National (Overseas), a British overseas territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British protected person or a person who under the British Nationality Act 1981 is a British subject).

5. The requirements to be met by as person seeking leave to enter as a participant in the SEGS, as set out in paragraph 135O of the Immigration Rules, are that s/he:

(i) has successfully completed and obtained a degree (with second class honours or above), masters degree or Ph.D in a subject approved by the Department for Education and Skills at either:

(a) a publicly funded institution of further or higher education; or

(b) a bona fide private education institution which maintains satisfactory records of enrolment and attendance;

(ii) intends to seek and take work during the period for which leave is granted in this capacity;

(iii) can maintain and accommodate himself/herself and any dependants without recourse to public funds;

(iv) completed his/her degree, masters or PhD in the approved subject in the last 12 months;

(v) if s/he has previously spent time in the UK as a participant in the Science and Engineering Graduates Scheme, is not seeking leave to enter to a date beyond 12 months from the date s/he was first given leave to enter or remain in this capacity;

(vi) intends to leave the United Kingdom if, on expiry of his/her leave under this scheme, s/he has not been granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom in accordance with paragraphs 128-135H or 200-210H of these Rules;

(vii) has the written consent of his/her official sponsor to enter or remain in the United Kingdom under the Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme if his/her approved studies, or any studies s/he has subsequently undertaken, were sponsored by a government or international scholarship agency; and

(viii) holds a valid entry clearance for entry in this capacity except where s/he is a British National (Overseas), a British overseas territories citizen, a British Overseas citizen, a British protected person or a person who under the British Nationality Act 1981 is a British subject.

6. Where an applicant will not graduate prior to the expiry of their leave as a student, s/he must include in his application a letter from his/her university personal tutor stating that s/he has successfully completed the degree course with second class honours or above and is awaiting graduation. In all (all) cases the applicant should provide contact details of their personal tutor, so that his/her academic record can be verified as necessary.

7. Masters and Ph.D students often complete their courses by submitting a satisfactory project or piece of research, and are normally granted sufficient leave as a student for this work to be accomplished. In exceptional circumstances, they may be granted further leave to remain in order to write up their projects. The date of their "completion of studies" (for the purpose of paragraph 135O(v) of the Rules) is taken as the date that their leave as a student / leave to write up expires.

8. When assessing whether an applicant can maintain and accommodate him/herself in the UK while seeking employment, consideration should be given to all relevant factors such as cash resources and the level of planning they have undertaken to find employment. Applicants who can demonstrate that they have a firm or tentative job offer or contract will require a smaller cash reserve as they will be able to start earning almost immediately. Applicants who possess the required academic qualification should have skills in demand in the UK labour market. Having already spent time in the UK, they should be aware of the funds they need to support themselves while seeking employment.

9. If each of the requirements in paragraph 5 (i) to (vii) is met, applicants may be granted entry clearance for 12 months on Code 1 conditions. The Proviso endorsement will be "SEGS Participant" and the entry clearance fee 75.00 GBP.

10. Refusal of entry clearance should be on the grounds that each of the requirements of paragraph 135O(i) to (vii) is not met. Those refused will have a right of appeal under Section 82(1) of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

11. Dependants (i.e. spouses, unmarried partners or children) may be granted entry in line with the SEGS participant (up to a maximum of 12 months) on Code 1. The requirements to be met are the same as for dependants of work permit holders (see paragraphs 194 and 197 of the Rules). The entry clearance fee is also 75.00 GBP.

Annex E – Telegram 167 of 2004

SUBJECT: SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING GRADUATE SCHEME

SUMMARY

1. List of approved degree/postgraduate courses for participation in the Science and Engineering Graduate Scheme (SEGS) which is coming into operation on 25 October (AECIP 166 refers). Home Office caseworker guidance notes on the approved course list.

DETAIL

SEGS - ELIGIBLE SUBJECTS AT EACH LEVEL OF STUDY

The following Principal Subjects as defined in the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) are those eligible for SEGS. Any subject with a JACS code having the same letter and first digit as a Principal Subject is considered to fall within that Principal Subject. For example the Principal Subject H100 General Engineering includes H121 Fire Safety Engineering.

Eligibility is limited to first degree programmes and to taught and research postgraduate programmes. If the programme is categorised as "Other Undergraduate" it is not eligible regardless of the subject of the programme. The "Other Undergraduate" category includes Higher National Certificates (HNC), Higher National Diplomas (HND), Diplomas in Higher Education (DipHE), and Foundation Degrees.

FIRST DEGREE PROGRAMMES

A100 Pre-clinical Medicine
A200 Pre-clinical Dentistry
C100 Biology
C200 Botany
C700 Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry
D600 Food and Beverage Studies
F100 Chemistry
F200 Materials Science
F300 Physics
F600 Geology
F800 Physical and Terrestrial Geographical and Environmental Sciences
G300 Statistics
H000 Balanced Combinations in Engineering x
H100 General Engineering
H200 Civil Engineering
H700 Production and Manufacturing Engineering
H800 Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering
J100 Minerals Technology
J200 Metallurgy

J400 Polymers and Textiles
J500 Materials Technology not otherwise specified
J600 Maritime Technology
J700 Industrial Biotechnology
K200 Building

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

C200 Botany
C300 Zoology
C400 Genetics
D700 Agricultural Sciences
F000 Balanced Combinations in Physical Sciences x
F300 Physics
F500 Astronomy
G200 Operational Research
H000 Balanced Combinations in Engineering x
H100 General Engineering
H600 Electronic and Electrical Engineering
H700 Production and Manufacturing Engineering
J100 Minerals Technology
J400 Polymers and Textiles
J500 Materials Technology not otherwise specified
J600 Maritime Technology

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

A100 Pre-clinical Medicine
B400 Nutrition
B500 Ophthalmics
B600 Aural and Oral Sciences
C300 Zoology
C700 Molecular Biology, Biophysics and Biochemistry
D700 Agricultural Sciences
F100 Chemistry
F200 Materials Science
H000 Balanced Combinations in Engineering x
H300 Mechanical Engineering
H400 Aerospace Engineering
H600 Electronic and Electrical Engineering
H800 Chemical, Process and Energy Engineering
J200 Metallurgy
J600 Maritime Technology

x Eligibility of programmes coded in whole or part as F000 or H000 depends on their content. See the notes for details of eligibility.

NOTES ON THE APPROVED COURSE LIST

HOW DO I KNOW IF THE PROGRAMME IS ELIGIBLE?

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has created a list of eligible Science and Engineering subjects. The list focuses on the subjects and skills that the Roberts Review identified as being in short supply. Only those who have studied programmes in the approved subjects are eligible to apply for leave under the scheme. Approved subjects are identified by their Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) code. This system, developed jointly by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS, www.ucas.ac.uk) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, www.hesa.ac.uk), is now used by institutions providing HE programmes, and by the Teaching Quality Information website (www.tqi.ac.uk).

Applicants will need to provide evidence of their course's JACS code at the time of application (please note that course codes may be changed during the period of studies. If the applicant has yet to graduate and therefore does not have a final JACS code, caseworkers should ensure that the JACS code provided is no more than two months old at time of application). Course eligibility can be checked looking that code up in the list of eligible subjects.

WHAT IF THE PROGRAMME COVERS MORE THAN ONE SUBJECT OR IS BROADLY BASED?

Many degree programmes cover more than one subject, including those known as "Joint Honours". HESA recognises four possible patterns:

single-subject;
balanced two-subject combination;
major/minor two-subject combination;
balanced three-subject combination.

Institution report programmes to HESA according the pattern that best matches it, and the match might not be exact. For example, if the second subject is a very small component, the programme is reported as single-subject, and the test for eligibility is based on that subject.

A balanced two-subject programme is eligible if one of the components is eligible, or if both are.

A major/minor programme is eligible if the major component is eligible, or if both are.

A balanced three-subject programme is eligible if two of the components are eligible, or if all three are.

Academic tutors will be able to tell which pattern is being used to describe programmes, and the JACS code of each component. This should be submitted with any SEGS application

Some programmes are broadly-based within a subject group, and will have a "generic JACS code" such as F000 for Physical Sciences or H000 for Engineering. If a programme is coded in this way as a whole, then the application for the scheme must be accompanied by an official letter from your institution certifying that at least half of the material covered by the programme is eligible. The same applies if either of these two generic codes is used for one or more components of a combination programme, unless the coding of other components already establishes eligibility.

WHAT IF THE QUALIFICATION IS A BEd?

Integrated undergraduate programmes leading to Qualified Teacher Status commonly last for four years and lead to the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree. Such programmes are regarded as comprising one-half teacher training, which is not eligible for the scheme, and one-half subject content. If the whole of the subject content is eligible then the programme is eligible. The subject content may lie within a single JACS Principal Subject that is eligible, or may be split across more than one.

Caseworkers should note that PGCEs are not eligible courses, and PGCE graduates will only be eligible for SEGS if they graduated from an approved course within the last year.