

Students, Agents and Host Family Newsletter February 2011

This is the first newsletter of 2011 so Happy New Year to you all. We would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all of our new students, some of whom have joined the College very recently.

Student Recruitment – 2010/11

The College started this academic year with fewer students than usual due mainly to the changes in visa regulations. Almost 20 new students have joined or returned to the College since September and there are plans for more to join shortly. The new Pre-Degree Foundation course started a few weeks ago and this course is preparing students for Degree level study in September.

The International Team

There have been a few changes in the International team this year:

New Faces



Ceri Waddington has joined the team as a Student Adviser. Ceri previously worked at Bangor University.



Sarah Evans has joined the team on a temporary basis as a Student Adviser. Sarah was previously a student at Bangor University.

Existing Faces

Louise Jowett, Director of International Strategy

Gill Hughes, Student Adviser

Sarah McCormack and **Amy Bennison**, EFL Lecturers

They all continue their work within the International team.

Absent Faces

Lin Filipiak is taking a break from teaching this year.

Melanie Edwards is now a lecturer at Rhyl College

Charlotte Griffiths is on maternity leave after giving birth to baby Violet in November. She is planning to return in August 2011.

Course Attendance

The majority of students have very good attendance on their courses. The reviews in December showed that many students committed 100% to their courses. For those whose attendance showed concern, report cards were issued and, on the whole, attendance has improved. For a very small minority, attendance is well below 80% and a report is being sent to the UK Border Agency regarding these students. We are writing to the students in this category.

Course Fees

The College wrote to students with fees outstanding in early January and a number of these students have now organised staged payment of their fees. This year an unacceptable number of students have not paid their fees on time and do not appear to have sufficient funds to pay their fees when requested. As a result, a very small minority will have legal action taken against them for recovery of the debt.

For 2011, students who are applying to the College after being introduced by family members/friends are requested to pay 80% of their fees prior to the issuance of their CAS. New students in the first year of study are not permitted to pay the fees in instalments and must pay the fees in full upon arrival at the College.

UK Border Agency – Review of Student Visa Regulations

The UK Government are currently reviewing the regulations regarding student visas. There has been a period of consultation and the agreed changes are to be announced shortly.

Llandrillo College has contributed their opinion to the consultation.

The consultation is looking at the following key changes to the Tier 4 student visa immigration route: -

- Tier 4 visas only to be issued for students studying level 4 or above (no more A level, IB or English students). Perhaps only HTS institutions will be allowed to take Level 3 students.
- Students studying under 12 months will not be permitted to bring their dependents
- All students will have to have English levels of at least IELTS 5.5 on entry (currently 4.0/4.5) (5.5 is Llandrillo's entry requirement for HE study, this will mean no further students for FT English study)
- Students will only be permitted to work at weekends - this would have to be regulated by Colleges and Universities.
- Removal of the post study work route (all students who have graduated in the UK can currently work for two years in the UK following graduation)

The good news is that the Student Visitor Visa route can be used now to attend courses for up to 11 months. This means that students can study in the UK for all types of courses lasting up to 11 months (including lower level English and Level 2 vocational courses) However, students are not allowed to work and must return to their country at the end of the period.

Overseas Travel

During 2010/11 members of the International Team will be visiting the following countries for recruitment purposes:

<i>Bangladesh</i>	<i>Vietnam</i>
<i>Singapore</i>	<i>Libya</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>Philippines</i>
<i>Nepal</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>
<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>China</i>

For more information of the dates of these visits, please contact the International team directly.

Accommodation Issues

We hope that all students are happy with their accommodation arrangements. If you are not happy then please speak to a member of the International team. Recently, we have come to hear about students who are moving without letting us know. You must inform the office if you are planning on moving.

The International Office will be contacting all host families shortly to arrange visits and undertake a re-inspection of the property. This process is carried out every two years.

Course Progress

This is the time of year when tutors become aware of how students are progressing on their courses. The majority of students appear to be making good progress and are on target to successfully pass their course. For those students showing concern, there are three main reasons

- 1.) Poor Attendance – Students cannot learn if they are not present in class
- 2.) Poor English Language – especially written language skills. Students must sign up for English classes if their IELTS is lower than 6.0 in any area
- 3.) Assessment Difficulties – Students who have difficulties writing essays, reports or word processing their work must seek help from the Learning Centre or Sarah McCormack

College Holidays and Absence from College

Forthcoming holiday periods include:

21st-25th February – Half Term break
19th April – 3rd May – Easter break

There will be no classes during these dates; however, the College will be open. The International Office will be closed on Friday 22nd, Monday 25th and Friday 29th April.

Some students have requested time off in term time for family reasons. Only in exceptional circumstances will this be approved and then for one week only. Students will not be excused during this time.

Remember, if you cannot make it into class for any reason, you **must** inform your tutor and a member of the International team.

We Look forward to hearing from you soon...

Louise, Sarah E, Ceri, Gill, Sarah M and Amy