

Edinburgh MSP slams coalition government's proposals on student visas

✘ Edinburgh Central MSP Sarah Boyack has condemned the UK coalition Government's plans to tighten up the issuing of student visas as part of wider restrictions on immigration.

The UK Border Agency has now launched a public consultation on reform of the student immigration system which closes at the end of January.

According to Boyack, the latest published figures on international students studying in Edinburgh's four universities suggest that there are approximately 11,000 international students studying at university in the city.

Commenting on the proposals the Scottish Labour MSP said:- "Edinburgh's universities have a deserved international reputation for attracting some of the brightest students from around the world.

"The presence of overseas students enriches the learning culture of these institutions building strong international ties which have benefits that stretch beyond the purely academic.

"Overseas students also provide an important income stream to our institutions, without which there would be less investment in developing facilities and increased pressure on the ability to offer a wide range of courses.

"As Scotland's population ages we need to ensure that we have people with the skills to grow the economy and overseas students have a role to play in this objective.

"The Coalition's crackdown on student visas is a direct

consequence of their misguided and arbitrary cap on immigration, and shows again their lack of recognition of the particular needs of Scotland.”

The National Union of Students in Scotland said that the proposals by the UK Border Agency to change the Tier 4 visa system will limit the number of international students coming to study in the UK.

“All these measures would dramatically decrease the number of international students coming to the UK and prevent many from making a great contribution to this country.

Around 46 per cent of international students come through some kind of sub-degree preparation course. StudyGroup estimates that 20,000 people who work at institutions offering access to higher education courses for international students could lose their job as a result of the proposed changes.”

The students’ body call on their members [to respond](#) to the UKBA consultation on the UK Student Immigration System on their website. They need a body of evidence to enable them to make a case against these changes.