# UK Government Introduces New Student Visa Regulations to Curb Recruitment Abuses



On Thursday, the UK government announced a new set of student visa regulations aimed at curbing dishonest recruitment practices and ensuring stricter compliance standards among higher education institutions. Though Prime Minister Rishi Sunak had considered significantly tightening or even eliminating the graduate visa route, which permits international students to stay in the UK for two years post-graduation, the government opted for less radical changes.

The new measures, introduced by the Home Office, include implementing a mandatory framework for universities working with recruitment agents, requiring international students to demonstrate financial self-sufficiency, and enforcing stricter face-to-face teaching requirements. Universities whose international students fail to pass visa checks or complete their courses may lose their sponsor licenses.

These proposals follow recommendations from a recent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) review, highlighting issues with some recruitment agents exploiting student visa holders. Home Secretary James Cleverly emphasized the need to prevent abuse of immigration routes, asserting that these reforms are part of the government's broader strategy to reduce legal migration.

The graduate visa route will remain in effect at least until after the general election on July 4, allowing the government to reassess its impact. The announcement coincides with provisional Home Office figures indicating a decline in visa applications from overseas students and foreign care workers, while the number of skilled worker visa applications has risen significantly.

Labour's shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper criticized the government's handling of immigration, accusing the Conservative party of creating chaos and failing to offer effective solutions. Both parties continue to debate the best approach to manage migration and support the UK's higher education sector.