



Higher Education Industry Experts

Education Agent Verification Opportunities

A STRATEGIC OPTIONS PAPER FOR NEAS



Prepared for  by Edified





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Executive Summary

NEAS is the global leader in quality assurance for the English language teaching community. It promotes the recognition of quality in education and training for the benefit of students, parents, education agents, teachers and professional staff. NEAS is well-regarded by regulatory and government bodies for the important role and contribution it makes towards ensuring quality and standards across the industry.

Now, NEAS have the opportunity to expand the scope and reach of its quality assurance frameworks by establishing an Education Agent Verification Framework. A verification framework complements the mission of NEAS in multiple ways. It advances global quality assurance in the recruitment of students who seek to improve their language acquisition abroad, it supports the achievement of quality outcomes across English language programs by engaging with the gate-keepers, and it empowers end-to-end knowledge partnerships across Education Agencies and counsellors, institutions as well as the English language teaching community.

Applying the well-regarded NEAS tick to Education Agencies via a robust and relevant quality assurance verification framework addresses several stated NEAS principles and goals. It improves industry capacity, encourages best practice, delivers greater customer (student and parent) satisfaction, and enhances the service quality students experience from the beginning.

NEAS Principles & Goals

Quality Assurance	Scope and Recognition	Partnerships	People and Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle: Quality is at the heart of everything we do. • Goal: Build industry capacity through strategic interventions that foster growth, sustainability, innovation and best practice in English Language Teaching • Goal: Deliver a total customer satisfaction promise through a member oriented service culture • Goal: Enhance service quality to ensure competitive advantage and complementary positioning with other Quality Assurance organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle: We are the global leaders and innovators in quality assurance. • Goal: Grow and maintain membership globally • Goal: Grow and maintain the NEAS brand portfolio to encompass a depth and breadth of products and services, thereby increasing recognition, reputation and global awareness of NEAS • Goal: Take a global leadership role in the driving of quality in teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle: Strategic engagement underpins our services. We position for purpose. • Goal: Engage in complementary relationships with Commonwealth and other government regulators for the benefit of learners and providers • Goal: Achieve productive working relationships with complementary peak bodies • Goal: Lead global network of quality assurance organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle: We strive for excellence, we listen, we learn. We are here to make a difference. • Goal: Ensure all assets and resources within NEAS are aligned and support NEAS mission • Goal: Empower stakeholders through professional development, continuous engagement, reflective practice and open communication • Goal: Communicate and demonstrate international leadership in a culture of quality

Working more closely with Education Agencies will allow NEAS to make a step-change in the scope and scale of partnerships globally and allow it to take an active leadership role in the development of quality assurance frameworks across the region and beyond. A verification framework will grow the brand of NEAS and open opportunities for further quality assurance projects at home and abroad.

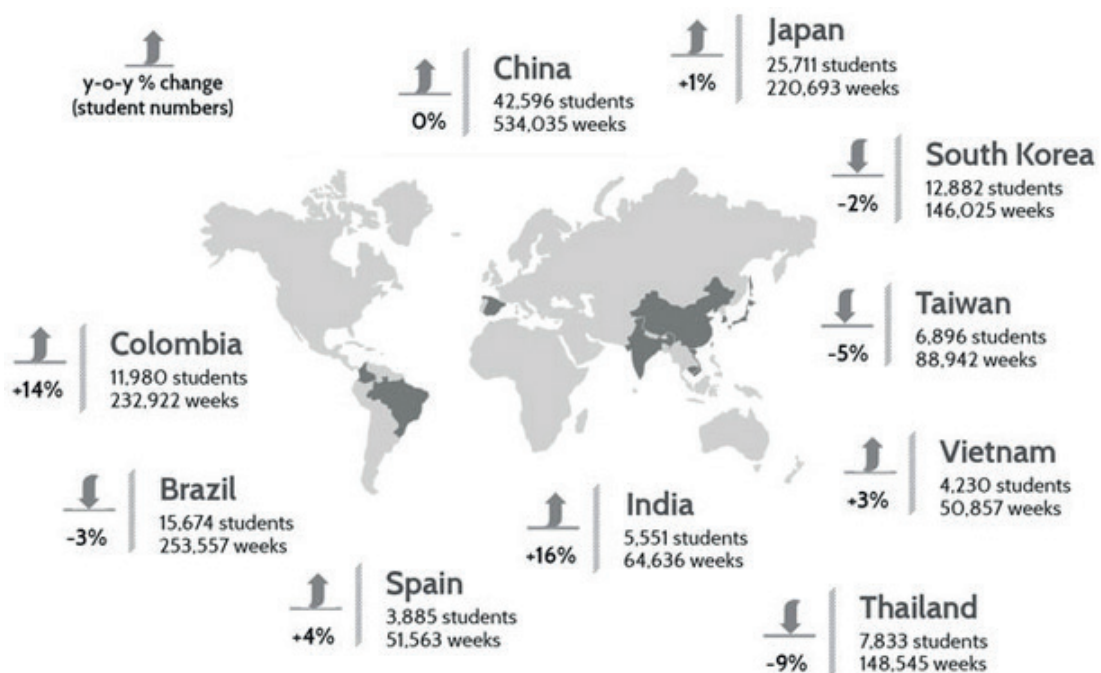
Education Agent Market

Globally, the market for Education Agencies is very large. According to ICEF, there are 32,174 known and registered Education Agencies worldwide, across 164 countries. The top countries with registered Education Agencies include those profiled in the table below.

Rank	Country	# Agencies	Rank	Country	# Agencies
1	Australia	9035	11	Malaysia	608
2	China	3527	12	South Korea	576
3	India	3444	13	USA	524
4	Indonesia	1071	14	Nigeria	522
5	Vietnam	1020	15	Brazil	517
6	Pakistan	971	16	Japan	483
7	Canada	894	17	Hong Kong	385
8	Nepal	810	18	Russia	370
9	United Kingdom	646	19	Bangladesh	359
10	Thailand	610			

In 2018, it was been reported that Education Agents send 75% of all international student enrolments to Australia and Australian institutions have experienced a 27% increase in Education Agents working with them over a 5-year period. There were 693,750 international students were in Australia at end of 2018 (Department of Education, 2018).

Amongst the Top 10 source countries in 2018 to Australia, ELICOS student weeks fluctuated with strong growth from India and Colombia and declines in Thailand and Taiwan. China remains the top source country for ELICOS weeks and was flat year on year.



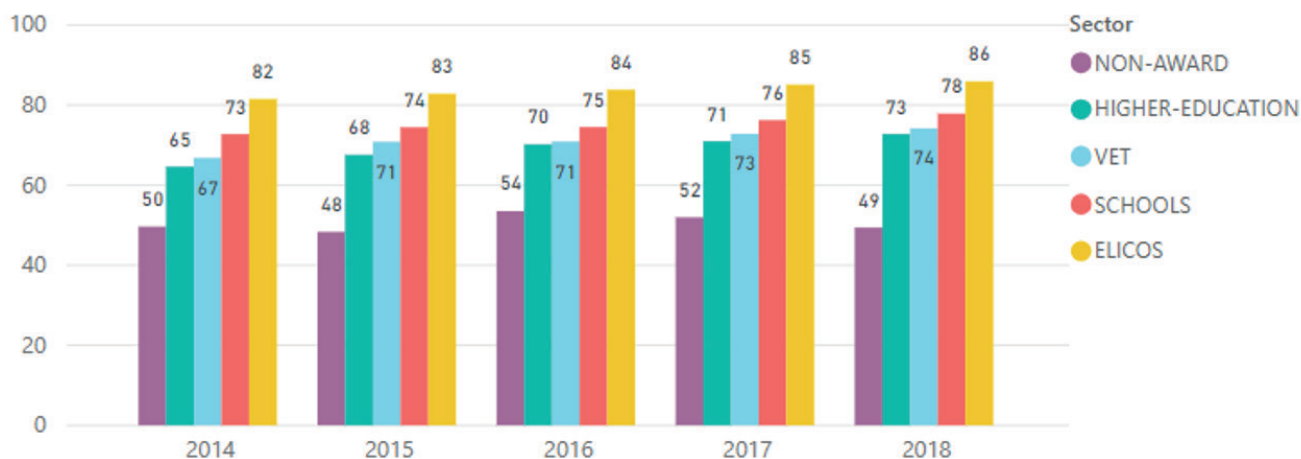
Nearly 7,000 active Education Agencies employ over 19,000 counsellors to assist students to study in Australia.

Students from Brazil (92%), Colombia (89%) and Nepal (84%) are the most likely to use Agents, followed by China (73%) and India (72%). 9 in 10 students are satisfied with their ELICOS experience (i-graduate)

According to the Australian Department of Education in 2018, there are 6,878 active Education Agencies and 19,413 individual agency counsellors assisting overseas students to enrol at Australian education providers. Prospective international students looking to study English / ELICOS programs remain the most reliant cohort of students on Education Agents.

Education Agents have significant reach across the international education sector and are the primary 'gate-keepers' for application and enrolment assistance for prospective students. In 2018, 86% of Australian ELICOS enrolments were assisted by an Education Agent, as opposed to 73% of Higher Education.

Reliance on Education Agents has steadily increased since the introduction of the SSVF visa framework for student visas. ELICOS enrolments via Agents have risen from 82% to 86% over 5 years, and Higher Education has risen from 65% to 73% over the same 5-year period.



According to the Department of Education, 75% of all Australia-bound international enrolments are facilitated by Education Agents. The top eight source countries for Australia have nearly 7,000 Education Agencies. It is worth noting that emerging countries such as Nepal, Brazil and Colombia have a larger proportion of enrolments facilitated by Education Agents as compared to more established source markets such as China, India and Malaysia.

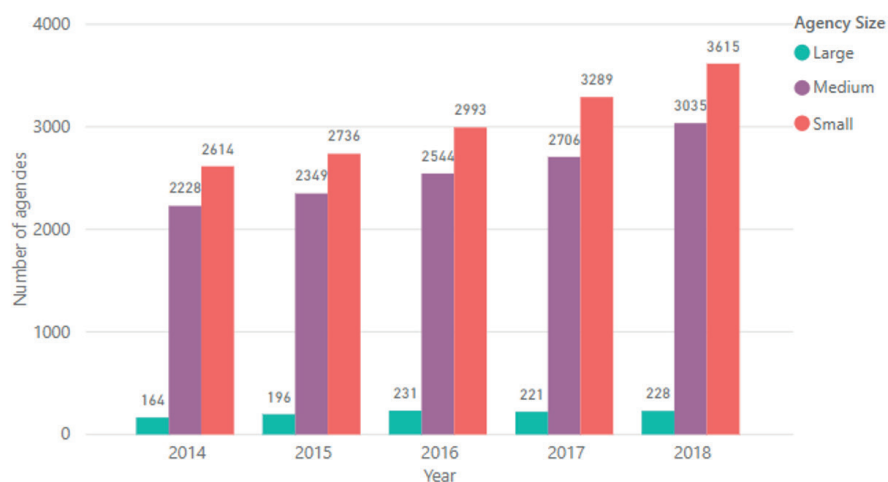
Student Nationality	% Enrolments Facilitated by Education Agents	# of Agencies
China	73%	1892
India	72%	1427
Nepal	84%	977
Brazil	92%	479
Colombia	89%	423
Vietnam	77%	595
Korea	85%	497
Malaysia	71%	722
All countries	75%	6878

China and India are the largest markets with number of Education Agencies and therefore produce a larger number of Australia-bound enrolments per Agency. Nepal also has a large number of Agencies per provider which are typically smaller-sized Agencies.

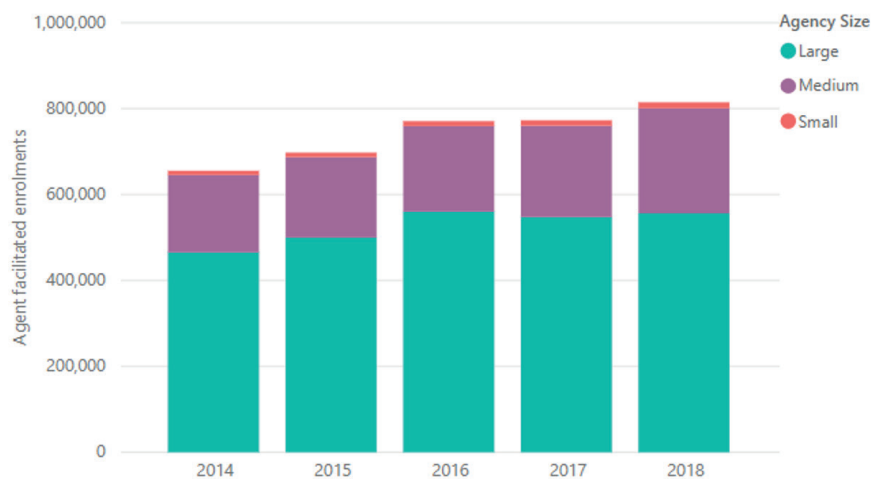
Student Nationality	Average # of Agencies per Provider	Average # of Providers per Agency	Average # of Enrolments per Agency
China	16	5	84
India	15	5	61
Nepal	13	5	53
Brazil	9	7	77
Colombia	9	8	62
Vietnam	7	4	33
Korea	6	6	45
Malaysia	6	3	25

Small and medium sized Agencies have proliferated, but enrolment volume is primarily facilitated by large Agencies.

The distribution of Education Agency size and the percentage of enrolments facilitated over the last five years indicates that there is an increasing number of small and medium sized agencies. Small agencies are classified as agencies involved in 1-10 enrolments per year, medium agencies are those involved in 11-500 enrolments per year, and large agencies are those involved in more than 500 enrolments per year.

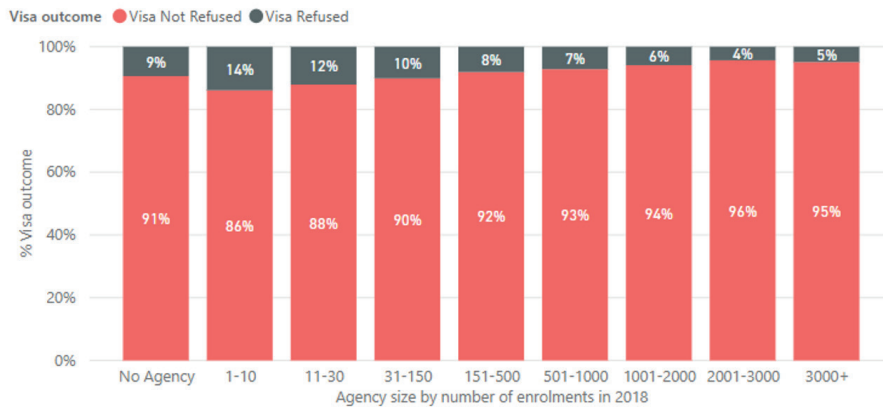


While there are many small and medium sized agencies, the vast majority of enrolments are facilitated by large agencies. As an example, in 2018 small agencies with less than 10 enrolments made up more than half (52%) of all agencies, yet account for around 2% of all Australia-bound enrolments. Whilst larger agencies, which are those with greater than 500 enrolments and who comprise less than 3.5% of all Agencies, accounted for nearly 70% of all Australia-bound enrolments.

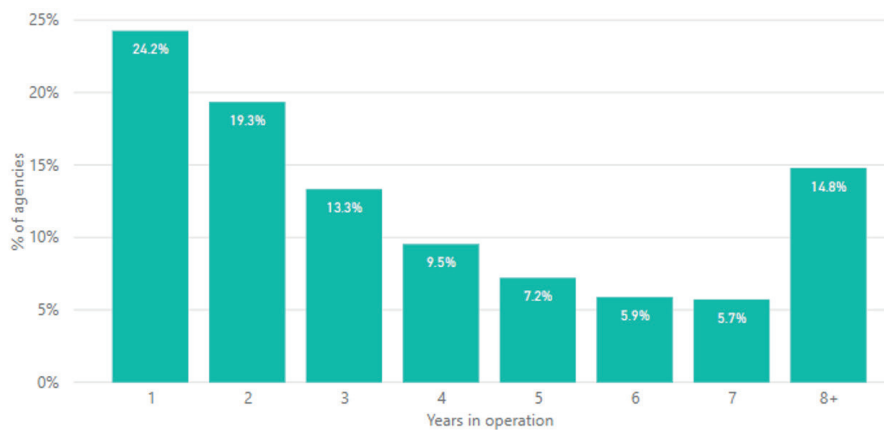


The size of an Education Agency can impact visa outcomes as well. Larger Education Agencies have greater student visa success grant rates as opposed to smaller Education Agencies. This shows there is a quality gap in the knowledge of agent counsellors and the need for greater quality assurance in their ability to adequately match students with appropriate programs and then facilitate that application into a successful visa outcome.

There is a growing quality and performance gap between large and small Agencies.



The length of operation for Education Agencies that are actively sending students to Australia in 2018 is also worth noting. There are many young Education Agencies, a quarter of which have been established in the last calendar year. Most of these more recently established Agencies are smaller in scale, and this potentially shows that newer entrants to the industry have higher turnover. More established Education Agencies with six years or more experience comprise just over a quarter of the industry.





Some Education Agencies have a dual function of assisting students for visa applications as well as new migrants with permanent residency applications, the Australian government established a registration authority, MARA - Office of Migration Agents Registration Authority. All agents that provide migration advice to students must be registered by the Australian Department of Home Affairs.

There are 8,928 registered MARA Agents based in Australia, many with branch offices overseas. Based solely abroad, there are additionally several hundred agencies. This publicly available listing can assist NEAS to understand the scope and scale of the Education Agency market on and offshore. All full list of all MARA registered Agents can be found online.

Country	# of MARA Agencies	Country	# of MARA Agencies
Australia	8,928	Bangladesh	9
India	163	Korea	6
China	57	Indonesia	4
Hong Kong	36	Cambodia	3
Malaysia	27	Japan	2
Philippines	23	Macau	1
Singapore	18	Myanmar	1
Thailand	15	Taiwan	1
Pakistan	12	Nepal	1
Viet Nam	9		

Australian Government and Education Agents

Australia has arguably the most robust legislative instruments enacted to govern institutions and protect students. All education providers in Australia are obligated under Standard 4 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (more commonly referred to as the ESOS Act) to list their contracted Education Agents on their websites. These Agent contacts can be leveraged by NEAS as it embarks on a scan of the industry and which providers and working with which Agents.

The Australian government acknowledge the important role Education Agents have in assisting prospective international students choosing a program in Australia. The government places onus on registered providers to ensure that their Education Agents act ethically, honestly and in the best interest of overseas students and uphold the reputation of Australia's international education sector. The Australian government requires registered providers to:

- Maintain a written agreement with each education agent they engage with;
- Enter and maintain education agent details in Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS);
- Ensure Education Agents have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Australian International Education and Training Agent Code of Ethics;
- Ensure education agents act honestly and in good faith;
- Take immediate corrective action, or terminate a relationship if an agent (or an employee or subcontractor) is not complying with the National Code; and
- Not accept overseas students from an education agent if it knows or suspects that the education agent is engaging in unethical recruitment processes

These requirements are in place to ensure there are minimum standards applied and a layer of quality assurance overlaid to the ensure ethical student recruitment practices. Given the large volume of Agent-assisted student recruitment into Australian ELICOS programs, the quality of advice provided by Education Agents and counsellors is critical.

Australia has robust legislative instruments to protect international students and the education industry.

Agent training, quality assurance and monitoring are of critical importance to the Australian government.

KEY TAKEAWAY

NEAS can assist the Australian government to fulfil some of its requirements and expectations of quality control in the education industry by implementing a verification framework for Agents.



AUSTRALIAN AGENT CODE OF ETHICS (ACE)

The Code seeks to support an environment of continuous improvement across the education industry.

Australia is committed to ensuring the highest standard of service and care is delivered across its international education and training sector. To support these standards and its aims, the Australian government has established a comprehensive international education and training quality framework. The Agent Code of Ethics (ACE) was created and based on principles outlined in the London Statement regarding Education Agents and ethical recruitment practices in the international education industry. A critical component of this framework is that it provides guidelines as to the expected professional behaviour of individual agent counsellors working with Australian international students, parents, providers and fellow Agents across the sector.

The aim of the Agent Code of Ethics is to outline the principles and expectations of fair and ethical conduct of Australia's offshore and onshore Education Agents. The Code seeks to foster best practice among Education Agents to assist them to provide quality services to potential and existing international students and partner providers. The ACE seek to provide assurances on the quality and standard of services provided by Education Agents recruiting students into Australia. The ultimate goal is to build upon Australia's globally recognised international education and training quality systems to further enhance the reputation of Australia's overall education system.

There are seven Key Principles in the Australian Agent Code of Ethics which provide a useful guideline for NEAS as it embarks on establishing an Agent Verification Framework for the industry.

Principle 1: Agents and consultants practise responsible business ethics

Principle 2: Agents and consultants provide current, accurate and honest information in an ethical manner

Principle 3: Agents and consultants develop transparent business relationships with students and providers through the use of written agreements

Principle 4: Agents and consultants protect the interests of minors

Principle 5: Agents and consultants provide current and up-to-date information that enables international students to make informed choices when selecting which agent or consultant to employ

Principle 6: Agents and consultants act professionally

Principle 7: Agents and consultants work with destination countries and providers to raise ethical standards and best practice

The Agent Code of Ethics supports the need of an industry-led approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

As a result of the establishment of the London Statement and the recent Australian Agent Code of Ethics, agent training, quality assurance, monitoring and continuous improvement have come to the forefront. As the Australian government are now releasing statistics on agent performance to education providers, an increase in quantitative measures will provide greater transparency to recruitment practices and outcomes in the industry. Institutions can now view individual and collective Education Agent performance across a variety of measures including reliance on Agents, Agent performance against the industry, CoE completion rates and visa success rates.

Given the transparency that is now being provided to institutions, the need for an industry-led approach to continuous improvement and stakeholder-driven quality assurance is becoming ever-critical.

Industry-led Quality Assurance

In response to the criticality of stakeholder-drive quality assurance, several industry-led initiatives have been established. Agent accreditation schemes have been established in Australia and abroad by Agent associations as well as professional industry bodies. These stakeholders are offering training packages, qualifications and ongoing professional development. These schemes are reviewed and analysed below to provide background and context for NEAS to consider for its own Agent Verification Scheme.

Industry-led initiatives in Australia and abroad are supporting stakeholder-drive quality assurance schemes



ISEAA (THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA)



ISEAA (The International Student Education Association) is the peak body in Australia for Education Agents. Founded in 2018, ISEAA is an Australia-based organisation that represents small to large education agency members to engage with peak bodies and government departments on student recruitment and student visa matters. Providing representation to the government and Austrade, advocacy across the industry, access to training programs, and networking opportunities.

The Objectives of ISEAA are:

- To represent the interest of its members to prospective students overseas, Australian government agencies and peak education bodies
- To promote Australian education services with standards of ethical behaviour underpinned by a code of conduct and supported by training materials to Agents
- To act as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information between Agent members and relevant stakeholders
- To organise and participate in events and initiatives which jointly promote the interests of all members

There are 30 Education Agents with full ISEAA Agent membership, and an additional 13 Education Agents with ISEAA provisional membership. These Agents represent 50 source countries and regions around the world.

ISEAA Education Agency Members		
360 Degree	Global Study Partners	Open Conexus
ABC Australia	Globancy	Smart Education Link
ACAE Advisory Centre	Goody	Stay Global
Australia Online	GoStudy	STB Student Travel
Australian Information	Hello Australia	Student World
Boomerang	IAE	Studybird
CI	Information Planet	Trip Study
Cross Australia	Link House	VETA
Estudien Australia	Mate	Welcome
Expert Education	Monkey King	West 1

ISEAA offer two different levels of Membership for Education Agents and two different levels of Membership of Colleges and Service Providers. ISEAA provides a variety of services and benefits to its stakeholders.



Representation to Government:
DET, DHA, Austrade
and State Governments



Advocacy with the international education industry



Access to our in person and online training programmes



Access to networking forums, events and internal communication



Be supported by providers and government bodies

ISEAA Education Agent Membership

- \$1000 AUD per annum
- For Agents with at least 9 institutional contracts
- Must be registered in Australia with both a business and physical address
- For Education Agents that meet all of ISEAA Agent membership requirements

ISEAA Associate Membership

- \$2,000 AUD per annum
- For Institutions with at least 5 working agreements with Agents
- For Service Providers with at least 5 working agreements with Agents

ISEAA Provisional Education Agent Membership

- \$500 AUD per annum
- Designed for Agents with at least 2 institutional contracts
- Must be registered in Australia with both a business and physical address
- For Education Agents who do not meet all ISEAA Agent membership requirements and granted for one year.

ISEAA Preferred Partner Membership

- For Colleges and Service Providers who seek to sponsor ISEAA events and raise profile to Agent members

KEY TAKEAWAY

ISEAA have a publicly available Constitution and Code of Conduct available on their website. NEAS would benefit greatly from a strong working relationship with ISEAA to ensure quality assurance goals and aims are in alignment.



AIRC is the only professional membership association focussed on international student recruitment and Education Agency matters for the United States. Founded in 2008, it is a non-profit membership association recognised by the US Department of Justice and the US Federal Trade Commission as a recognised Standards Development Organisation (SDO).

AIRC has grown significantly over the last 10 years. It currently has 285 Institutional Members across 43 US States and has offered full accreditation and certification for 79 Education Agencies across 300 cities and 90 countries. There are four new Agency applications under consideration and three currently certified Agencies that are undergoing re-certification.

AIRC have strategic alliances with ICEF and English USA (the American Association of Intensive English Programs)

AIRC Certified Education Agencies cover both small and large operations with a concentration of certified Agents based in China and India.

Agency	Country/Region	Agency	Country / Region
Abacus Overseas Edu	India	Grad-Dreamers	India
Abroad Campus	India	Gurukul Overseas	India
Acadia Talent	France / Europe	Gyanberry	Middle East
Access American Edu	Vietnam	IAE Global	Worldwide
AECC Global	Asia-wide	IAEC	India
AEMS Overseas Edu	India	IDP	Worldwide
Alfa Beta Institute	Nepal	IEC	Germany
ALPS	India	Imperial	India
Angel EduNext	India	IGEC	Middle East
AOJI International	China	i-Horizon	China
StudyCo	Worldwide	JJL	China
Beijing New Oriental	China	Kanan	India
Beijing Oxbridge	China	Kangaroo	India
Blueberry College	Sweden	Krishna	India, Nepal
Can-Achieve	China, Vietnam	Landmark Immigration	India
Canam	India	Liu Cheng	China
Career Mosaic	India / SE Asia	Manhattan	India
College Contact	Germany	Manya Education	India
Computrain	India	Maxway	Hong Kong
Council American Edu	India	Mentors StudyAbroad	Bangladesh
Dalian Xinquan	China	N&M Intercambios	Brazil
Disha	India	PAC Asia	India, B'desh, S. Lanka
Dongfang Intl	China	Phemia Education	China
EDU Denmark	Denmark	Pyramid E Services	India
EduGlobal	China	QS	India
EduShanghai	China	Raj Consultants	India
Edwise International	India	Renaissance EduCare	India
Edwise Foundation	Nepal	Scholar Education	Taiwan
EEC Enbee	India	Shinyway	China
EIC Group	China	SIEC	India
ELS	Worldwide	Study Abroad Assoc	Japan
Exella	India	Study Metro Edu	India
FirstPoint	UK	SONOR	Norway
Forward Pathway	USA	TPNL	India
Future Link	India	TR Training	India
GeeBee	India	Uniserv	Africa
Global Reach	India	UES	India
Global Study Centre	Worldwide	University Study	Worldwide
Global Tree	India	UStudy Global	Israel
Globalizers Edutrain	India	Valmiki	India
V&U Intellect	India	Winy Immigration	India
WholeRen	China	World Education	Worldwide
Yathapu Consulting	India		

AIRC offer a variety of benefits for certified Agencies, including:

- Validation that AIRC Certified Agencies follow best practice
- Quality validation and continuous improvement for Agencies
- Access to AIRC members and other US and Global educators
- AIRC Certified Agencies receive an official seal for promotion
- AIRC Certification that verifies 40 AIRC standards have been met
- Universities in the US increasingly require that Agencies are AIRC Certified
- Opportunity to exhibit at the annual AIRC Conference in December
- Opportunity to exhibit at the AIRC booth at NAFSA in May
- Participation in AIRC webinars and panel sessions
- Complimentary training on US student visa procedures

The AIRC Certification manual is publicly available on their website and can provide NEAS with comprehensive guidance on eligibility criteria, certification services, re-certification processes and other relevant standards. Certification is valid for 5 years after which Agencies must then be re-certified.

AIRC Certification Process includes 4 key steps:

1. Background & Eligibility Check
2. Agency Self-Evaluation Report
3. AIRC Site Visit
4. AIRC Certification Decision

The AIRC Certification charge is \$10,000 USD (\$14,800 AUD) in total. This charge includes the following components.

- \$2,000 USD (\$3,000 AUD) Non-Refundable Application Fee to be paid upon Online Application
- \$5,000 USD (\$7,400 AUD) Non-Refundable Certification Fee to be paid prior to AIRC Site Visit
- \$3,000 USD (\$4,400 AUD) First-Year Members Fee

For each following year of membership, \$2,000 USD (\$3,000 AUD) for Small Agencies that send <500 students or \$4,000 USD (\$5,900 AUD) for Large Agencies that send >500 students.

Since its inception in 2008, AIRC have recorded the following statistics:

109	Total Agencies Certified since 2008
25	Total Voluntary Withdrawals
12	Total Agencies Discontinued Certification After First 5 Years
9	Total Conditional Certifications and Certification Denials
5	Total Agencies Not Advanced to Undergo Certification
2	Total Certified Agency Closures



KEY TAKEAWAY

For NEAS, AIRC provides a good case study in the establishment of quality assurance and certification credentials for both institutions and Education Agents.



**PIER (PROFESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION RESOURCES)**



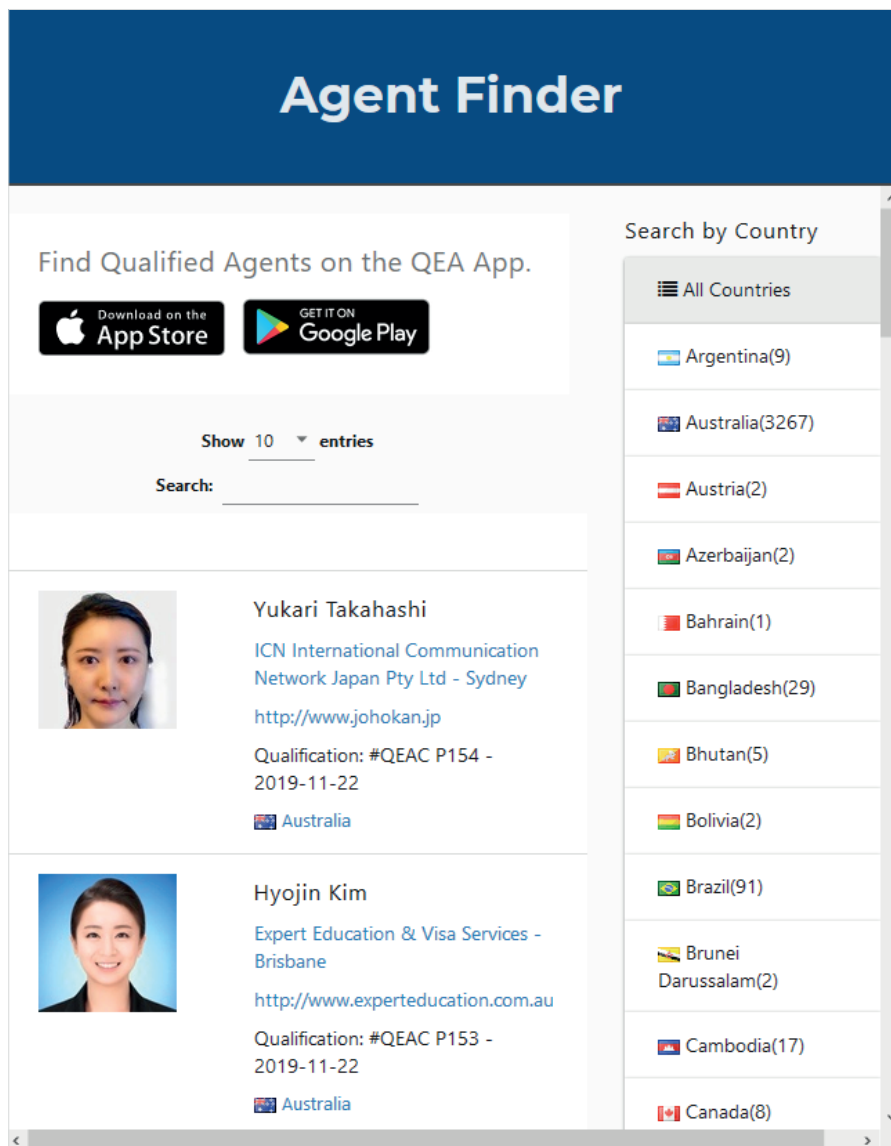
PIER have established the Qualified Education Agent Counsellors Framework, known in the industry as QEAC. In association with ICEF Education Agent Accreditation, a variety of market-specific Education Agent training programs have been established. There is a total of 11,183 Qualified Education Agent counsellors around the world with PIER, QEAC and/or ICEF training qualifications. These 11k+ individual Agent counsellors are working for 6,454 Education Agencies worldwide. Of his total, nearly 8,000 of these trained Agent counsellors assist students with Australia-bound programs.

Qualification	Region / Focus	# of Trained Counsellors
(QEAC) Qualified Education Agent Counsellor	Australia	7906
ICEF Trained Agent Counsellor	Europe / South America	1454
Canada Course Graduate	Canada	979
CEAC	Chinese Language version of ICEF course	469
US Course Graduate	US	274
Irish Course Graduate	Ireland	101

The Education Agent Training Course is a free, online, self-paced, industry-recommended course that provides both new and current Education Agents with up-to date information on the Australian education system and Australia as a study destination. It is considered a valuable training and resource tool that keeps Agent counsellors aware of changes and developments across Australia's education industry. The online training course covers four key areas including, the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF), Regulations & Legislation, Working Effectively, and Ethics. The course was developed with the assistance of the Department of Education (AEI-Australian Education International) and the Department of Immigration.

The course provides opportunities for Agent counsellors to demonstrate their professionalism via QEAC-PIER certification. Education Agents who finish the aforementioned online training course can sit the QEAC exam and be listed publicly on the QEAC database. The cost of QEAC certification is \$400 AUD. Some Australian institutions require that Education Agents have counsellors on staff that have QEAC qualifications.

PIER provides resources online for both institutions as well. For institutions, PIER provides online 'Introduction to International Education' courses for international office team members, as well as a free searchable database of Agents that have successfully completed online training.



Agent Finder

Find Qualified Agents on the QEA App.

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

Show 10 entries

Search: _____

Yukari Takahashi
 ICN International Communication Network Japan Pty Ltd - Sydney
<http://www.johokan.jp>
 Qualification: #QEAC P154 - 2019-11-22
 Australia

Hyojin Kim
 Expert Education & Visa Services - Brisbane
<http://www.experteducation.com.au>
 Qualification: #QEAC P153 - 2019-11-22
 Australia

Search by Country

- All Countries
- Argentina(9)
- Australia(3267)
- Austria(2)
- Azerbaijan(2)
- Bahrain(1)
- Bangladesh(29)
- Bhutan(5)
- Bolivia(2)
- Brazil(91)
- Brunei Darussalam(2)
- Cambodia(17)
- Canada(8)

KEY TAKEAWAY

NEAS can leverage the publicly available Agent Finder database to determine which Education Agents are qualified and trained, those that have experience in sending students to Australia, as well as their contact details.

Engaging with Education Agents



ICEF EVENTS



ICEF is a global leader in international education, committed to advancing the international education industry through the promotion of best practices, strengthening of global networks, and sharing of insights and analysis on the latest industry trends and data. ICEF maintain a global programme of networking events supports student mobility by connecting international education institutions, student recruitment Education Agents, and relevant service providers.

ICEF run a series of global and regional events, as well as Education Agent-focused events and Agent roadshows. Of these events, the ICEF events in Berlin and Oceania (ANZA) are worth noting.

Every year in late October /early November, ICEF run its largest global conference connecting institutions, peak bodies, and Education Agents. Hosted annually in Berlin, Germany, it attracts 1210 Agent Counsellors from 893 Education Agencies across 97 countries. 60% of Education Agents hail from EU and Eurasia, 16% from Asia, 9% from Latin America and 8% from the Middle East.

	ICEF Berlin	Education Agencies
1	Russia	84
2	Turkey	70
3	Italy	68
4	Spain	68
5	Germany	48
6	Brazil	35
7	Ukraine	34
8	India	33
9	France	31
10	Nigeria	23

Nearly 50% of institutions that attend ICEF Berlin are Language Schools, highlighting the importance of this event to NEAS. Coupled with the 1,200 Education Agent counsellors that attend, this is a critical event for NEAS to engage with key stakeholders on its Agent Verification plans. The next ICEF Berlin conference is scheduled for November 1-3, 2020

The ICEF ANZA conference attracts 200 Agent Counsellors from 149 Education Agencies across 43 countries. It attracts a variety of Education Agents, with 25% from Latin America, 24% from South Asia, 19% from Southeast Asia, 12% from Europe and 11% from East Asia

	ICEF ANZA	Education Agencies
1	Colombia	17
2	India	14
3	Vietnam	13
4	Nepal	10
5	China	8
6	Pakistan	7
7	Brazil	6
8	Thailand	6
9	France	4
10	Philippines	4

The ICEF-ANZA conference attracts most of NEAS core Australian stakeholders. The next ANZA conference is scheduled to be held in Adelaide on April 15-17, 2020.

In addition to Berlin and ANZA, ICEF also run a series of relevant regional conferences in the Asian region. ICEF Asia attracts 215 counsellors from 157 Education Agencies across 12 countries, with a heavy emphasis on the Greater China region. 29% of institutions attending are Language Schools. The next ICEF Asia conference will be held on October 14-16, 2020 in Beijing, China.

ICEF Southeast Asia attracts 198 counsellors from 144 Education Agencies across 11 countries. 10% of institutions attending are Language Schools. The next ICEF Southeast Asia conference will be held on June 17-29, 2020 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

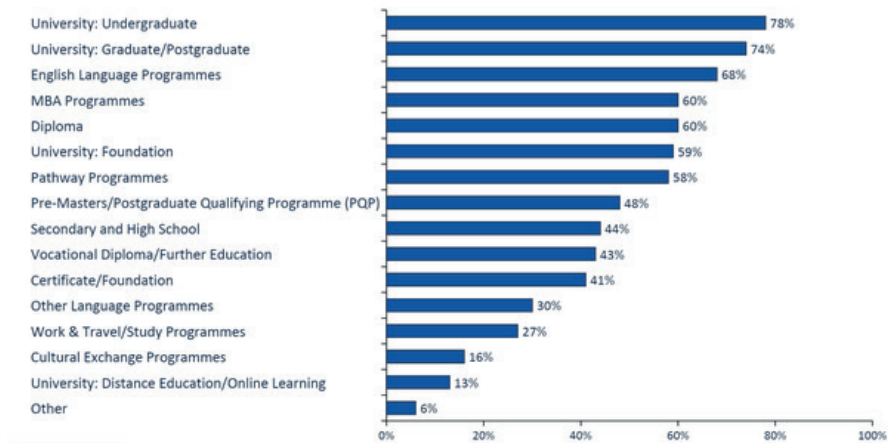
Key Takeaway: ICEF events are important events for NEAS to attend in order to network and learn from the experiences of partner institutions and Education Agents. These forums are a perfect opportunity for NEAS to pitch its Agent Verification framework once the standards have been established.



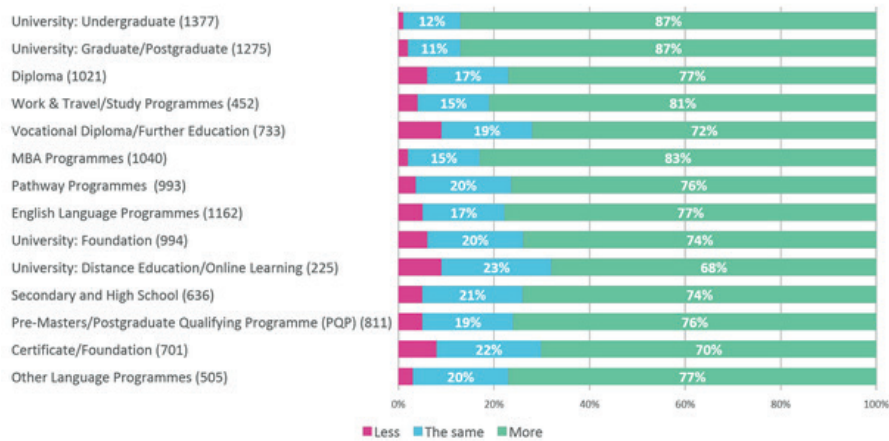
ICEF AGENT BAROMETER

Every year, ICEF survey education agents for their views on critical issues. In 2019, over 2,000 Education Agencies from 119 countries responded to the Agent Barometer.

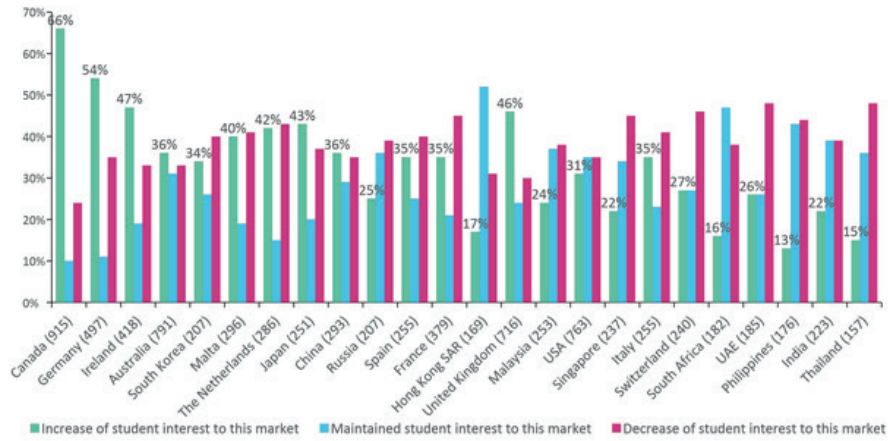
For agents surveyed, English Language programs ranked 3rd in popularity (at 68%) behind University – Bachelors (78%) and University – Graduate (74%) programs.



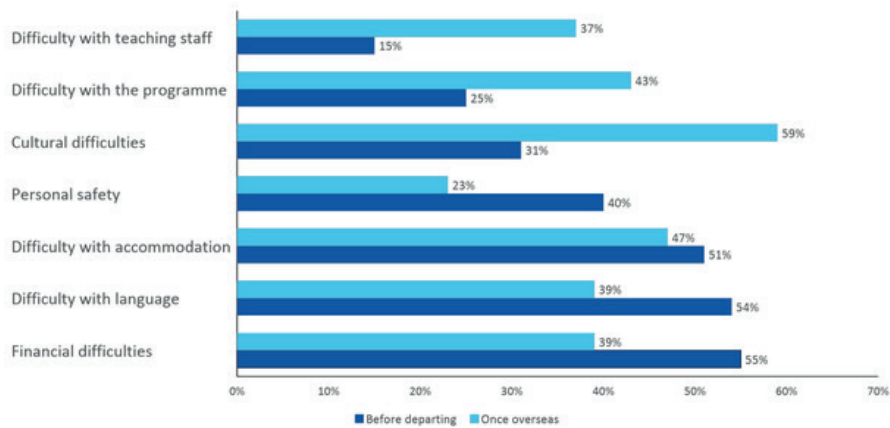
Agents are optimistic about program promotion and recruitment opportunities, with 77% of 1162 individual responses citing increased confidence in promoting English Language programs in 2019.



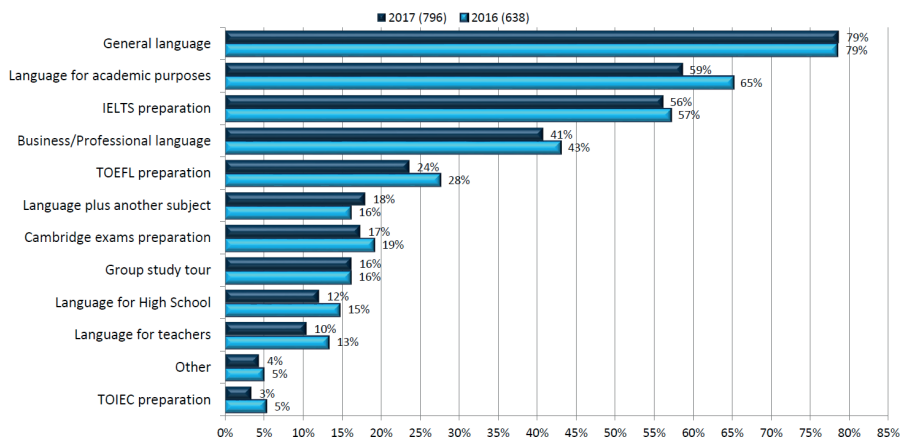
In regard to destination countries, Canada is growing in popularity amongst prospective students with 55% of surveyed agents sending students there, with Australia stable year on year with 42% of agents surveyed agents sending students there.



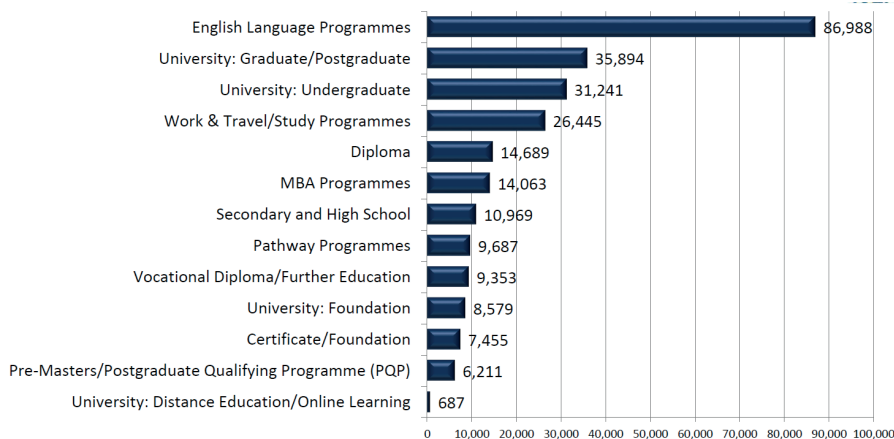
The primary concerns mentioned by students before they depart are focussed on Financial difficulties, Language barriers and finding Accommodation. Once students arrive overseas, their concerns are more focussed on Cultural Difficulties, Program issues and Quality of Teaching Staff.



From Education Agents recent experience, General Language, English for Academic Purpose, and IELTS preparation courses remain the most popular language programs for placement.



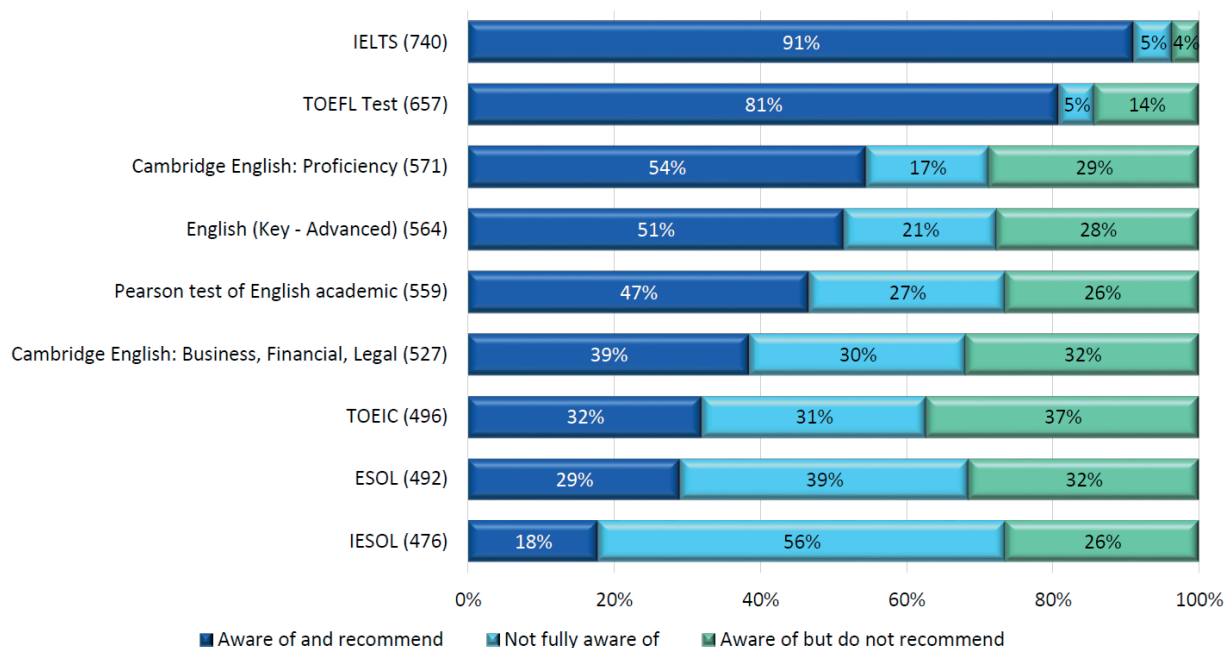
Education Agent support for English Language programs remains strong, with English Language program application and enrolment support far exceeding Higher Education (UG and PG combined)



Education Agent support for ELICOS remains strong and exceeds support for Higher Education enrolments.



From the Education Agents perspective, IELTS receives the most amount of support, followed by TOEFL and Cambridge English.



KEY TAKEAWAY

For NEAS, Education Agent perspectives on critical issues and pain points are important as it seeks to develop an Agent Verification framework. Developing an Agent Verification framework in isolation is not advised. Education Agents value the opportunity to share their opinions and seek opportunities to better engage with industry stakeholders.



INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS FOR VETTING AGENTS

It is a legislative requirement under the ESOS Act for Australian institutions to maintain a valid agreement outlining obligations of its contracted Education Agents. It is also a requirement for institutions to publish the contact details of its contracted Education Agents online. NEAS can leverage the standards used by partner institutions as well as view the contact lists as it seeks to build a database of contacts for the Agent Verification framework.

UNSW GLOBAL

UNSW Global maintain a robust network of several hundred Education Agents that support the UNSW Institute of Languages (UNSWIL) and other pathways to the University of NSW. UNSW Global require Education Agents to meet several KPIs per annum covering conversion rates, compliance, online application usage, joint promotional plans, positive working relations with UNSW Admissions.



Programs & Courses

Agents

From student visas to applications and accepting an offer, our global network of certified agents ensure a good relationship between students and UNSW Global.

[Enquire](#)

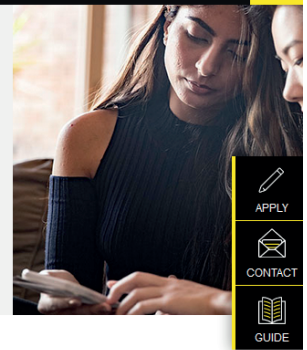
[Our agents](#)

[Future agents](#)

Become an agent

UNSW Global appoints agents to assist students wishing to undertake our programs.

We review applications in May and November each year. Applicants will be advised of the outcome by the end of the following month.



Q | STUDENTS | UOW GLOBAL | MENU

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG (UOW)

UoW publish a list of all Education Agents by Region for prospective students as well as maintain a UoW International Representatives portal (password protected) of information on courses and entry requirements.

International representatives of UOW and UOW College

International representatives website

Information and Resources for official representatives of UOW and UOW College

- [UOW International Representatives website](#) (password required)

Don't have the password?

- [Email UOW Future Students](#) with your name and agency details.

Find a UOW representative office

Representatives of the University of Wollongong are located around the world, and are able to assist you with your application to study at UOW/UOW College.

If you would like further information regarding UOW representative offices, please [email UOW Future Students](#) or see our [agent list](#).

Become a UOW representative

- [Apply to become a registered UOW Representative](#)

AUSTRALIA PACIFIC COLLEGE (APC)

APC, with campuses across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, runs English Unlimited which provides academic and professional English courses. APC maintain a web list of Education Agents by country with contact name, email and office address of contracted Agents.

AGENTS

On this Page
 ▶ Our agent partners

OUR AGENT PARTNERS

[BECOME AN AGENT](#)



Information for Agents



BECOME AN AGENT

Applications will only be considered when our education agent is completed and all supporting documentation supplied.



ENROLMENT PROCESS

Enrolment applications may be lodged at any time. 24-hour turnaround on applications submitted in full. Application fee to be included with application.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SUPPORT

The College is committed to assisting students with English language support. Our staff are committed to help students succeed and that integration into school and the Australian culture is enjoyable.



MARKETING MATERIAL

Access photos and videos of student life at John Paul College



FORMS DOWNLOAD

Download all the College forms



HIGH RESOLUTION MEDIA

Please note that all images on our website may be used for promotional / marketing purposes with permission from the College.

JOHN PAUL INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE (JPIC)

JPIC requires prospective Agents to show proof of QEAC-PIER training. JPIC outline obligations of its Education Agents and information to support its network of Agents online.

KEY TAKEAWAY

NEAS can leverage the established networks of its close partner institutions. Their experience in managing and maintain robust networks of Education Agents is a valuable resource for the NEAS Agent Verification framework.

Motivations for Agent Verification

Education Agents have shown motivation for monitoring and continuous improvement. From stakeholder-driven initiatives such as the recent establishment of ISEAA by Australian-based Agencies, to the monitoring scheme established by AIRC in the US, to the thousands of counsellors that have undertaken QEAC-PIER training online, Education Agents have demonstrated their desire and motivation to self-improvement. The analogy of “As the tide rises, all boats are lifted” has relevance to individual counsellors from small to large Agencies’ willingness to be trained and to be subject to quality assurance schemes to improve the industry as a whole.

Education providers have already demonstrated their willingness to undertake quality assurance monitoring to obtain the NEAS tick. Partner institutions of NEAS recognise the importance of external reviews, quality assurance and industry validation. Education providers are judged by their peers as well as Agency stakeholders and with external validation, the education industry improves through a process of continuous improvement. Increasingly, education providers are requiring Education Agents to have undertaken some form of external validation, be it individual counsellors completing online training programs through PIER or US institutions mandating prospective student recruitment partners be AIRC-accredited Agencies.

For Education Agents, there are a variety of factors that will influence their decision to participate in a NEAS Agent Verification scheme.

- Will this help my Agency acquire new contracts with partner institutions?
- Can this assist my Agency to retain existing partner institutions at contract renewal stage?
- How will this help my Agency improve the way we conduct business?
- Will this be a selling point to prospective students and parents?
- How will this be perceived by my Agency competitors in the industry?
- Will my Agency IP and business intelligence be kept confidential during quality assurance reviews?
- How will I know if I am in breach and what are the consequences?
- What is the risk of not obtaining a NEAS tick?

For Education providers, there are also a number of considerations that influence their decision to work with Education Agents.

- What steps have we taken to mitigate risk?
- Are our Agents operating ethically and responsibly?
- Do we have a transparent process for vetting new Agents?
- What are our KPIs for renewing Agency contracts?
- How do we know which Agencies take quality assurance seriously?
- Our institution undertakes external vetting and monitoring, why shouldn't our student recruitment partners?
- What is the risk of not requiring our Agents to have a NEAS tick?

What is the risk of my Agency not being verified by NEAS?

How does my institution ensure our Agents are externally vetted for quality?

KEY TAKEAWAY

As NEAS considers implementing an Agent Verification framework, it should listen to the issues and concerns expressed by a variety of stakeholders, from Agents themselves, to partner institutions, service providers and industry peak bodies.

Recommendations

NEAS should build the Verification framework in consultation with Agents, providers and industry bodies.

NEAS should create a pricing framework that considers the volume and variety of Agencies in market.

A NEAS Agent Verification framework needs to provide value to Education Agents to be successful.

As NEAS seek opportunities to establish an Agent Verification framework, it is important that it understands the experiences of stakeholders in Australia and abroad. NEAS can leverage compliance materials, codes of conduct and agent certification materials that have been established by partner institutions as well as peer organisations. As the Australian government are providing greater transparency to Education Agent performance data and has established an Agent Code of Ethics, the time is ripe for greater industry-led frameworks to support Agents and institutions for the long-term health and growth of the international education industry.

NEAS will need to carefully consider the logic to the proposed pricing structure for its Agent Verification framework. For example, ISEAA consider the volume of institutional contracts an Agent has to determine appropriate level of membership. AIRC consider the volume of students each Agent sends per annum for on-going membership fees. NEAS will need to consider the scale and scope of its Education Agents for the Agent Verification framework as some Agents may have one or two offices, whilst other Agents may have dozens of offices in multiple countries. Agents with multi-national structures will need to be treated differently as each country office is likely managed in slightly different ways. It is recommended that NEAS establish a framework to govern a general application charge, a site visit charge to cover costs, and an annual membership charge based on scale of Agency. At present, the low price point of the Agent Verification scheme as an entry to the market needs to be complimented with a higher, more thorough offering.

To be successful, the Agent Verification framework needs to provide value to Education Agents. The NEAS tick is well-recognised across the 200+ English language centres and education institutions that have undertaken quality assurance and site inspections. Education institutions value and recognise the importance of external validation. Education Agents work in a competitive environment and need to provide parents, prospective students and partner institutions peace of mind and confidence that their counsellors adhere to the highest standards and are recognised externally for their quality and commitment to successful outcomes. The competitive nature of Education Agents business models, however, means that NEAS will need to be sensitive to Agent confidentiality and non-disclosure of their business intelligence when it undertakes quality assurance and verification.

There are specific issues that NEAS will need to consider, particularly in relation to how NEAS addresses the concerns of Agents. Whilst NEAS has considerable strength in working with education providers, it lacks depth and expertise in working closely with the Education Agent industry. NEAS should ensure that it is listening to industry stakeholders and cooperating strategically with associations such as ISEAA and ICEF to understand appropriate entry points for established Agencies and for new Agencies. As well, NEAS will need to tackle the semi-regular and on-going cycle of renewals and transparent processes to deal with breaches. The complexities of this type of Agent Verification framework will apply pressure upon NEAS' capacity from a systems perspective.



Should NEAS not embark on an Agent Verification framework, the opportunity will likely be filled by another industry body. IALC have recently released their Approved Agency program and English Australia are undertaking due diligence on an Agent Affiliation program to be launched in 2020. IEAA (the International Education Association of Australia) has been vocal and supportive of the Agent Code of Ethics and have advocated for greater transparency in government data concerning Agent performance. ISEAA and AIRC have both established codes of conduct and associations to support Education Agents that recruit students for the Australian and US markets.

NEAS have the opportunity to take the lead and ensure that it remains the recognised leader in quality assurance in education and training, not just for partner institutions, but for Education Agents as well.

NEAS should enter this space before it is occupied by another quality assurance scheme.

Company Profile

Edified is a specialist higher education consultancy dedicated to assisting Australian, New Zealand and UK education providers and promoters to significantly improve their ability to build their brands, acquire and retain students, and deliver outstanding student/graduate success.

Our partners each have 20 plus years of experience working within education providers, government and service providers to the education sector.

We are results oriented, using our expertise, energy and partnerships with curated service providers to help our clients make dramatic improvements to their key metrics.

OUR MISSION

To dramatically improve our clients' ability to Build, Acquire, Retain and Deliver

OUR VISION

To be the first-choice global consultancy and solution provider for the education sector.

VALUES

Integrity, Respect, Excellence, Happiness.

BACKGROUND

Edified was established because the founding partners saw a gap in the market for a specialist higher education consultancy who could not only analyse problems but also find and implement the right solutions to help our clients achieve world class results.



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