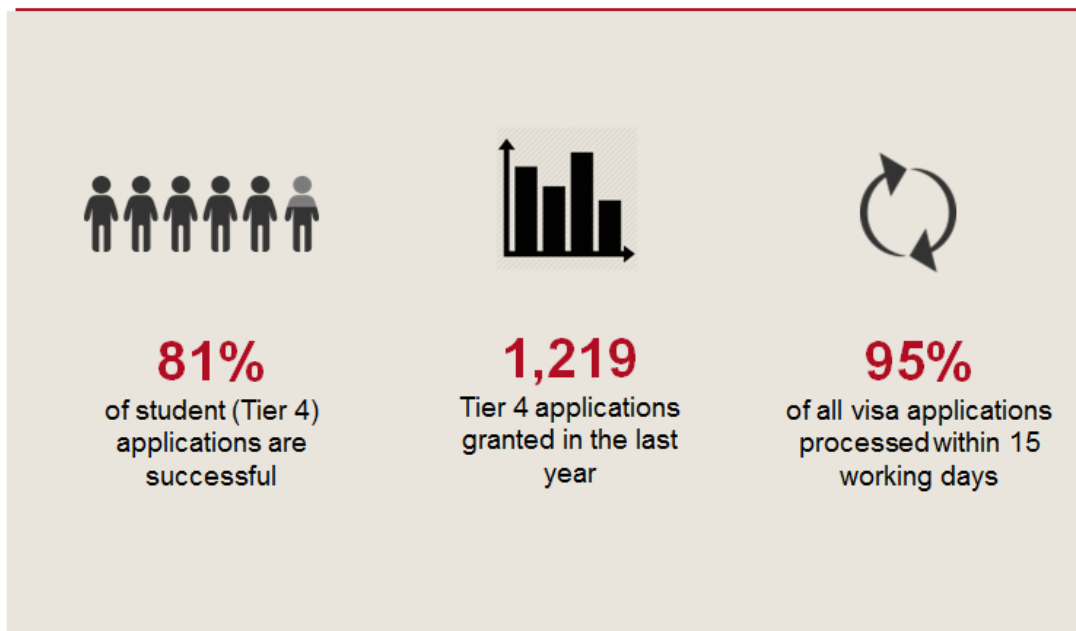


Visa issuance rates on the rise in Bangladesh: UKVI shared updates to local agents on student visa applications from Bangladesh in a visa seminar

Visa data showed an increase in visa issuance rates due to increased quality of UG and PG applications in the market resulting in improved turn-around times for student visas processing. This is an early sign of growing maturity and quality of students in the Bangladeshi market.

Student visa applications from Bangladesh



As per the recent statistics (till June 2016) released by the UKVI on visa applications from Bangladesh,

- 81% of student (Tier 4) applications were successful
- Around 1,219 Tier 4 applications are granted
- 95% of all visa applications had been issued within 15 working days.

The new figures indicate that more genuine students are applying to UK which is resulting in less visa refusal and this is expected to improve further. The statistics clearly define Bangladesh as a more stable market when it comes to visa processing and approvals.

These latest statistics were shared with 19 local agents at a visa seminar organised by the British Council on 27 October 2016. An official from UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) Bangladesh presented the key presentation. An official from UKVI Mumbai was present over Skype throughout the seminar and responded to different queries of local agents during the Q & A session. New UK Tier 4 visa policies had been highlighted in the presentation.

Jim Scarth, The Deputy Director of British Council Bangladesh on his note expressed his gratitude over agents' contribution in creating positive impact for the market of UK Education in Bangladesh.



Brendan Fitzpatrick, Head of UKVI Team, UK Visas and Immigration, Dhaka delivered his presentation on the latest statistics on student visa applications, followed by information on the visa application process, supporting documents and funding requirements; and student interviews. He further discussed common reasons for visa refusal, options of working in the UK during and after study; and summarised the latest policies related to the Health Surcharge, Biometric Residents Permits and English Language Tests.

Further to that, over the Skype Hayley Gatade, Education Account Manager, UK Visas and Immigration, British Deputy High Commission Mumbai received different queries from the agents and responded accordingly.

Highlights of peak season 2016

- ✓ Kept within 15 working day service standard
- ✓ Decrease in the number of refusals
- ✓ No complaints on refusal letters or DQ

#Dontbelateforclass

- Campaign aimed at providing students with helpful tips and advice for applying for UK Visa.
- Bangladesh FB posts reached over **85,000** users with nearly 200 click through
- Web chat reached over **100,000** users with **1,000** engaged users
- The team in Dhaka created a video which received around 1500 views



While data and statistics from the UKVI are encouraging, it is the agents, who work on the ground that we were keen to hear from. They reported that while some UK institutions have reduced their activity in the Bangladeshi market due to last year's visa refusal rates, there had been a massive turnaround this year and the situation has improved as the refusal rates have decreased and average time to get the visa and passport has been reduced. Officials from UKVI also mentioned that increased quality applications were being received.



Tier 4 Pilot

Students applying to study Masters courses at Oxford, Cambridge, Bath or Imperial can now:

- Stay for six months at the end of their courses to look for work
- Submit fewer evidential documents with the application

Results will be monitored throughout the pilot to see what difference it makes to student visa applications and numbers switching to Tier 2.



Current Political Situation

Brexit

• Any new reforms will ensure that our world class universities can continue to attract the best international students.

Consultation into the Study Route

- The Home Secretary outlined the Home Office will launch a consultation to remove the opportunities for abuse, whilst ensuring our top universities can compete to attract top international students.
- We will consult on whether there should be a more differentiated offer based on immigration compliance and the quality of the institution.





Agents asked different queries on IHS subscription fee, fund, sources of fund, clear guideline on supporting documents, education loan, English language requirements for the students applying for English courses, visa extension facility from the UK, third party sponsorship etc.

Most of the queries are responded by the UKVI officials during the seminar. For some queries UKVI officials have taken note and will provide response in their final wrap up.

British Council Bangladesh will continue to work closely with local partners and the UKVI and provide platforms where key stakeholders can come together to discuss and solve problems as well as celebrate small victories! We remain committed to working with UK institutions in their marketing efforts in Bangladesh and look forward to hearing from you about your engagement plans in the country.

To know more about the latest visa statistics, the agents' visa seminar or about the Bangladesh market, please get in touch with Jahir Uddin at Jahir.Uddin@bd.britishcouncil.org and siemsouthasia@britishcouncil.org .