

Statement of Principles for the Ethical Recruitment of International Students by Education Agents and Consultants

(To be known as the London statement)

19 March 2012

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Increasing numbers of students now move across national borders seeking education and training opportunities in order to gain internationally recognised qualifications. The OECD publication *Education at a Glance 2010* sources OECD and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, which estimated that more than three million tertiary students were educated outside their home country in 2008. Some commentators project that global demand for international education could be expected to rise to almost eight million by 2025.

The growth in the number of international students has been accompanied by an increase in the number of education agents and consultants who provide services to them. Education agents and consultants are integral and important stakeholders in international education.

1.2 Background to the Initiative

The Roundtable on the Integrity of International Education is a forum at which the UK, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and the US meet to share knowledge and experience and identify common areas of practice and concern, as well as scope for collaboration. At the initial meeting of the Roundtable in 2010 Australia proposed developing a joint international code of ethics for international education agents which would facilitate a common approach and raise ethical standards.

The development of a 'Statement of Principles for the Ethical Recruitment of International Students by Education Agents and Consultants' is the initiative that flowed from that proposal. The UK, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand agreed to the statement of principles on 16 March

Each of these countries is now working towards implementing the principles. This includes training and communications for Agents.

1.3 Purpose

This high-level Statement of Principles promotes best practice among the education agents and consultant professions that support international students. The Statement of Principles is a unifying set of understandings for the recruitment of, and related services provided to, students in international education which serve to promote best practice among education agents and consultants. The Statement will be reflected in each country's approach to international education.

A report on activity will be presented to the Roundtable meeting in 2013.

A number of factors which could be addressed under each principle when developing initiatives and actions are provided in an Attachment to this Statement of Principles.

2. Ethical Framework

The Statement of Principles is based on an underlying ethical framework of:

- **Integrity** - being straightforward and honest in all professional and business dealings;
- **Objectivity** - not allowing professional judgment to be compromised by bias or conflict of interest;
- **Professional competence and due care** - maintaining professional knowledge and professional service, and acting diligently;
- **Transparency** - declaring conflicts of interest to all clients, especially when service fees are charged to both the education provider and the prospective student;
- **Confidentiality** - respecting and preserving the confidentiality of personal information acquired and not releasing such information to third parties without proper authority;
- **Professional behaviour** – acting in accordance with relevant laws and regulations and dealing with clients competently, diligently and fairly; and
- **Professionalism and purpose** - acting in a manner that will serve the interests of clients and the wider society even at the expense of self-interest; recognising that dedication to these principles is the means by which the profession can earn the trust and confidence of stakeholder groups (individual clients, the public, business and government).

3. Principles

- **Principle 1** - Agents and consultants practice 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.

