

Minister for Europe and International Development
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Bruce Crawford MSP
Convenor of the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee
Room T3.40
Scottish Parliament
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Your ref:
Our ref:
02 March 2016

Dear Bruce,

Thank you for your e-mail of 15 February providing a link to your publication '*Welcome to Scotland? A Report on Post Study Work Visas.*'

I read the report with interest and noted the compelling case presented for the reintroduction of post study work visas in Scotland. I can confirm that the Scottish Government agrees with all the 8 recommendations contained in the report and I attach an annex containing more detailed comment on the recommendations made.

I am also pleased to inform you that the Post Study Work Steering Group has now published their final report. This can be found at:

<http://www.gov.scot/poststudyworksteeringgroupreport>

The report and associated documents add further weight to the evidence base for the reintroduction of a post study work route in Scotland. We have made 10 pragmatic recommendations to help shape a future route and we hope that you will find much in the report with which you can agree.

Best Wishes,
H. Yousaf
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Recommendation of Welcome to Scotland? A Report on Post Study Work Visas	Scottish Government Comment
<p>1 The Committee therefore recommends that a Post-Study Work scheme be re-introduced in Scotland.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government strongly supports the reintroduction of a Post Study Work Scheme in Scotland. A post study work visa would act as an important lever for attracting the best international student talent, securing essential income streams, and allowing talented graduates to continue contributing to Scotland after their studies end.</p>
<p>2. The Committee is concerned at the barriers facing students in further education institutions as compared to those in higher education institutions....[and] recommends that this issue be addressed. Students and institutions should not be discriminated against as a result of their choice of educational pathway or the courses they offer.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government shares the Committee's concerns about the impact of UK immigration rules, specifically on Scotland's further education institutions. Most recently, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning wrote again to the UK Immigration Minister, outlining our concerns about the damage immigration rules are causing to Scotland's colleges' ability to attract and recruit international students.</p>
<p>3. The Committee welcomes and endorses the framework for a Post-Study Work Visa scheme proposed by the Post-Study Work Working Group and recommends that it provides the basis of a framework for discussion between the Scottish and UK Governments on the re-introduction of such a scheme in Scotland.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government welcomes this endorsement of the Post Study Work Working Group's recommendations. The Working Group recommendations were used as the starting point for the considerations of the cross-party Post Study Work Steering Group. We agree that the reports of these Groups provide an excellent framework for cross-government discussion and stand ready to commence these discussions as soon as the UK Government agrees to hold further meetings on this matter.</p>
<p>4. The Committee recommends that the UK Government considers the case we have made and outlines what further steps it considers would be necessary for a case for reintroduction of such a scheme to be made given the substantial case that has been made to date.</p>	<p>In light of the substantive body of evidence that has now been collated, the Scottish Government agrees that it would be appropriate for the UK Government to identify what additional evidence would be required for the reintroduction of a post study work visa in Scotland.</p>
<p>5. The Committee recommends that the Scottish and UK Government engage in an urgent dialogue with regard to the recommended framework for such a scheme proposed by the Post-Study Work Working Group.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government would be delighted to enter into a constructive dialogue with the UK Government on this issue. The Post Study Work Steering Group has written twice to the UK Immigration Minister in recent months requesting a meeting to discuss their work.</p>

<p>6. The Committee recommends that the relevant Scottish Parliament committee should undertake work on this issue at the outset of the next session of the Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government notes this recommendation and would be pleased to provide any support or evidence required by such an inquiry.</p>
<p>7. The Committee recommends that the UK Government's Minister for Immigration, Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, commits to appearing before the relevant Scottish Parliament committee early in the next session of Parliament in order to discuss this issue in detail.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government would be pleased if Mr Brokenshire engaged directly with the Scottish Parliament on the issue of post study work visas. We agree that this would be appropriate due to the overwhelming consensus for the reintroduction of post study work in Scotland amongst Scottish stakeholders and all parties represented at Holyrood.</p>
<p>8. The Committee further recommends that a Parliamentary debate on this issue should take place early in the next session of the Scottish Parliament whilst recognising that this will be a matter for a future Parliamentary Bureau to agree.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government notes this recommendation and welcomes additional Parliamentary consideration of this important issue.</p>