Devolution (Further Powers) Committee

Welcome to Scotland? A Report on Post-Study Work Visas
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Devolution (Further Powers) Committee

To consider matters relating to The Scotland Act 1998 (Modification of Schedule 5) Order 2013, the Scottish Independence Referendum Act 2013, its implementation and any associated legislation. Furthermore, (i) until the end of November 2014 or when the final report of the Scotland Devolution Commission has been published, to facilitate engagement of stakeholders with the Scotland Devolution Commission and to engage in an agreed programme of work with the commission as it develops its proposals; and (ii) thereafter, to consider the work of the Scotland Devolution Commission, the proposals it makes for further devolution to the Scottish Parliament, other such proposals for further devolution and any legislation to implement such proposals that may be introduced in the UK Parliament or Scottish Parliament after the commission has published its final report.

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## Committee Membership

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Introduction

1. Post-study work visas are a type of visa that are extended to nationals of foreign countries that have been in the country for a period of time pursuing tertiary (further and/or higher education level) education who wish to remain in the country for a period of time while they establish their careers post-study. They tend to be directed specifically at graduates and others who are recognised as bringing sought after skills and talent to the recipient country. The motivation for developing such a scheme can differ by country depending on the cultural, social or economic issues the scheme is intended to address.

2. Given the different rationales for such schemes, they can be restricted to specific groups and circumstances. For example:
   - Directing the visa only at those with who recently completed a particular programme of study e.g. those who have graduated from programmes in subjects recognised as experiencing skills shortages e.g. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
   - Restricting the visa only to those achieving specific qualifications e.g. a Degree, Masters or Ph.D.
   - Limiting the length of time that someone can remain in the country on a post-study work visa before having to either leave the country or move to another visa scheme.
   - Placing restrictions on the type of activity that should be pursued to qualify for the post-study work visa, for example seeking opportunities to access relevant paid or unpaid work experience or developing a business idea for future self-employment.
   - Limiting which educational institutions can take part in the scheme e.g. only those that offer recognised qualifications and/or those that are in receipt of public funding for post-compulsory education.

3. As well as benefits for individual graduates, post-study work schemes can be perceived as a means of assisting economic growth by attracting ambitious, talented individuals to attend educational institutions and ultimately participate in the economy of the host country.
The Operation of Post-Study Work Visas in Scotland and the UK

4. The UK has operated a number of post-study work schemes in recent times. In 2005, the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme was launched. Fresh Talent was introduced as a response to concern about the scale of the demographic challenge facing Scotland and also the impact of skills shortages in key sectors upon the performance of the Scottish economy. The scheme was managed by the Home Office. Between 2005 and 2008, 7,620 non-European Economic Area (EEA) students were granted visa extensions under Fresh Talent.

5. In 2008, the then UK Government decided to mainstream the Fresh Talent Scheme across the United Kingdom by making the Scheme part of Tier One (Post-Study Work) of the UK Government’s Points Based System (PBS). The UK Government PBS consists of 5 broad tiers or categories of visa. These are:

- **Tier 1**: This visa category is for 'high-value migrants' from outside the EEA and covers entry of entrepreneurs, investors, and people who come under the 'exceptional talent' visa.

- **Tier 2**: This category is for 'skilled workers' from outside the EEA with a job offer in the UK. It includes skilled workers who are transferred to the UK by an international company, skilled workers where there is a proven shortage in the UK, ministers of religion and sportspeople.

- **Tier 3**: This category was designed for low-skilled workers filling specific temporary labour shortages. The current UK government has not allocated any visas under this scheme; meaning it is not possible to apply for a visa in this category.

- **Tier 4 (General – Adult)**: This category is for students aged over 16 from outside the EEA who wish to study in the UK. Applicants must have a place at a registered UK educational establishment before they can apply. There is also a Tier 4 (General – Child) visa that applies to under-16s attending ‘independent’ schools.

- **Tier 5**: This category contains six sub-tiers of temporary worker including creative and sporting, charity, religious workers, and the youth mobility scheme which enables about 55,000 young people every year to work in the UK on working holidays. The visas are awarded to young people from countries that have reciprocal arrangements with the UK.

6. The Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) scheme operated from 2008 until April 2012 when it was abolished by the then UK Government. The House of Commons Library summarised the UK Government’s rationale for abolishing the scheme as follows—
The Government closed the post-study work visa, which had enabled international students to do any kind of work in the UK for up to two years after graduation (with the possibility of switching to a skilled work visa), in April 2012. It argued that the visa undermined the idea that student visas are for temporary migration rather than permanent settlement, that many non-EEA graduates were not using it as a stepping stone into skilled occupations in the UK, and questioned whether giving foreign graduates open access to the UK labour market was appropriate at a time of high graduate unemployment⁴.

7. As a result the current post-study work offer available in the UK to non-EEA students and graduates is as follows:

- **Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur):** 1,900 graduates a year who have been awarded a degree in the UK can extend their stay under this route to set up business. These graduates require endorsement of their business idea from their University. 100 graduates from institutions in other countries can also apply under this route, endorsed by UK Trade and Investment.

- **Tier 2 (General):** this is the main route for graduates to take up employment in the UK. Employers who wish to employ a non-EEA national must hold a UK Home Office sponsorship licence. There is a minimum salary requirement of £20,500 and the occupation must be to skill level National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 6.

- **Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES):** this route allows those studying for a PhD to spend one year in the UK on completion of their studies to undertake employment or self-employment.

- **Tier 5:** graduates who would like to take up work experience or training in order to qualify in their chosen profession may be able to extend their stay under Tier 5. Likewise those from specified countries can benefit from the Tier 5 (Youth Mobility Scheme), although to benefit applicants have to apply from outside the UK.
8. The UK Government does not record the geographical location within the UK of those who apply for leave to remain are residing. As such, there is no systematic data available on the numbers of people residing in Scotland that have accessed the different post-study work visa schemes that have been in operation in recent years. The UK Government does, however, publish data at the UK level on visa applications and the granting of visa applications under different categories.

9. Considering UK trends with regard to the granting of all categories of study visa over the period 2005-14, see Figure 1 below, there was a significant increase in student visas in the UK during the period when the post-study work visa schemes, including the Fresh Talent scheme and then Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) were in operation, and a decline when these schemes ended.

**Figure 1: Long term trends in student immigration to the UK, 2005 to 2014**

10. Figure 2 shows a downward trend in student visa applications to the UK in the period December 2010 to March 2015. The further education sector experienced the most significant decline, while visas to those studying at higher education level have remained relatively stable over this time period.
11. Figure 3, depicts the number of international students attending higher education institutions in Scotland in the period academic year 2009-10 to 2013-14. Over this period, there was an increase in the overall international student numbers at Scottish institutions between 2009-10 and 2010-11, although little change has taken place since then. Numbers have continued to be higher for postgraduate study than for undergraduate level study.

Figure 3: Number of international students at Scottish higher education institutions, by level of study, 2009-10 to 2013-14

12. Figure 4 details the geographical origin of international students studying at Scottish universities over the period 2009-10 to 2013-14. Students from Asia
represented the largest intake of international students at Scottish higher education institutions over this five year period. With numbers increasing slightly each year, China represented by far the largest proportion of students from Asia at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The next largest student populations were from North America followed by students from Africa.

Figure 4: All international students at Scottish higher education institutions, 2009-10 to 2013-14

13. Universities Scotland commented, in written evidence, on the recent trends in international students attending Scottish universities in the following terms—

Overall international student numbers are only just sustained by growing demand from China. Over-reliance on one market is a high-risk strategy going forward. There was a 0.7 per cent decrease in total international student numbers to Scotland between 2011/12 and 2012/13. A small handful of institutions are responsible for maintaining modest growth in student numbers but the majority have not been able to meet their recruitment targets for the last few years.

14. The University of Edinburgh, in their written submission, emphasised the performance of Scottish universities vis-à-vis competitor countries. They stated—

Compare and contrast annual UK and Scottish national performance against the two major Anglophone competitors for the UK, the United States of America and Australia. Both these nations report 10 per cent growth across the last year, with the United States reporting their largest
increase in 35 years and extending their position as the world’s leading destination for international students. Other major competitors are increasing significantly, Canada reporting 11 per cent growth and Germany 7 per cent growth during the same period.

15. As noted in Figure 2 above, it is the college / further education sector that has seen a larger decline in students from outside the UK coming to Scotland to study than is the case for higher education institutions. Figure 5, details the number of international students at colleges in Scotland over the period 2005-06 to 2013-14. Broadly, the number of students was fairly constant over the period 2005-06 to 2010-11. Since then the number of international students has declined by around 28 per cent.

Figure 5: Number of International Students undertaking courses at colleges in Scotland, 2005-06 to 2013-14

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<td>Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>1,763</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,106</td>
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Where numbers are very small, rounding up to 5 students may have taken place.

Note: The above figures include international students taking both further education (non-advanced) programmes and those taking HNC and HND (higher education) level studies at all colleges except Highlands and Islands and SRUC. Only students taking programmes of further education are included in the figures for these two regions.
Smith Commission and subsequent responses

16. As part of the consultation to inform the Smith Commission report on devolution of further powers to the Scottish Parliament, there were submissions made that highlighted the need to consider the reintroduction of a post-study work visa for Scotland. These submissions suggested a need to reconsider a scheme for Scotland similar to Fresh Talent. For example, the Scottish Government in its written submission setting out proposals for further devolution noted—

“A specific issue of concern to Scotland’s higher education establishments is post-study work visas, which were abolished by the UK Government in 2012... The Scottish Government believes that reductions in migration to Scotland for formal study have been at least partly caused by the end of the post-study work visa. Responsibility for some immigration powers would give Scotland the opportunity to reintroduce the post-study work visa and attract talented individuals from around the world to Scotland.”

17. Colleges Scotland’s submission added—

“The post-study work visa encouraged international students to come to Scotland as the ability to stay, and work, is an important factor when choosing a place to study. The demographic patterns over recent years, and the varying impact of migration, are not uniform across the UK. As such, there is logic in having a different approach in different parts of the UK... International students enrich the experience of Scottish learners by providing a more diverse pool of learners, with a broader global perspective. The cultural exchange benefits everyone as well as helping to promote Scotland.”

18. The Smith Commission outlined a number of ‘additional issues for consideration’ where a legislative change to devolve a power was not required. Post-Study Work Visas was one such issue where the Smith Commission recommended that the Scottish and UK Governments should work together to—

explore the possibility of introducing formal schemes to allow international higher education students graduating from Scottish further and higher education institutions to remain in Scotland and contribute to economic activity for a defined period of time.

19. The UK Parliament’s All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Migration considered the issue of post study work opportunities for international students and reported on this issue in February 2015. Amongst the findings of the group were that the closure of the Tier One Post Study Work Visa had resulted in—
“a significantly larger decline in the numbers of skilled international graduates able to remain in the UK for employment following their studies than that anticipated by the Government”\textsuperscript{16}.

20. The APPG on Migration also found that the operation of the Tier 2 (General) Scheme as a result of its restrictive costs and requirements had prevented some UK employers from being able to recruit skilled international graduates. In particular the APPG noted that there were particular impacts upon economies outside of London and the South East as a result of the operation of the Tier 2 Scheme and stated that—

\textbf{The lower numbers of Tier 2 (General) licensed sponsors outside London and the South East mean that it is now less likely that employers based outside the capital can recruit skilled non-EEA graduates when needed. The Committee was concerned that this could, in some cases, have implications for regional economies\textsuperscript{17}.}

21. Overall the APPG on Migration considered that the UK’s post-study work policies needed to be reconsidered in order to address three main priorities. Firstly, to maximise the attractiveness of higher education in the UK within a competitive international marketplace. Secondly, to meet the needs of employers particularly within growth sectors such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Lastly, to develop a policy that would send a message internationally that the UK is ‘open for business’.

22. In August 2014, the Minister for Europe and International Development, Humza Yousaf MSP, established the Scottish Government’s Post Study Work working group. This group brought together stakeholders from the business and higher and further education communities to consider post study work opportunities in Scotland. The Group published its report, calling for the reintroduction of the post-study work visa, in March 2015\textsuperscript{18}. In particular, the Group concluded that UK Government policy at present did not provide an effective pathway for international graduates to transition from education into skilled employment. The Group found clear support across the business and education sectors in Scotland for the reintroduction of a post-study work scheme and considered that current UK Government policy was leading—

\textbf{To a ‘brain drain’ of highly skilled talent from Scotland and may deter international students from considering Scotland as a place to study.}

23. The Group then set out what it considered should be the key elements of a future post-study work scheme in Scotland. These are reproduced in Annexe A of this report.

24. The UK Government published a Written Statement, on 11 January 2016, detailing the UK Government’s position with regard to the ‘additional issues for
consideration’ in the Smith Commission report. In terms of Post-Study Work Visas, the UK Government stated—

“We continue to welcome genuine international students to our world-class institutions in all parts of the UK, and there remains no cap on the number of those who can come to study here.

Visa applications to study at Scottish universities are now 11 per cent higher than they were in 2010 – demonstrating that controlling migration properly and increasing genuine student numbers are compatible aims.

The UK has an excellent post study work offer for graduates of Scottish universities seeking to undertake skilled work in the UK after their studies:

- those with an offer of a graduate-level job paying an appropriate salary may take up skilled employment through Tier 2;
- we have introduced a Tier 1 route for graduate entrepreneurs;
- we have made provisions to switch into Tier 5 for graduates wishing to undertake professional training or an internship before pursuing a career overseas; and
- PhD students can stay in the UK for an extra year under the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

This is why we believe that the current schemes available to graduates of Scottish universities are precisely the type referred to in the report of the Smith Commission. The Smith Commission did not recommend that the two Governments discuss the re-introduction of the former Tier 1 (Post Study Work) visa, and there is no intention to do so.

25. Following the publication of this statement, the Committee wrote to both the Scottish and UK Governments seeking their views on the merits of introducing a post study work visa scheme in order to inform evidence taking on this issue. The letter also sought detail on what dialogue had taken place between the two governments on this issue given the recommendation of the Smith Commission that the two governments should work together on this issue.

26. The Home Office Minister for Immigration, Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, responded in writing to the Committee on 28 January 2016. The Minister reiterated the UK Government’s view that “an excellent post study work offer” was in place for graduates of Scottish universities. Mr Brokenshire cited statistics regarding the number of visa applications made by international students in evidence for this position stating that—
The increasing number of visa applications made by international students to study at Scottish universities – up 11 per cent since 2010, with a continued year on year increase of 2 per cent in the year ending September 2015 – shows that Scotland remains attractive for international students as a destination of study with the current post-study provisions in place.

The UK Minister for Immigration did note however that “it is important to ensure that such schemes are kept under review; to ensure that they continue to deliver for all parts of the UK.” Mr Brokenshire observed that if there are different views on how to make policy in this area work “then this case needs to be argued.” The letter from the Home Office was silent on the issue of any dialogue that had taken place with the Scottish Government since the publication of the Smith Commission report. The Scottish Government response to the Committee’s letter provided a timeline of engagement between the two governments. This timeline is reproduced at Annexe B to this report. Commenting on the degree of engagement to date, the Scottish Government’s Minister for Europe and International Development observed that “the UK Government have not entered into any constructive dialogue with us on this issue and merely reaffirmed their existing position.” With regard to UK Government policy in this area, Mr Yousaf stated that—

There is consensus in Scotland, amongst business, education and every political party represented in Holyrood that we need a return of the post study route to allow talented students to remain and contribute to the Scottish economy. We were therefore surprised and disappointed that the Secretary of State for Scotland published the statement indicating that there is no intention of reintroducing the post study work visa in Scotland.

This is another example of the UK Government failing to live up to the spirit of the Smith Commission and Lord Smith’s personal recommendation that: "Both Governments need to work together to create a more productive, robust, visible and transparent relationship. There also needs to be greater respect between them."

Committee Scrutiny

The Devolution (Further Powers) Committee undertook a series of informal meetings to discuss issues dealt with as ‘additional issues for consideration’ by the Smith Commission. This included a meeting with representatives from the Higher Education sector in the West of Scotland regarding Post-Study Work Visas. Following the publication of the UK Government’s written statement on 11 January 2016, the Committee agreed to undertake a short Inquiry into the issue of Post Work Study Visas. The Committee, on 28 January 2016, took evidence from the following witnesses on this topic:
Mr Maulin Buch, former participant on the Fresh Talent Scheme

Ms Mary Njoki, former participant on the Fresh Talent Scheme

Lucy Flynn, International Officer, South Lanarkshire College, and

Alan MacKay, Deputy Vice-Principal International and Director of the International Office, Edinburgh University.

29. The Committee is grateful to all those who provided evidence, both oral and written, and to those who met informally with Committee members.
An Excellent Post-Study Work Offer?

30. The UK Government has stated on a number of occasions that it considers that the current schemes “represent an excellent post-study work offer for graduates of Scottish universities seeking to undertake skilled work in the UK after their studies.” The UK Government cites statistics on visa applications by international students to study at Scottish universities as evidence in support of this position. For example, the UK Government’s Minister for Immigration, Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, in his letter to the Committee stated—

The increasing number of visa applications made by international students to study at Scottish universities – up 11 per cent since 2010, with a continued year on year increase of 2 per cent in the year ending September 2015 – shows that Scotland remains attractive for international students as a destination of study with the current post-study provisions in place. This view is also supported by data published earlier this month by the Independent Higher Education Statistics Agency:

Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, there was a 3% increase in the total number of full-time non-EU student enrolments at Scottish universities (up to 26,335).

Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, there was a 3% increase in the number of full-time, non-EU new entrants at Scottish universities (up to 14,745).

Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, there has been a 7% increase in the total number of Indian student enrolments at Scottish universities, and a 10% increase in the number of Indian students enrolling in their first year at Scottish universities.

31. The performance of Scottish and UK higher education institutions in attracting international students was disputed in evidence to the Committee. In particular, the performance of Scottish universities in comparison to competitor countries in a market-place which is expanding rapidly due to the growth in the middle class populations of a range of developing countries was considered to be poor. For example, Alan Mackay, Vice-Principal International and Director of the International Office, from the University of Edinburgh observed—

Depending on the way in which you interpret them, the recent Higher Education Statistics Agency figures for Scotland show a 1 or 2 per cent growth on last year, with pretty steady declines for many of the key fast-growing nations that send large numbers of students overseas. The figures for India, for example, for the university sector in Scotland, show a decline of 63 per cent over three to four years. For Nigeria the decline is in the region of 20 to 30 per cent, although I do not have the exact figure. The figures from Pakistan are down by 45 per cent. We can certainly point to
growth, but 1 or 2 per cent translates as a few hundred students every year.

The picture of the United Kingdom sector shows 1 per cent growth. When we compare that to competitor nations, in terms of the first attraction of talent, of which post-study work is a very important part along with the wider immigration system, we can see that the United States is up 10 per cent, Germany is up 7 per cent and Canada has double-digit growth. When we look at that in the global context of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development growth of 7 per cent a year in students moving around the world and studying outside their country, there is a clear economic impact on Scotland and its sector\(^30\).

32. Lucy Flynn, International Officer, from South Lanarkshire College highlighted the position for her college, created by the current policy environment, in the following terms—

There are fewer statistics about the further education sector. The climate is challenging for us; as you will see from our submission, we have gone from having up to 150 international students a year, down to one. We made an active decision to stop recruiting in areas in which we had traditionally recruited because it was becoming too challenging and costly for the organisation\(^31\).

33. The Committee also notes the report of the European and External Relations Committee (EERC), ‘Connecting Scotland: how Scottish organisations engage internationally’, which detailed evidence that the removal of the Post-Study Work Visa scheme had a highly detrimental impact on the colleges sector. For example, the Committee reported on the example of Perth College UHI which had developed a partnership with Andhra Pradesh in India which had resulted in more than 200 students from the Indian region studying at the college. Following completion of their degree the students were entitled to work for two years in Scotland. However, changes in the UK Government’s policy offering, including the removal of the Post-Study Work Visa scheme, had resulted in there being no financial incentive for the college to continue this partnership. As a consequence, Perth College UHI has said that it will not have any progressing or new international students in 2016-17\(^32\).
Impact of the current policy approach

34. Evidence presented to the Committee tended to highlight a range of factors, including the removal of the Post-Work Study Visa scheme, as having a detrimental impact on the ability of Scottish universities and colleges to compete for international students. For example, Lucy Flynn of South Lanarkshire College commented—

"The issue is not simply the removal of post-study work for students who are studying in further education. There are big differences between the visa terms and conditions for a student who is studying at a higher education institution and those of a visa for a student at a further education institution, albeit that that student will be studying a higher education course at a college.

For example, a student who is studying at a further education college has no right to work while they are in the UK. In order to articulate on to university, they are required to leave the UK and return to their home country to apply for a visa to go to university. Those are all reasons why our offer is becoming less and less attractive to international students."

35. Ms Flynn, from South Lanarkshire College, also highlighted the position of ‘embedded colleges’ which mainly are private providers that are attached to universities that are being treated more favourably than colleges.

36. It should be noted that UHI and SRUC differ from other publicly funded institutions in that a student taking an HNC or HND would be sponsored by the higher education institution if progressing to a degree level programme. As such, they could – if they meet all visa requirements - progress from HN level study to degree without the need to leave the UK and reapply to make this progression. In essence, colleges that are part of UHI and SRUC when delivering non-advanced / further education programmes are the same as any other publicly funded college i.e. the student would need to leave the UK while they apply for a new visa to pursue further studies on completion of their FE programme. It should be noted that this situation only applies to a small number of students.

37. Ms Flynn commented on the impact of this differentiation as follows—

"The point about embedded colleges is that, as we have said, international tier 4 students who study at a further education college, even if they are on a higher education programme, are required to leave the UK when they complete their higher national diploma in order to articulate on to a degree at a university. However, students studying at a private provider that is attached to a university are not required to do the same, which means that they do not incur the costs of returning home and do not have to show again that they have maintenance funds. An international student must
demonstrate that they have had over £9,000 in their bank account for 28 consecutive days within a 30-day period of making their visa application, which is a large undertaking for such students.\textsuperscript{34}

38. Similarly, Alan MacKay from the University of Edinburgh also referred to a range of factors which were responsible for the lower rate of growth in the number of international students attending universities in Scotland compared to the rate of growth in competitor countries. Mr McKay observed that—

“There is a range of factors. We have heard about the articulation routes or pathways from Scotland’s colleges through to universities and the difficulties that have been created around them. People have to leave college to go back overseas to apply and then come back to go to university. That is not exactly a good pipeline.

There is the almost total collapse of the English language sector for non-EEA students, as well. Many students who are academically qualified come just to top up their language skills and then move to a college or university. I cannot put a percentage on that, but there is evidence that shows a very steep decline.

There is a range of factors in the immigration system, particularly with regard to the continued public nature of a lot of what is going on. Frequently, the Times of India, one of the largest English-language dailies in the world, talks about the United Kingdom not having a carefully articulated and well-integrated strategy for promoting what it does. The immigration system is a key tool in that, as it can be used to create a perception that influences some of what is going on. Further, as I said before, you should go into the detail, as many people do. People now have access to information that they can use to compare things and they have more choice about where they go to than they have had at any point in human history.

We have to understand that we are in a global race for talent. There is no doubt about it. Nations, cities, universities and colleges are all competing for the talent. We need a well-integrated, well-articulated and well-promoted strategy that carefully links the issues together and thinks about post-study work in terms of high-value talent migration to the country.

The removal of post-study work visas has had a damaging impact on us. Some of our competitor nations with good post-study work options are doing very well and have double-digit growth. Again, we have to think about the package that is on offer. If we do not have a good one, people will go elsewhere.

39. The Committee also heard evidence both formally and informally regarding the impact on local economies as well as the Scottish economy as a whole regarding Scotland’s relatively poor performance in this sphere. For example, Universities
Scotland stated, in written evidence, “we conservatively estimate that Scotland has lost out a potential £254 million of direct additional income since 2012 as a result of the closure of this route”. The reputational damage to tertiary education institutions in Scotland and the UK as well as more generally with regard to international perceptions of the UK was also highlighted in evidence. For example, Mr Maulin Buch, who was a former participant on the Fresh Talent scheme, commented on the impact of current policy on the perceptions of potential international students considering studying in the UK that—

> For me, it was also an emotional thing. Many students who want to consider the UK as a study destination contact me and ask what the situation is like and whether I have any advice for them. I try to give them a fair picture of what is happening right now and what might happen in the future.

> What they tell me, and what bothers me the most, is that, as Alan Mackay mentioned, the UK seems to be a little bit unwelcoming right now. For me, that is the most damaging thing. My recommendation to the committee would be to consider the emotional side of things, not just the financial and economic side. Increasingly, students feel that the UK is becoming unwelcoming. I know for a fact that UK universities are among the best in the world, but if they are to remain among the best in the world they must be open to the world. Right now, they are building walls, and I do not know how long the quality aspect of their legacy will remain in the minds of students who want to come here to study. The emotional side of their legacy needs to be preserved as well.

40. In a similar vein, Lucy Flynn also stressed the non-financial implications for South Lanarkshire College. She described the impact of UK Government policy upon her college in the following terms—

> Obviously, there is a huge reduction in fee income, but I stress that, for a college such as ours, the issue is not just about the money. Having international students is really important for our UK-based students, who may not otherwise have the opportunity to work, study and socialise in a multicultural environment. The ultimate aim of our college is to prepare students for the world of work and to be global citizens so that we enable them to be socially mobile. That is what we are trying to do. Really, those students are being disadvantaged, too, because they do not have that opportunity.

41. The Committee also received evidence regarding the potential impact of policy changes arising from recent recommendations by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC). Alan MacKay, of the University of Edinburgh, perspective on the recommendations of MAC were—
The Migration Advisory Committee, which was tasked by the Government with looking at ways in which tier 2 could be further restricted, has in the past couple of weeks come up with a set of recommendations that include increasing the pay threshold to just over £23,000 for switchers—in other words, tier 4 graduates moving from tier 4 into tier 2. That would move the minimum salary threshold up for new entrants into that category. The committee also recommends introducing a tax on talent in the form of a £1,000 surcharge on every employer who seeks to take on an international student or migrant. When the Russell group of the UK’s front-end research universities, of which the University of Edinburgh is a member, looked at the issue, it found that that would cost over £7 million a year. It would be, in effect, a tax on talent.  

42. In particular, Mr McKay stressed the potential impact of the proposals upon small and mediums sized enterprises (SMEs) and the potential impact on the Scottish economy in terms of skills shortages by commenting that—

What you will see, certainly with regard to international students graduating from Scottish universities, is a further tightening as a result of the increasing salary thresholds; the tax on talent particularly for small to medium-sized enterprises, which are the backbone of the Scottish economy; and the compliance regime that they have to deal with. When I looked at the issue, I could get only six Home Office figures, but I found that 672 employers across the whole of Scotland and Northern Ireland are actively using certificates of sponsorship through tier 2. There is a question whether employers, too, are finding the process attractive. Clearly, companies are not engaging with it, particularly small ones, which have to take hugely expensive legal advice and trail through hundreds of pages of documents to ensure that they are complying with all the regulations. The sign-up for that sector seems to be very small.

As for the shortage occupation list or the resident labour market test, subjecting students to that as well will further restrict the ability of that talent to remain in Scotland in the areas that have been identified as skill shortage areas. One report, which I need to look at again, has identified in Scotland skill shortages in digital information communications technology of about 10,000 posts a year that cannot be sourced locally in Scotland or the UK.

43. Colleges Scotland suggested that the proposed changes would have an even more detrimental impact than the removal of the Post-Study Work scheme. Colleges Scotland stated—

The additional changes targeted at the college sector will have further and possibly greater impact on the sector despite our efforts to reintroduce Post Study Work (PSW) in Scotland. The previous Fresh Talent Initiative was open to any international student who graduated with an HND or above.
Without the ability for students to either complete the HND (due to new time limits) or apply for PSW while in Scotland (due to the removal of in-country visa extension or transfer rights), it is unlikely that any college graduate will be able to take part in such a scheme and will therefore be at a significant disadvantage compared to their counterparts studying at universities in Scotland.  

44. Mr Maulin Buch summarised the impact of the proposed changes upon his own position and his employer, a small and medium-sized enterprise based in Coatbridge, in the following terms—

> Today, with the thresholds that are in place, my employer simply cannot afford to keep me on—and it would be wrong of me to expect my employer to pay me such wages. Despite everything being perfect, I will probably have to give up my job and go back home. How damaging is that to an individual’s future career? At the same time, an employer who is completely comfortable with and has confidence in one of his employees is having to break the relationship. That is just not right.

45. Ms Mary Njoki, a former participant on the Fresh Talent Scheme, commented generally on the experience of complying with the changing nature of immigration policy as follows—

> Mostly what happens is that lots of goalposts get moved. You try to reach one goal and get to a salary threshold but just when you are about to reach it, the Home Office changes the rules. In the 10 years that I have been here, the process of trying to move with the goalposts when they get moved has been a very emotional one. You have to jump through hoop after hoop, and the process is quite tedious.
A Scottish Solution?

46. The evidence the Committee has received from stakeholders across the tertiary education sector has indicated concern at the loss of a Post-Study Work Visa scheme and the impact that a range of immigration policies are having upon the ability of Scottish universities and colleges to compete for international students against competitor institutions from other countries. The lack of incentives for international students to choose Scotland or the UK as a destination for study was emphasised by Maulin Buch—

> Five years ago, for me, being educated in the UK was an investment; today, for an Indian student wanting to come here, being educated is a cost. That is the difference—it is no longer an investment; it is a cost. After spending such a big amount of money, people can stay here for only one year. They are not given a fair chance or an opportunity to stay on and see what they can do after their course. That does not justify the costs and the efforts. It is more of a cost than an investment, and that is the danger 44.

47. In this regard, the Committee’s evidence echoes the degree of support for the reintroduction of a post-study work scheme that the Scottish Government’s Post-Study Work Working Group found across a broad range of business, education and student organisations. This is also reflected in the cross-party membership of the cross party steering group on Post-Study Work Visas. This group includes representatives from all of the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament45. Universities Scotland emphasised the degree of consensus across Scottish civic society for the re-introduction of a scheme by noting that “160 different organisations in Scotland signed a statement of support for the reintroduction of a post study work visa”46. Alan MacKay from the University of Edinburgh commented on the feasibility of re-introducing such a scheme in the following terms—

> As regards where people go—if they are staying on in Scotland or possibly not staying on in Scotland—there are measures that would serve to stop that happening, including income tax codes and biometric residence permits that could clearly state that somebody’s permission to work is within a specific part of the UK.

> Both for the UK and for Scotland, we need to look at clear options for a targeted and focused approach. We need an approach that benefits not just Scotland’s universities and colleges but our economy. We also need to think about where businesses tend to invest. If we look at some of the most successful cities and environments across the world, we see that big businesses invest where there is an immersion of global talent, because they know that they can get access to high-value talent.
Simple, practical steps could be taken if there was the will to look at some of those options. There are options that could be explored for Scotland and at the UK level. We have a wealth of evidence on what that approach might look like\(^47\).

48. Lucy Flynn of South Lanarkshire College made the following comments with regard to the prospect of re-introducing a post-study work scheme in Scotland—

We would welcome it and we would like to make the case very clearly that higher national diplomas should be covered by any post-study work visa scheme. They should be seen, as I have said, as a qualification in their own right. They are developed in conjunction with employers, so we know that students who go into employment with a higher national diploma are well qualified to help meet the needs of the job market in Scotland. They also act as a feeder into universities\(^48\).

49. The Committee considers that there is considerable evidence that the removal of a Post Study Work Visa scheme has had a detrimental impact upon the ability of Scottish educational institutions to attract international students to study in Scotland. The Committee also considers that there are no practical barriers to prevent the reintroduction of such a scheme within the framework of immigration remaining a reserved policy area.

50. The Committee welcomes the work of the Post-Study Working Group in setting out the key elements of the structure of a future scheme operating in Scotland. The overarching framework the Working Group proposed for such a scheme was—

To ensure compatibility with the existing UK immigration rule framework, the Group agreed that it would be beneficial to frame any future post study work scheme within the existing terminology and definitions of Tier 4 of the UK PBS. This would in effect mean that those eligible to apply for the scheme would need to have last held status under Tier 4. Linking eligibility to Tier 4 status will operate as a check to ensure that the international graduate has maintained reliable conduct throughout their studies with their education provider and has studied with a Scottish education provider that meets Home Office compliance requirements\(^49\).

51. Other key elements of a future scheme recommended by the Working Group were as follows:

- **Eligible qualifications** – Postgraduate Degree, Post graduate Diploma, Bachelor’s Degree, HND and HNC.

- **Eligible institutions** – Institutions eligible for a post study work scheme should hold a qualification from an institution which holds a sponsor licence under Tier 4.
- **Qualifying criteria** – To qualify for any future post study work scheme in Scotland, the international graduate must hold a qualification from an institution which holds a Tier 4 sponsor licence and has its main address in Scotland. The graduate’s primary site of study must have been in Scotland.

- **Eligibility** – any future post study work scheme in Scotland should not restrict eligibility to obtaining employment at a specific skill level; salary level; or subject, discipline or occupation; and should instead be open to all international graduates who obtain the required level of qualification.

- **Sponsorship** – a future post study work scheme should not require international graduates to obtain sponsorship from either their employer or education provider. However, to ensure the legitimacy of any applicant, the graduate should obtain verification of their studies and awarded qualification from their education institution.

- **Career path between Tier 4 and Tier 2** – provision should be made for employers who employ an international graduate under a post study work scheme to be exempt from having to complete the Residential Labour Market Test.
Conclusions and Recommendations

52. The Committee has received considerable evidence making the case that the current policy of the UK Government with regard to Post-Study Work Visas is having a detrimental impact upon Scotland’s universities and colleges. These impacts are not confined solely to the education sector but are also affecting Scottish businesses and the economy more generally. The Committee also notes the widespread concern regarding the potential impact of further changes proposed by the UK Government’s Migration Advisory Committee.

53. The Committee considers that there is robust evidence which identifies the decision to remove the Post-Study Work Visa scheme as one of a number of factors, in terms of UK Government policy, which has resulted in the Scottish education sector falling behind competitor countries in their ability to attract international students. The Committee emphasises that given the demographic profile of the Scottish population and importance of small and medium-sized enterprises to the Scottish economy, this comparatively poor performance in this area is of particularly acute concern.

54. The Committee agrees that the impact of UK Government’s policy to date has been a major factor in seriously restricting the ability of Scottish higher and further education institutions to attract international students. The Committee notes that this policy approach is being implemented at a time when there is a global boom in demand for tertiary education from international students wanting to study abroad.

55. The Committee also recognises that tertiary education institutions are facing increased competition in this marketplace from institutions in competitor countries, which are experiencing substantially higher rates of growth in the number of international students studying than is the case in either Scotland or the UK.

56. **Recommendation 1** - The Committee therefore recommends that a Post-Study Work scheme be re-introduced in Scotland.

57. The Committee was also surprised at the variation in policy which exists between further and higher education institutions with regard to issues such as visa terms and conditions, employment rights and the role of ‘embedded colleges’.
58. **Recommendation 2** - The Committee is concerned at the barriers facing students in further education institutions as compared to those in higher education institutions. For example, International Tier 4 students who undertake further education courses are required to return to their home country in order to apply for a new study visa in the UK. The Committee sees no justification for the lack of a ‘level playing field’ for publically funded further education colleges and international students. **The Committee 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.

59. Moreover, the Committee recognises the comprehensive degree of support there is from across the Scottish further and higher education sector, business community and civic society organisations for the re-introduction of a Post-Study Work Visa scheme. The Committee also recognises that all of the political parties in the Scottish Parliament support the re-introduction of such a scheme. The Committee considers that the unparalleled degree of support for the re-introduction of a scheme is a reflection of the distinctively Scottish nature of the impacts being experienced as a consequence of the demographic profile and economic structure of Scotland referred to above. This is also reflected in the substantial work that has been done to articulate the case for a scheme by the Scottish Government’s Post-Study Work Working Group which brings together a wide cross-section of organisations from across Scottish society.

60. The Committee notes the timeline of engagement between the Scottish Government and UK Government with regard to the issue of Post-Study Work Visas which was provided to the Committee by the Scottish Government and is detailed at Annexe 2 of this report. In particular, the Committee notes that the Scottish Government was not notified by either the Home Office or the Secretary of State for Scotland that it intended to publish a written statement which would state that the UK Government has ‘no intention’ of re-introducing the former Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) visa or considered that the Smith Commission had made a recommendation to this effect.

61. **Recommendation 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.**

62. The Committee is disappointed by the position set out in the UK Government’s written statement with regard to Post-Study Work Visas. However, the Committee welcomes the commitment by the UK Minister for Immigration, in correspondence with the Committee, that, if there are different views as to how best to make this work, then the case needs to be argued.
63. The Committee considers that a clearly articulated case has been made for the re-introduction of a Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) Visa scheme in Scotland in the overwhelming evidence we have heard. This case has been made by a broad coalition of organisations representing stakeholders in the education and business sectors as well as wider Scottish civic society. In addition, the case made has been supported by all the political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament.

64. **Recommendation 4** - Accordingly, 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.

65. **Recommendation 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.

66. **Recommendation 6** – As the time remaining in this parliamentary session to take forward detailed work on a new scheme is limited, 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.

67. **Recommendation 7** – Accordingly, 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.

68. **Recommendation 8** – In order to inform Parliament more widely as well as the general public and interested bodies, 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.

69. More generally, this episode highlights yet again the need for good working relationships between the two governments, where both are seen as equal partners, and for adequate consultation on matters where the Smith Commission recommended that the Scottish and UK Governments should work together.

70. From the evidence provided by the Scottish Government in its ‘timeline of engagement’ on this issue, it is not immediately apparent that intergovernmental relations have been as good as they should be. This is a worrying sign in light of
the forthcoming Scotland Bill where effective working relations will be of paramount importance.

71. This reinforces the comments that the Committee has made previously in its report on Changing Relationships that there needs to be much better intergovernmental relationships given the changes proposed to the powers of the Scottish Parliament in the Scotland Bill and that parliamentary notification and oversight of the outcome of the discussions between the two governments on a range of matters needs to be vastly improved.
In the context of the UK, this would refer to non-EEA nationals.


Universities Scotland written submission, p.3. Accessible at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/UniversitiesScot_submission.pdf


Ibid, Information provided by SPIeCe, 2/2/2016. Put in link once public.

See for example the submissions from: Universities Scotland; University and College Union; and the University of Strathclyde Student Association to the Smith Commission.


A copy of the letter on post study work visas to the Scottish Government can be accessed at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/2016.1.21_Letter_to_Humza_Yousaf_MSP_on_Post_Study_Work_Visas.pdf


Ibid, p.2.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Linda Fabiani MSP and Alex Johnstone discussed, on 22 June 2015, the issue of Post Study Work Visas with the following representatives of the Higher Education sector:

- Professor Frank Coton, Vice Principal of Learning and Teaching, University of Glasgow
- Professor Craig Mahoney, Principal and Vice Chancellor, University of the West of Scotland
Devolution (Further Powers) Committee

- Mr Kenneth Fleming, Principal's Executive Assistant, Glasgow Caledonian University
- Mr Ian MacLellan, Student Support and Wellbeing Manager, University of Strathclyde

29 Ibid, p.2.
31 Ibid, Col. 2.
34 Ibid, Col. 20.
35 Universities Scotland Written Submission, 3 February 2016, p.1. Accessible at:
   http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/UniversitiesScot_submission.pdf
37 Ibid, Col. 20.
38 Migration Advisory Committee, ‘Review of Tier 2: Balancing migrant selectivity, investment in skills and impacts on UK productivity and competitiveness’, December 2015. Accessible at:
40 Ibid, Col. 18.
41 Colleges Scotland Written Submission, 3 February 2016. Accessible at:
   http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/20160203_CollegesScotland_submission.pdf
43 Ibid, Col.17.
44 Ibid, Col. 21.
45 The membership of the cross party Post Study Working Group is: Humza Yousaf MSP, Minister for European and International Development, Scottish Government; Liz Smith MSP (Conservative); Claire Baker MSP (Labour); John Finnie MSP (on behalf of the Green party); Institute of Directors; Scottish Council for Development and Industry; Colleges Scotland; National Union of Students (Scotland); Scottish Universities International Group; Universities Scotland; UK Council for International Student Affairs; Scottish Trades Union Council; and Scottish Chambers of Commerce.
46 Universities Scotland written submission, p.2.
48 Ibid.
49 Post Study Work Working Group, ‘Report to Scottish Ministers’, March 2015, Para. 4.1. Accessible at:
Annexe A – Recommendations of the Post Study Work working group

In identifying key elements of particular importance to the development of any future post study work scheme in Scotland, the Group make the following recommendations:

**Framework of a post study work scheme:** It would be beneficial to frame any future post study work scheme within the existing terminology and definitions of Tier 4 of the UK Points Based System (PBS). This will operate as a check to firstly ensure the validity of the education provider, from whom the international graduate will have obtained their qualification; and secondly, that international graduates applying for the scheme have maintained reliable conduct throughout their studies.

**Eligible qualifications:** To ensure that students have a minimum level of knowledge and experience, the following qualifications at least, should be recognised as eligible to qualify for a post study work scheme; Postgraduate Degree; Postgraduate Diploma, including postgraduate teaching qualifications; Bachelor’s Degree; HND; and HNC, if further consideration shows there is a need for this qualification.

**Definition of a qualifying institution:** Those eligible for a post study work scheme should hold a qualification from an institution which holds a sponsor licence under Tier 4.

**Scottish qualifications only:** International graduates must hold a qualification from an institution which holds a Tier 4 sponsor licence and has its main address in Scotland. The graduate’s primary site of study must have been in Scotland.

**Skill level and subject, occupation and discipline of employment:** Eligibility should not be restricted to obtaining employment at a specific skill level; salary level; or subject, discipline or occupation; and should instead be open to all international graduates who obtain a required type of qualification.

**Sponsorship:** International graduates should not be required to obtain sponsorship from either their employer or education provider. However, to ensure the legitimacy of the applicant, the international graduate should obtain verification of their studies and awarded qualification from their education institution.

**Career path between Tier 4 and Tier 2:** To assist international graduates to transition from education to Tier 2, employers who employ an international graduate should be exempt from having to complete the Resident Labour Market Test for the international graduate to extend their stay from a post study work scheme to Tier 2.

**Other elements:**

- A post study work scheme should run as a 2 year visa and certainly for no less than 12 months.
• Given Scotland’s particular demographic issues, it is worth recognising time spent on a post study work scheme as time that can count towards the five years’ residence needed by Tier 2 migrants to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

• International graduates should be required to apply for a future post study work scheme within a specified period of time for obtaining their qualification, but no later than 12 months after they are awarded their qualification.

• The international graduate’s family should be able to join them as their dependents, as is the case with other UK PBS dependent provisions.

• Maintenance requirements should be in line with other visa immigration categories within the UK PBS. International students financially supported by their home government should require permission from that government to extend their stay under a post study work scheme.

• A future post study work scheme should be open to international graduates who wish to be self-employed.

• A future scheme should be monitored to establish its effectiveness in addressing Scottish business and education sector needs.

• An Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out prior to the reintroduction of any future post study work scheme in Scotland.
# Annexe B – Scottish Government timeline of engagement with the UK Government

## Post Study Work: Scottish Government engagement with UK Government and other key events

Since the publication of the Smith Commission Report, there has been the following engagement between the Scottish and UK Governments, and other key events, on the issue of the possible reintroduction of a post study work visa in Scotland:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Engagement and key events</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 January 2015</td>
<td>Scottish Government officials met with UK Government officials to begin discussions on the section of the Smith Commission Report which referenced international student graduate schemes (i.e. post study work), human trafficking and asylum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 March 2015</td>
<td>Scottish Government officials met with UK Government officials to further discuss post study work, human trafficking and asylum. Scottish Government officials noted disappointment at the lack of response from UK officials to the agreed actions from the previous meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 March 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development wrote to UK Immigration Minister to advise of the publication of the Post Study Work Working Group’s Report; noted the reintroduction of a post study work scheme in Scotland received full cross-party support at a debate in the Scottish Parliament that week; noted that UK Government officials had advised that they were unwilling to have detailed discussion until they had taken advice from Ministers after the General Election; and asked the UK Minister to instruct his officials to move forward with discussions pre-election.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 May 2015</td>
<td>Cabinet Secretary for Justice wrote to the Home Secretary to welcome her continued appointment; noted shared interests across portfolios, including the wish to see the reintroduction of the post study work visa; and requested a meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 May 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development wrote to the UK Immigration Minister requesting the opportunity to meet to discuss post study work in more detail and repeated the request for the UK Minister to instruct his officials to move forward with discussions as a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 June 2015</td>
<td>UK Immigration Minister wrote to Minister for Europe and International Development advising he would welcome a meeting after the Cabinet Secretary for Justice meeting with the Home Secretary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 July 2015</td>
<td>Home Office officials met with the Post Study Work Working Group to discuss the Working Group’s Report, which was published in March 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 July 2015</td>
<td>Cabinet Secretary for Justice met with the UK Home Secretary to discuss amongst other things, the potential for the reintroduction of a post study visa in Scotland. Without consultation, the Home Secretary advised that there were no plans to reintroduce post study work visas in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Engagement and key events</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 July 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development wrote to UK Immigration Minister requesting a meeting following the Home Secretary’s indication that the UK Government had no plans to reintroduce post study work visas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 August 2015</td>
<td>Deputy First Minister met with the Secretary of State for Scotland, when it was indicated that the UK Government would be willing to consider any specific proposal from the Scottish Government that avoided risk of Scotland having a comparative advantage over the rest of the UK. UK Government officials have however appeared reluctant to discuss further the reintroduction of a post study work visa, including the possibility of proposed flexibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 September 2015</td>
<td>UK Immigration Minister wrote to the Minister for Europe and International Development advising that the UK Government does not intend to reintroduce the post study work visa and stated that the existing opportunities for graduates to remain in the UK are precisely the type referred to in the Smith Commission Report. The UK Minister noted that he would be happy to meet to discuss specifically how to ensure that universities in Scotland are making students aware of the opportunities that exist post-graduation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 October 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development wrote on behalf of the Post Study Work Steering Group to the Home Secretary to invite a Home Office official to sit on the Steering Group. No response has been received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 October 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development also wrote on behalf of the Steering Group to the Secretary of State for Business and the Secretary of State for Education asking if they would be available to meet with the Steering Group Members. No response has been received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 November 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development submitted oral evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee for their inquiry into post study work schemes for Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 2015</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development submitted written evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee for the inquiry as above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 December 2015</td>
<td>UK Immigration Minister gave oral evidence to the Scottish Affairs Committee; stated during the session that he looked forward to seeing the further report from the Scottish Government (referring to the Post Study Work Steering Group report due to be published March 2016); and noted that he would be happy to meet with the Minister for Europe and International Development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 January 2016</td>
<td>Secretary of State for Scotland told UK parliament in response to Oral question by Pete Wishart SNP MP that he was looking forward to reading the Scottish Affairs Committee’s report on their inquiry into post study work schemes for Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Engagement and key events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 January 2016</td>
<td>Written statement lodged in House of Commons by UK Government in Secretary of State for Scotland’s name stating there is no intention of reintroducing a post study work visa in Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 January 2016</td>
<td>Minister for Europe and International Development wrote on behalf of the Post Study Work Steering Group to the UK Immigration Minister and copied in the Secretary of State for Scotland. The letter sought clarity on the UK Government’s position and requested a meeting with the UK Minister as a matter of urgency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 January 2016</td>
<td>UK Immigration Minister’s office responded to Minister for Europe and International Development to arrange a meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Correspondence from the Minister for Europe and International Development to the Convener of the Devolution (Further Powers) Committee, 26 January 2016