

News Release

New website for world's leading language teaching association

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An upgraded course search function, a comprehensive members' area and expanded student pages in eleven languages are among the innovations on English UK's new website, launched this week.

Not only will the site provide improved services for English UK's 390 accredited members, but it will better promote British language schools to potential students and language travel agents all over the world.

And the launch comes at a time when the UK's English language schools appear to be bucking the economic downturn by overwhelmingly reporting good or improved bookings for the first quarter of 2009, after a dramatic upturn in business last year. The sector expects to benefit further from the falling value of the pound, which will make it particularly good value to learn English here.

"It is perfect timing," said Tony Millns, Chief Executive of English UK. "The new site does a far better job on showcasing the quality and variety of English courses available in the UK at a time when exchange rates have made us far more affordable as a study destination. Coming here to learn is now unbeatable value for money."

"The new website also comes as we're preparing for the Government's launch of the new points-based visa system for students in March 2009. Only language centres accredited by an approved accrediting body such as Accreditation UK can apply to be on the Register of Sponsors. And only organisations on the Register can issue a 'confirmation of acceptance for studies', a unique reference number which students must have to apply for a full student visa. So non-accredited centres will no longer be able to enrol student who need visas next year. This is good news for the accredited English language sector, which brings more than 350,000 students to the UK each year to learn English. The low-quality and sometimes frankly bogus non-accredited colleges damage the reputation of the UK for providing a quality education, and that reputation is our key selling point abroad."

The members' area has been expanded and updated, and includes marketing news and information on forthcoming events. It is also much more user-friendly, bringing together everything centres could need to make the most out of their membership. The training area covers full details of English UK's affordable and quality-driven Continuous Professional Development programme for the ELT industry, including qualifications, conferences and training days.

Prospective students and language travel agents will find it much easier to find the perfect course, thanks to the site's upgraded search function. They will also get a more rounded and colourful picture of life and studying in the UK.

Entirely new features in the student area of the site include interviews with past and current students, a frequently updated roundup of British news, and lots of information on culture, things to do, and profiles of unusual courses.

This area of the site will be available in English and ten additional languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Turkish and Portuguese.

Notes to editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association with around 390 accredited members. It is a UK registered charity with the key aim of advancing the education of international students in the English language. Members are private language schools, educational trusts and charities and language centres in further education colleges and universities. All our members are accredited by the British Council under the Accreditation UK scheme, which is managed by the British Council in partnership with English UK.
2. Over 350,000 students a year come to the UK to learn English, contributing about £1.5 billion to the UK economy in course fees, accommodation and general spending. The UK has the largest share (over 30%) of this important global market. Many students go on from English language courses to UK degrees or professional qualifications. There are long-term affinity benefits to Britain as well since many students go on to be opinion-leaders and senior figures in their own countries.
3. For more information, please contact Jodie Gray, International Marketing Manager (jodie@englishuk.com).