

Co Chairs' Welcome

Hello everybody and thank you for giving us the opportunity to Co Chair the AISA Executive. We take on this role in interesting times as we are sure you will agree!



This is, for many of us, perhaps one of the most potentially challenging political periods that we have worked within. The insecurities around the effects of BREXIT, and now the US election, we know will be causing most of you the same sleepless nights that they have been causing ourselves and our own teams. However, each of us plays a vital role in the business of international students in our institutions and organisations. Equally, many of us have direct influence over the UK experience of these students and this is a responsibility which none of us takes lightly.

It would be foolish to believe that we are not going to see some significant changes to the Tier 4 system—Theresa May and her government have made it very clear that these are coming. However, as a sector we dealt with the implementation of the 'all new' Points Based System in 2008 plus over 100, sometimes virtually incomprehensible, changes since.

There is no doubt that we have the knowledge and professional capabilities to engage practically and intellectually with whatever regulatory and process changes are thrown at us. Our biggest challenge, as it has been many times over the last 8 years, will be to plot a

smooth and steady course through those changes and to present a positive face of UK education to our stakeholders. Those snatched corridor discussions or late night emails to worried students are just as important as decoding UKVI policy—perhaps even more important if we are the only people engaging with our students on that level. We understand how challenging (and draining) finding positivity in difficult situations can be but also what a difference you can make with some informed and well chosen words of reason and support.

This isn't going to be easy. It hasn't been easy. We are going to need to come together and support each other like never before. A key finding in the AISA survey was people's desire for better networking and support opportunities. This is going to be a primary focus as AISA moves forward and we ask you to help and support us in this.

You can do this by making sure that you are attending your Regional AISA meetings and feeding back about what you are thinking and what challenges you are facing on the ground. Without your input and a clear cross UK overview, we are unable to take our issues forward to UKCISA and UUK for evidenced lobbying of the UKVI and this is definitely an area where we also need to be positioning AISA's focus in the future.

We promise that we will keep trying to provide valid training and conferencing opportunities to help and guide you in your roles and that will complement the excellent work being done by our colleagues at UKCISA. However, if we are not doing so or there is something you want us to look at providing then we want to hear about it.

AISA is YOUR Association and it is important to us as a Co Chairs, and the wider Executive, that we are providing services that are relevant, inclusive and of benefit to our membership. So, please stay in touch with us and each other, engage with AISA events (or let us know why you can't/won't) and continue to keep doing the fab job we know you all do. Yes, they are interesting times ahead, but there's no better people to be going into battle with! Keep your positivity and we hope to see or hear from you soon.

Emma Gwynnett-Davies & Sally Saca

Goodbye from...

The Chair of the AISA Executive

This edition focuses on one of our founding members, Jo Holliday, who sadly is leaving us after over 20 years of involvement with AISA. The AISA Executive would like to thank Jo for all of her hard work and support over the years.



Name: Jo Holliday

Job title: International Student Adviser

How long have you worked with AISA, and how long have you been on the Executive Committee?

I joined Overseas Students Advisers Group (OSAG) shortly after its inception in 1992. The aims then of OSAG were to create a network for people engaged in overseas student welfare who seemed isolated and largely without support, and who rarely met to discuss issues, to create network to bring together staff advising international students within UKCISA (later renamed ISAG and finally AISA). I was involved with the OSAG committee for a number of years and then participated more at a regional level for a number of years. I then joined the AISA Executive Committee in 2012.

And how many years as chair?

I have been Chair since March 2014.

What has been the highlight of your time with AISA?

There have been a number of highlights. I am particularly proud of helping to bring into being what is now known as the UKCISA Code of Ethics. AISA and UKCISA came together to create the Code in part to respond to the introduction of the regulation of immigration advice in 1999. I think the fact the Code has recently been revised shows that it is a useful document both for new members of staff working with international students as well as for

established staff who still face ethical dilemmas on a regular basis (not least because of changes brought about under Tier 4). Another highlight would be working with the Executive Committee to explore compliance with compassion, which was the theme of our last conference. I hope this is a legacy which will continue to give in terms of stimulating discussion and hopefully some policy changes to bring in some compassion into what can sometimes feel like an increasingly harsh immigration environment.

What will you miss most about AISA?

Without a doubt, I will miss the incredible energy and creativity of the AISA Executive Committee. It's been great to be in a room where everyone shares a passion to do the best we can in supporting our international students. Above all I will miss the genuine respect and collaborative approach amongst the Exec – I feel very privileged to have worked with such a good bunch of people.

Any advice for the incoming Chairs?

Going forward there is much that AISA could and should do. I would hope that the new Chairs will continue to take AISA forward into the digital age as we are lagging a bit behind on that score! But above all I hope that AISA is able to continue to provide a supportive and inclusive network for the myriad of professional services staff within HEIs, FE and Students' Unions who work with international students.

The challenge as always will be how to respond to the wider welfare agenda as well as the ever dominant immigration agenda. I have every confidence that Sally and Emma will do a fantastic job and wish them the best of luck.

Finally, do you have a message you would like to give to members?

You are doing a really important job under increasingly difficult circumstances but one where you really can make a difference to international student lives. Your advice and support may mean the difference between success or failure for a student. By being part of AISA you have access to an important sounding board for those common problems and a voice which goes beyond your institution.

It is in this community that we hopefully identify and work on solutions to those common areas of difficulty. But AISA is only as good as its members and therefore if you don't feel you are getting enough out of AISA – perhaps take this as an opportunity to get a bit more involved in your local regional group.

I will really miss the goodwill and friendship from the wonderful AISA and wider UKCISA family. I know I couldn't have done my job without their support. However, I do hope our paths will cross in the future – because you haven't heard the last of me yet! I'm planning to continue to work in the immigration field and might even do a PhD in something migration related!

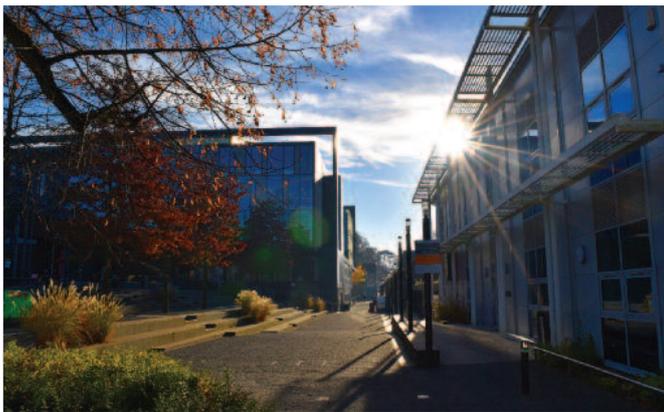
ALSA Training

13 January 2017 | Oxford Brookes



A working plan: safely supporting international student employability

Most of us deal with enquiries around international student working and employability activities on a weekly basis. This ALSA training day looks at how we as advisers can help in supporting and highlighting student employability opportunities – whilst staying firmly within the boundaries of Compliance.



Interactive sessions will explore who our institutional key co-workers are, how far our monitoring and reporting responsibilities go, ways of administering Tier 1 (GE) and how we can utilise the 'forgotten Tiers' and pathways outside of PBS to safely diversify our students' options post study. We will also consider the implications of an increasingly online business world and how we advise students who come up with ever more diverse ways of income generation. Join us as we tackle all these questions and more!

10.00am-10.30am

Coffee

10.30am-10.45am

Introduction: Welcome from Chair and scene setting

Competitive market/improving student experience/being savvy in providing safe opportunities/strengthening and diversifying ISA roles in uncertain times.

Look at current legal position and responsibilities led by NC. Scenarios to explore issues and gain feedback/share good practice. Look at Tier 5 and how we can use this more fully across the board in light of poor PSWS and constantly reducing options. Split: Tier 1(GE) sharing good practice and processes OR 'Beyond the Tiers' exploring options outside of PBS Encourage tweets and LinkedIn content during the day.

10.45am- 11.15am

Keynote Speaker: Nichola Carter

Nicola will look at student and institutional responsibilities, highlight key areas of UKVI concern and give examples of queries/issues she is aware of.

11.15am-12.15pm

Karen Griffiths and Nichola will lead on group discussions around various scenarios

- HR and employing students
- Student Unions and employing students
- Careers Service and student volunteering/placements
- Sabbatical Officers
- Volunteering opportunities- definition and inside/outside Tier 4 regs.

12.15pm-1pm

Reporting back and who delegate discussion around issues raised

1pm-1.45pm

Lunch

1.45pm-2.45pm

Tier 5 Liz Oxford Brookes. Utilising Tier 5 and setting up projects and processes around this. Sharing of good practice and advisory needs for international students compared to UK.

1.45pm-3.45pm

a) Tier 1(GE) 2 examples of GE in practice followed by an open forum for questions, discussion and sharing of good practice.

b) 'Beyond the Tiers' looking at diversifying student post study opportunities through volunteering and other routes

Meet... An Immigration Specialist

This edition we introduce you to Nichola Carter, Director and Principal Solicitor of Carter Thomas Solicitors

Name: Nichola Carter

Job title: Solicitor

Years working at Carter Thomas: I founded the firm in April 2013

What one word best describes your role? Exciting

What is the best thing about your job?

When you change the way clients think and that creates a positive outcome.

What is the worst thing about your job? Admin.

Describe a 'typical work day' for you?

In the office by 7.30/8 and start by reviewing emails and making calls. I then meet clients in or out of the office, provide advice, meet with the team to ensure they are on top of their work and try and escape early enough to do something outdoors.

What one thing in your office could you not function without? Water.

If you could do any other job what would that be?

Professional surfer or anything that gets me in or on the sea all day.

Tell us something interesting we might not know about you?

I'm very proud to have drafted part of the Civil Partnership Act.



Resource **Corner**

A space for signposting resources which might come in useful for our AISA members

#WeAreInternational Campaign

It is vital that staff and students from around the world feel welcome and safe in the UK.

As many members will be aware, the **#WeAreInternational** campaign was launched by The University of Sheffield in 2013 and is now supported by now supported by more than 100 UK universities and colleges, the British Council, the National Union of Students and the Home Office.

The campaign now takes on a renewed importance in light of the result of the recent EU referendum. It focuses on the importance of ensuring that the UK remains a welcoming home of global scholarship and showing pride in our diverse staff and student population. It is vital that the UK continues to provide a superb education to the most talented people

If you have found a helpful website, organisation or other resource please contact us at the email below so we can share with or wider membership.

from around the world, and that students and staff are able to celebrate their own cultures and friendships.

On the campaign's website <http://www.weareinternational.org.uk/>, members will find opportunities and resources to help show their support. One way of doing this is through utilising a digital toolkit which members can download and use in their communications and social media to show support to the campaign: <http://www.weareinternational.org.uk/toolkit/>.

Members and students can become actively involved in #WeAreInternational, and if you would like to do so, please e-mail: getinvolved@weareinternational.org.uk

David Barrott

AISA & Senior International Student Adviser,
University of Sheffield



Connect With Your AISA Colleagues on **LinkedIn!**

It would be great if you could join our group and network with your AISA colleagues around the UK. To ask to join, on the "Groups" page of your LinkedIn profile, just search for **"AISA: Association of International Student Advisers Forum"**

Contact details

You can find the AISA website at:

<http://www.aisa.org.uk/About/>

If you'd like to contact us with any stories, feedback or questions we'd be delighted to hear from you via:

aisa@ukcisa.org.uk