

Letter from Frank Field and Nicholas Soames to the Home Secretary

Post study route to working in Britain

We are writing in connection with the limit on non-EU economic migration which you are currently considering.

We welcome the Prime Minister's assurance to the CBI conference that the immigration regime will not be allowed to impede our economic recovery. It would clearly be wrong, and self defeating, if immigration policy was to prevent the recruitment of personnel vital to our economic recovery.

However, a very substantial number of economic migrants are permitted to come to or remain in Britain without a job to go to under Tier 1 of the Points Based System. We believe that these routes should be severely curtailed in order to leave "headroom" for those key people specifically required by British and foreign companies operating here.

Indeed, we call for the suspension of the Post Study Route of Tier 1 which in the year to June 2010 covered 47000 people. This route allows foreign graduates to remain in Britain for two years seeking work. It applies to some 600 institutions and is available regardless of the class of degree that the student obtains. Non-EU graduates are unnecessary at a time of very high unemployment ó now at 9% among recent British graduates. At the same time, a recent UKBA assessment of the Tier 1 scheme found 60% of Post Study Tier 1 visa holders in ònskilledö employment, taking jobs that should be filled by British workers.

Instead, we suggest that all such graduates be required to return home at the end of their course. They would then be able to apply for jobs in Britain but only after the employer had demonstrated that no suitable candidate was available in Britain, or indeed, the EU.

As regards the whole Tier 1 route, the same UKBA assessment showed that only 25% of the sample of these migrants was confirmed to be working in òskilledö jobs. We believe that this Tier should be capped at a low level.

We urge you strongly to include measures such as these in the proposals that you will shortly be bringing forward.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Field

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