



# QS Asia Pacific Professional Leaders in Education Conference

24 - 26 November 2009

**Managing the UK Governments Migration Agenda:  
Implementation of Fast and Fair Student  
Visa Decisions**

**Hazel Duddy**

Stakeholder Engagement  
Deputy Manager

# Tier 4 headlines - Global

- **Application numbers are holding up compared to 2008**
- **Refusal rates, after an initial spike, are lower in most markets than in 2008**
- **Ongoing reviews and policy improvements**
- **Re-checking colleges**
- **Conducting better verification checks through Risk and Airline Liaison Overseas Network (RALON) teams and supporting colleges by issuing secure paper**

# The previous student route

The previous Student route was open to abuse from:

- Bogus colleges
- Disreputable colleges offering bogus courses
- Disreputable colleges offering courses which were really disguised employment
- Bogus students using the route simply to work in the UK

# What has changed under Tier 4?

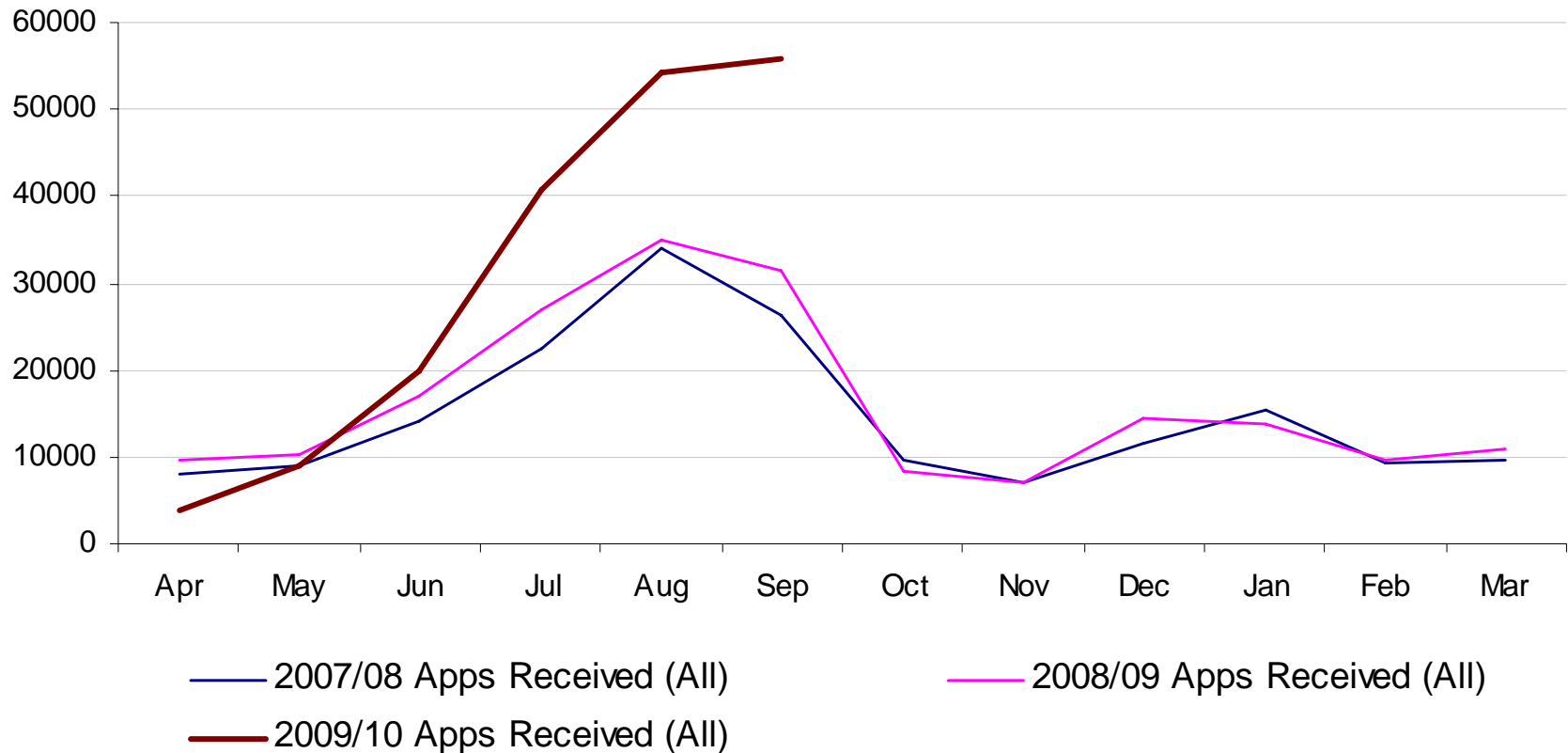
**There are two types of visa under Tier 4:**

**Child Student** – for those studying at independent schools and any 16-17 year olds studying NQF level 2 courses at FE colleges; and

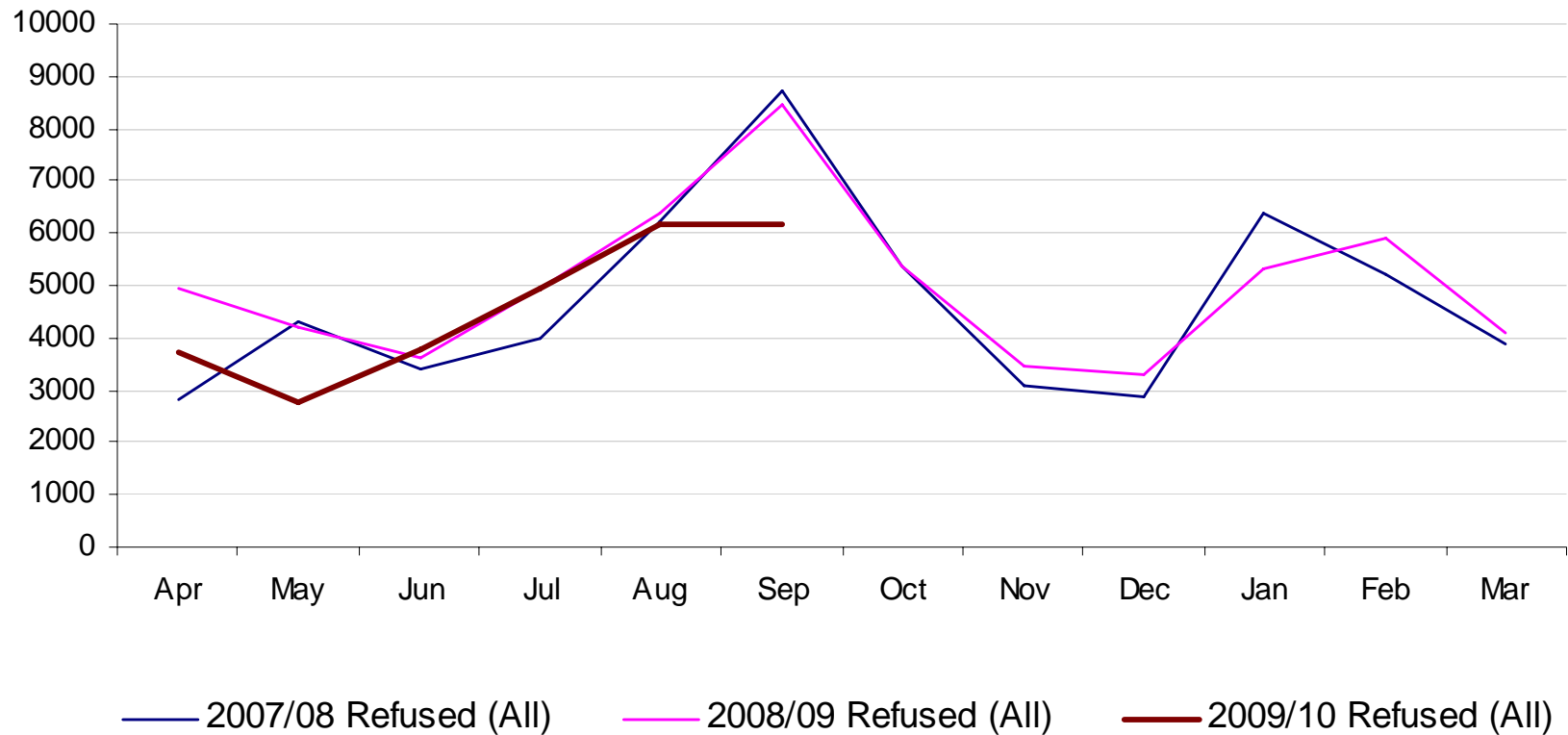
**General Student** - for all those coming to the UK for their post -16 education. General Student applicants can only apply to study for courses at a minimum level of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 3 or equivalent or above. English language students are expected to have already started to learn English. The minimum level of course acceptable for this type of student is at Common European Framework of Reference for Languages level A2. This is also the route for Post-Graduate Doctor and Dentist Training Programmes

Both are considered according to simple, objective criteria

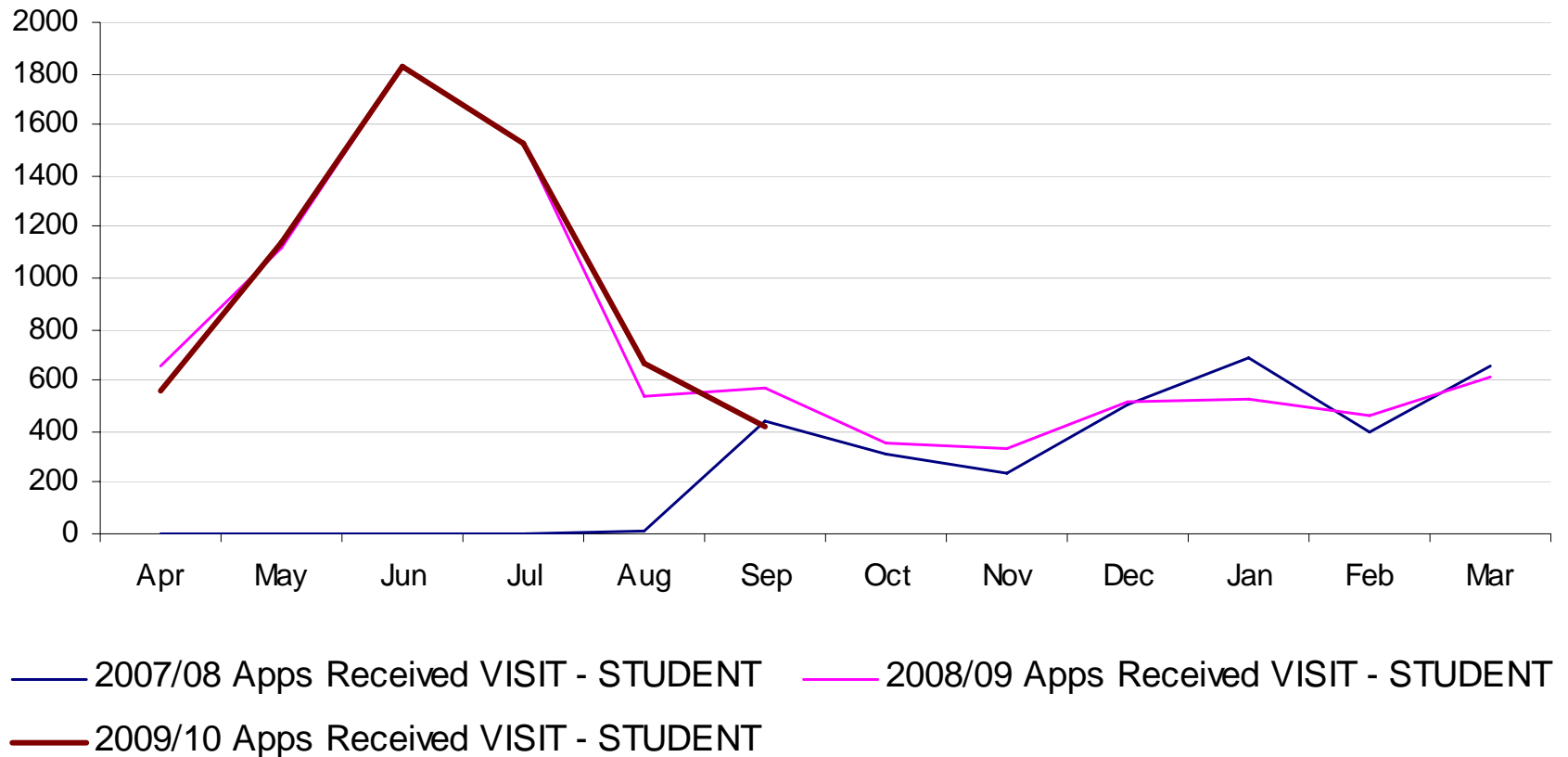
# Latest visa demand figures



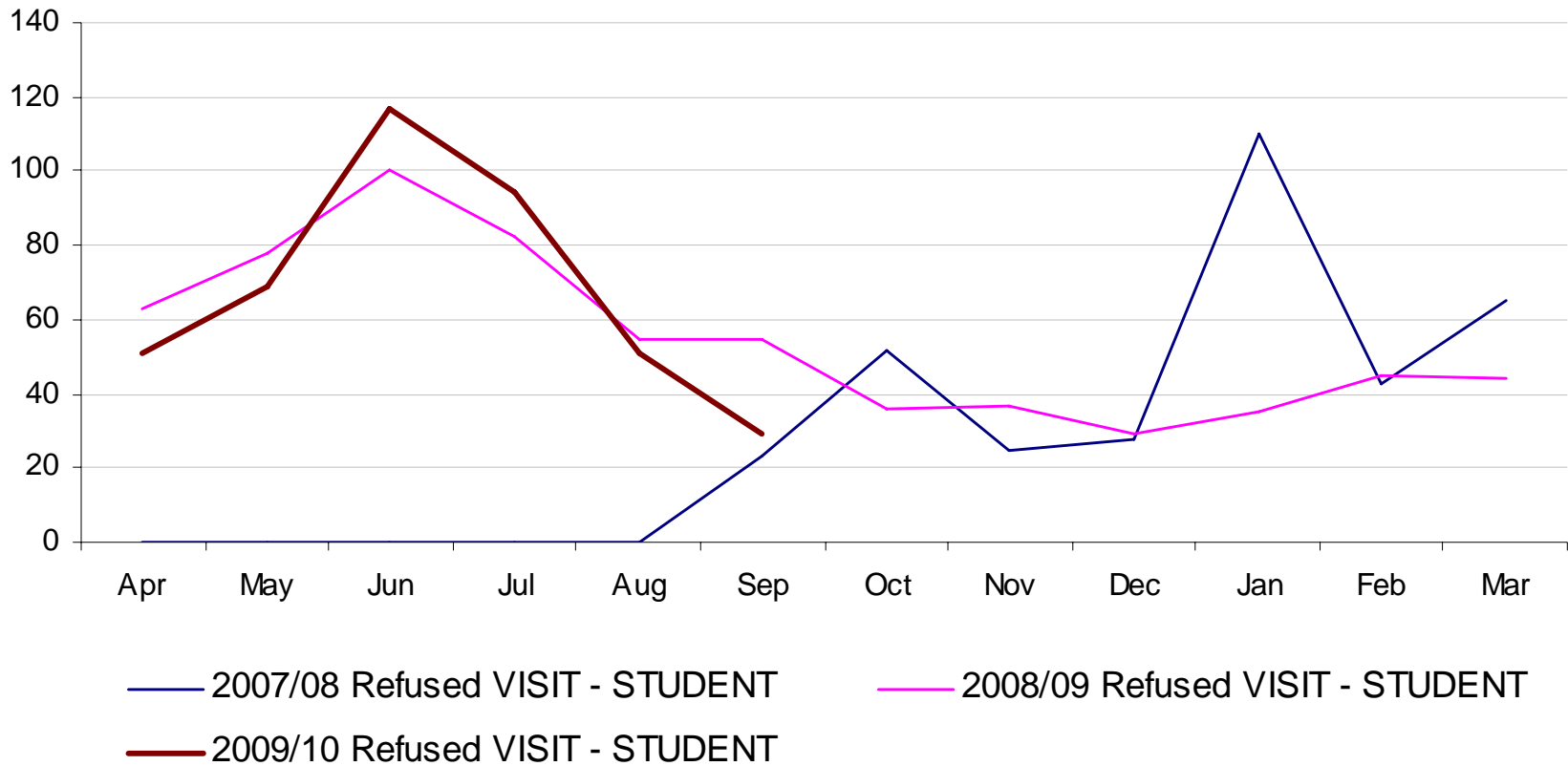
# Latest visa refusal rates



# Student Visitor Visa Applications



# Student Visitor Visa refusal rate



# Customer service standards

- **90% of straightforward (non-settlement) applications in not more than a week; 98% in not more than 2 weeks; 100% in not more than 12 weeks**
- **90% of non straightforward (non- settlement) applications in not more than 3 weeks; 98% in not more than 6 weeks; 100% in not more than 12 weeks**
- **95% of applications for settlement in not more than 12 weeks (60 days) and 100% in not more than 24 weeks**
- **Details of performance by individual Posts by application category available on website: [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)**

# Changes

## **We are:**

- **Outlining our plans to further develop our IT system to make it easier for customers and sponsors to navigate the system.**
- **Introducing new rules that deliver a more responsive and straightforward system for bringing researchers and academic visitors to the UK**
- **Improving our website so it is easier for students to access information about studying in the UK**

# Changes cont....

## Recent changes and revised guidance, including:

- Tier 4 sponsors and Partner institutions
- Extension to the period of time that a 'Study abroad' migrant may undertake
- Clarity on content of Visa letter for courses leading to a professional qualification
- Pre-sessional courses
- Postgraduate Doc/Dentists

## This year:

- Students awaiting GCSE results and going on to study A Levels and equivalents
- Arrangements for International Baccalaureate Students

# Maintenance change

## Maintenance concession ended on 30 September 2009

- From 1 October 2009 people applying from outside the UK must show that they have held the required money for a 28 day period
- Students applying in the UK will have a longer transitional period
- Until 31 January 2010 student applying in the UK will only need to show that they have the money needed on the day that they apply

# Phased Implementation

**Phase 1**, 28 July 2008. Sponsor register opened to T4 sponsors

**Phase 2**, 31 March 2009. T4 policy is launched

**Phase 3**, 05 October 2009. Issue CAS on a voluntary/trial basis for students extending and switching in country

**Phase 4**, February 2010. IT supports full implementation to all students in and out of country. Mandatory CAS usage

# Tier 4 Phase 3 is now live

## Phase 3 introduced 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009

- Sponsors are now able to issue **Confirmations of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)** to in-country students.
- A CAS is a unique reference number, not a paper document, and is issued from the web-based **Sponsorship Management System (SMS)**.
- Institutions can see the status of the CAS they issue and whether it has been used in an application to the UK Border Agency.
- Migrant reporting on SMS will become mandatory for students issued with a CAS from Phase 3 where it has been used in an application to UK Border Agency.

# Main benefits of Phase 3 trial

- Manage Sponsor Licence
- Request additional Level 1 & Level 2 users
- Issue CAS to all in-country student applications giving you the opportunity to trial the Sponsorship Management System including the reporting functions
- Help and Support on the SMS system is available at the following link:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/employersandsponsors/sms-user-manual-t4/>

# The Next Steps - Phase 4

## **Phase 4 will be introduced in February 2010.**

- Roll out of CAS will be complete for all in- and out-of-country applications.
- The CAS will be a mandatory document; visa letters will no longer be accepted.
- Mandatory reporting now fully implemented

# Sponsorship Management System Overview

**The SMS is a secure online tool that allows licensed Sponsors to perform all interactions with the UK Border Agency. It has been in use since 27 November 2008 for PBS Tiers 2 & 5. Its functions currently include:**

- Creating Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) for Tiers 2 & 5;
- Preparing and assigning CoS.
- Reporting student activity;
- Notifying the UK Border Agency of changes to sponsors' key personnel.

**For Tier 4, functions are the same as for Tiers 2 & 5 PLUS:**

- Bulk Data Transfer
- New functionality specific to Tier 4.

# Tying student leave to institutions

**Section 50 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 allows for restrictions to be placed on a Tier 4 migrant's studies.**

- Policy applies from 5 October only; it is not retrospective.
- Students are “tied” to their sponsoring educational establishment for the duration of their leave.
- A student wishing to change their sponsor now has to make a new leave application accompanied by CAS / Visa letter from the new Sponsor.
- The student cannot start their studies with the new sponsor until their leave application has been approved

# Questions

**Visit the UK Border Agency  
International Group  
Display Stand at Booth 05**



**For more information:**

[www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk)