

English Language Provision in Australia within the Global Context of ELT

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Abstract The first part of this report reviews briefly different purposes for learning English worldwide in the current context of globalisation. The second part of this paper researches and critically analyses English language provision in Australia through following topics: Types of programs and providers in the different sectors and their purposes for teaching English; Funding sources for programs; Types and provenance of clients; Nature of curricula, courses and credentials within programs; Purposes of and approaches to language assessment in different sectors; Regulation of the sectors. By examining a range of published journal articles, facts sheet, discussion feedback, evaluation reports and official internet sites, data were collected, edited, coded, classified and organized. Overall, Australia EL industry is constantly evolving to keep up with the changing needs of the global ELT market. Public and private sectors are strong and making a great progress though quite unstable and sensitive to the external challenges and fluctuations in demand.

Keywords: globalization, Australia, TESOL, sector, private, public, education, programs, providers, tuition, students, immigrants, refugees

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ELT programs in order to help international students find the program that suits their needs.

1. Introduction

The escalating use of English around the world for communications, science, education, business, diplomacy and entertainment has resulted in an increasing number of English language (EL) speakers. English is the dominant international language that is taught in a wide range of global contexts and there is a growing demand for EL courses that can deliver English languages skills needed by today's global EL learners.

In the era of globalization, English language market has received a great attention by EL providers in the leading EL destinations. Although the US and the UK continues to attract the highest number of international English language students, Australia has increased its market share as a destination for global EL learners and surpassed Canada in 2013 to take 3rd place in terms of the number of student weeks delivered [10]. Indecon International Economic Consultants [11] indicated that according to travel agencies, Australia's relative cheapness compared with the USA and UK, its 'safe' image, along with its climate and tourism attractions are important factors in choosing Australia.

The first part of this report introduces globalization and the spread of English language so as to establish a proper understanding of why people learn English. The second part of this paper concentrates on the English language provision in Australia as a popular destination for English language learning and teaching by reviewing its various

2. English and Globalization Review

According to Richards [16], there is a variety of reasons for learning English language worldwide. Some people learn it because English is a common language for the media, the internet and other types of e-communication; others may learn it for tourism and its associated activities; and it may be required for settlement and employment for immigrants and refugees in English-native countries. Some learners may need English for education or business and for other learners, it may just be an obligatory subject, but for which they have no apparent need. Crystal [7] revealed that English is prevalent in global relationships, security and tourism, globally networked media, education, and communications. He contended that English is the most taught and widely used as a foreign language in over 100 countries.

Globalization and English are closely related in many areas. One example is that English is the primary language for communication within multinational institutions such as the United Nations, the bureau of Europe and the European Union [16]. Moreover, Block and Cameron [3] stated that large international corporations normally have main offices based in Europe, North America or Japan, and globally dispersed branches of production, all of which are connected electronically. This can imply English being used as a medium of instruction for trading

and official documentation, written and verbal communication skills training in English for employees, potential byproducts for the local hotel and tourist markets, and more English being implemented in local schools. They maintained that the escalating number of these connected transactional organizations create a global network in which global demand for English is expected to grow. Another area is the emergence of the internet as global communication channel. English currently predominates on the internet [3].

The spread of English around the world is promoted by some historical factors. Crystal [7] asserted that the British colonial period and industrial revolution during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and then the dominance of the United States of America as a global economic and military power, all of which, have contributed to the expanding use of the language [7].

Also, the global economic fluctuations have led to language being handled as merchandise rather than an ethnic or national symbol [3]. They explained that this commoditization would affect people's attitudes and they will prefer to learn English language rather than other languages because it is associated with better careers, higher positions and promotions. Richards [16] argued that in many countries English is required to be able to enter the labor force and enhance your career. He pointed out that English language skills enable young IT experts to market their expertise outside their countries.

Graddol [12] concluded that the global spread of English will continue to the 21st century and he claimed that due to the rise of the English speaking countries in many fields, English language gained higher status and became predominant over other living languages. McKay [13] declared that the growth of English in these areas makes it an essential for any country wishing to become part of the global community. He affirmed that the number of people speaking English today is widespread and these figures are increasing rapidly. This growth is driven by privileges that English language provides to those speaking it.

3. Background

Australia is an English speaking country with lots of immigrants, refugees and international students from all over the world. English language learning and teaching is a basic component of its education and daily life.

Australia is one of the leading destinations for English language learning and teaching and it has one of the best regulated TESOL industries in the globe, split into separate Private and State sectors. The Private sector (ELICOS) is prevalent in many Australian universities and language schools. ELICOS courses are aimed at students who require English language training before commencing formal studies in Australia.

The State sector has two major adult language and literacy programs funded by the Australian Government and administered by the Department of Education and Training. The Adult Migrant Education Program (AMEP) and the Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program. English language courses are delivered through the New South Wales of Technical & Further Education (TAFE NSW) colleges and the Adult Migrant English

Service (AMES). These programs are mainly designed for permanent Australian inhabitants from non-English speaking backgrounds.

4. Methodology

The data were collected from the official websites of Department of Education and Training, AMES, TAEF, ELICOS and English Australia. Also, articles, journals, surveys, evaluation reports, facts sheet and discussion feedback talked about English provision in Australia were used. The data were edited, coded, classified and organized in relation to the following fields:

- Different sectors where English language is taught and learned
- Purposes for English language teaching and learning in the different sectors
- Types of different programs and providers in the different sectors
- Funding sources for the programs
- Types and provenance of clients of different sectors and programs
- Curriculum models used and courses and credentials offered in the different sectors
- Purpose of and approaches to language assessment in different sectors
- Regulation bodies and regulation in the TESOL industry.

5. Presentation of Findings

5.1. The State Sector:

Australia is prominent in providing immigrants and humanitarian entrants with settlement and English language programs that have been subsidized by the government for over 50 years [4].

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is the Australian's largest settlement program and It is funded by the government. It was established in 1949 and was administered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. In late 2014, the administration of the AEMP moved to the Department of Education and Training. The AMEP caters for refugees and immigrants who enter the country based on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. It aims at improving their English language and settlement skills to enable them integrate socially and economically into the Australian community.

The AMEP offers a minimum of 510 hours of free tuition, with an extra tuition through two sub-programs. The special preparatory program (SPP) provides a minimum of 100 hours available to humanitarian entrants and up to 400 hours of tuition to eligible humanitarian clients between the ages of 16 and 24 years who have less than seven years of formal schooling. The Settlement Language Pathways to Employment/Training (SLPET) Program provides an additional 200 hours of vocation-specific tuition for eligible AMEP clients. The AEMP program can be delivered through four training mode: Classroom-based; Distance learning; Home Tutor Scheme (HTS); Self-paced E-learning. In addition, the AEMP offers additional services such as counselling services,

childcare and a translation referral service. The AEMP service providers include universities, TAFE Institutes, state education departments, and private educational institutions in addition to the sub-contracted providers [8].

From 1966 to 1975 the AMEP curriculum was designed for tutoring English for social and labor settings outside the school by using an aural/oral approach, and then in 1980s the methodology used was communicative language teaching and the decentralized, learner-centered and negotiated curriculum. In the late 1980s issues concerning this approach were found, including lack of continuity and feedback to learners on their achievement and ambiguity about syllabus planning and content. This resulted in the foundation of the National Curriculum Project Frameworks and then they were followed by the Learner Pathways Project. Finally, in 1992 the Certificate in spoken and written English (CSWE), was accredited by the NSW Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) and adopted as the national AMEP curriculum by the government [4].

The CSWE is an accredited competency-based national curriculum and assessment framework and it provides a four-level certificates in Spoken and Written English: Certificate I for Beginner, Certificate II for Post Beginner, Certificate III for Intermediate and a pre-CSWE for students with no English language skill at all and with little or no prior schooling. Each CSWE level includes four core modules on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The proficiency is assessed by International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) instrument. [8].

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) currently known as **The Skills for Education and Employment (SEE) program**, commenced in January 2002. The program is funded by the Department of Education and Training and is the Australian Government's primary program for helping eligible job seekers to enhance their language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills to enable them to participate more adequately in training or in the labor market. According to Acil Allen Consulting (2015) 68% of the SEE program enrollments are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) clients.

The Department of Education and Training manages the SEE through Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) providers. Across Australia, Registered Training Organizations (RTOs) have been hired to deliver assessment and training services under the program within a specified Service Delivery Area (SDAs). The SEE program clients are entitled up to 800 hours of free training which can be delivered through a part-time basis (10 to 19 hours per week) or a full-time basis (20 to 25 hours per week) via face-to-face or distance training and may be vocationally contextualized within each stream of training.

The program serves initial, basic and advanced accredited English language training, along with basic and advanced literacy and numeracy tuition. Following a Pre-Training Assessment (PTA) of language, literacy and numeracy competencies, learners are assigned to the suitable stream of training with the appropriate training focus. Clients' progress is assessed against the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). It is a criterion instrument that defines the five main skills of learning, reading, writing, oral communication and numeracy.

Other accredited training for LLN is also acceptable such as (CSVP), (CSWE), and (CGEA) [8].

The Adult Migrant English Service (AMES) is an independent Adult Education Institution, incorporated under the Adult Community and Further Education Act. It has started providing English for new arrived immigrants and refugees since 1951. It offers a wide range of settlement services that are delivered through federal and state contracts such as Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS), Adult Migrant English Program (AEMP), and Skills for Education and Employment Program (SEE). Moreover, it provides general English, special skills and youth courses that make up the AMEP. In addition, the NSW AEMS offers Skillmax program and English for employment along with the AEMP [2].

TAFE NSW is Australia's leading and largest provider of vocational education and training that is funded by the NSW government. It was established as a separate Department of Technical Education in 1949. In the 1970s, the department was renamed "technical and further education" or "TAFE". In the 1990s, it became known as Vocational Education and Training (VET). In 1991, the NSW TAFE Commission replaced the Department of Technical and Further Education. This led in 1992 to the formation of TAFE NSW which has promoted the competitive but progressive and responsive approach of TAFE NSW. It runs as a network of institutes offering a wide range of courses to help jobseekers get into or return to the workforce. Also international students will find excellent TAFE NSW courses and services such as English language skills development and more than 300 certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, associate degree, bachelor degree and graduate courses [15].

TAFE NSW has five curriculum centers and each one aims at specific industry and program fields. Access and General Education (A&GE) curriculum center include English language program which has a variety of qualifications:

- Certificate I in ESOL (ISLPR1- General Proficiency, personalized focus)
- Certificate II in ESOL (ISLPR2- General proficiency, personalized focus)
- Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training (ISLPR2- General proficiency, vocational competencies)
- Certificate III in English for Further Study (ISLPR3- General proficiency, further study focus)
- Certificate III in Employment, Education & Training (ISLPR3- General proficiency, vocational competencies)
- Certificate IV in English for Academic Purposes (ISLPR3+- General proficiency, academic focus)
- Certificate IV in Skills for Career Development (ISLPR4= General proficiency, professional employment competencies)

According to Clipollone [6], the general principles underpinning development are:

- Communicative linguistic competence.
- Recognition of uneven macro skill development.
- Benchmarked against language as it is used in real life (ISLPR)
- Benchmarked against the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF)

In 2014, TAFE NSW was separated from the NSW Department of Education and Communities and started operating as an independent government agency. In 2015, The NSW Smart and Skilled reforms were implemented to provide more consistent skills training to better meet students' and industries' needs. Consistent with the subsidy of this training, the NSW Government endorses the role of TAFE NSW as the State's public Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider, ensuring stability at the center of the NSW training market [15].

5.1. The Private Sector:

The English language industry, or **English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS)**, has been developed in Australia over a period of about twenty five years and is regulated by Australian government to ensure a high quality of tuition for all international students. It is designed for students who require English language training before commencing academic studies in Australia or ESL speakers who just want to improve their English language skills.

The ELICOS Standards framework is a legislative instrument under the ESOS Act 2000. The National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme requires all ELT providers to abide by a set of standards. Every ELT provider is required to register itself on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) to ensure that certain requirements are met before enrollment and that they maintain these requirements throughout the course of their registration. This legislation guarantees that international students will be taught by qualified English teachers, programs will be accredited and class sized kept small [9].

Moreover, English language Teaching (ELT) centers in universities, colleges and high schools are endorsed by the National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) organization to ensure that these centers meet world-leading benchmark. Endorsed centers are granted the NEAS quality mark, internationally recognized and valued by students, teachers, agents and governments.

The clients of the ELICOS programs are self-funded. There are more than 150 English language providers which offer courses to overseas students. Those providers vary from the small privately run college with small group tuition, to the secondary school preparing students for high school studies, to large university or vocational education centers. Australian government has an official ELICOS student visa particularly for students who do one of these courses.

EFL/ELICOS providers cater for all standards, from beginner to advanced, through to the training of teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). Many courses run year round, although more are available in summer (November to January). Clients can study from one or two weeks up to 52 weeks for General English courses. Other courses are generally delivered in five or ten week blocks. The average course length is approximately 13 weeks. Clients on student visas must study at least 20 hours a week [10]. ELICOS also provides a range of courses: English for education & training (EAP, EHP, EFS etc.), English for exam preparation (IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC etc.), Social communication (General English.), English for work, English for business,

vocational areas (aviation, nursing etc.), English for fun (golfing, surfing etc.) [9].

English Australia association is the national peak body for the TESOL industry in Australia. It has a network of colleges throughout Australia that provide English language programs to international students and professionals. It aims to support member colleges in providing high quality English language training and associated services by maintaining a high professional and ethical standard in the work of these member colleges. The association has 105 members, which account for 87% of total enrolments in ELICOS. Over 80% of international students learning English in Australia choose to study with an English Australia member college. [9].

A positive feature of the Australian ELT system is its integration into Australia's third level education. Figure 1 below demonstrates how students can enter different academic programs by completing a suitable level of ELICOS and having the prerequisite background. Learners may also exit the Australian education system at any time and still have the benefit of the ELICOS English tuition [13].

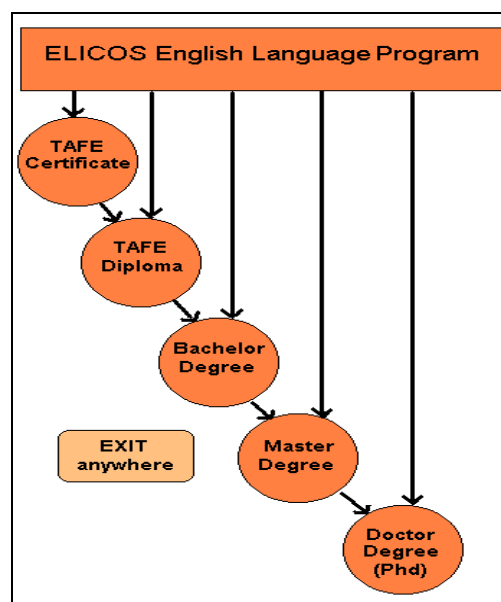


Figure 1. Study Paths – Australia (Source: Australian English)

6. Discussion of Findings

6.1. The State Sector

Findings reveals that the Australian public sector has recently gone through many iterations and reforms, which indicate that Australian government is paying a great attention to this sector. Firstly, the integration between the Literacy and Numeracy Training Program and the Advanced English for Migrants program in 2002, which provides a more integrated management approach to addressing language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) needs among job seekers at the national level. Then, in 2013, the name of the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) changed into the Skills of Education and Employment (SEE) as to be more flexible and to remove the negative social stigma attached to undertaking literacy and numeracy training because of the name.

Secondly, in 2011, the AMEP moved to a new business model, which involved significant changes in delivery methods and administration to better align the program with the needs of migrants and humanitarian entrants. Then, the administration of the AMEP and the SEE programs were moved to the Department of Education and Training in late 2014. This co-location of the two programs within the Department of Education and Training improves the management and supports the collaboration between the two programs [1].

Moreover, in 2012 the government extended the LLNP 2010-13 contracts for a further three years. This extension guaranteed the continuity in LLNP (currently known as SEE) training and enabled the providers to improve the program by making necessary business decisions, such as hiring trainers. Then, the Business Service Area (BSA) geographic boundaries have been aligned to the Employment Service Areas (ESAs) and now is known as Service Delivery Areas (SDAs). This alignment led to more collaboration between programs and less bureaucracy and paperwork. In addition, the SDAs now is allowed to have a multi-provider in a service area, which is considered a key area of program management improvement. With government tendering, the AMEP program is supported with a sustainability and stability that many similar programs worldwide did not have. However, the AMEP's one-provider-per-region approach has resulted in limited alternative options available to the clients and they are unable to provide meaningful feedback to enact change regarding the quality of teaching and course content [1].

The CSWE curriculum standards have three major strengths: contextualized tuition, development of independent learning skills and national consistency. In spite of this, some AMEP suppliers consider that CSWE is most suitable for learners with higher levels of previous educational achievement and strong language foundations. The proficiency of the AEMP clients is assessed by International Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ISLPR) instrument, which ensure the appropriate targeting and subsequent effectiveness of the program by limiting access to those that have not yet acquired functional English [1].

As for the sufficiency of the AEMP vocational training, it is not enough to obtain employment and insufficient to join the Vocational Education and Training (VET) beyond the Certificate I/II level, and higher education. The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI), [14] argued that vocational English skills is insufficient for jobseekers with qualifications and skills acquired outside Australia. Recently, the vocational English courses has been decreased. In the past, by contrast, a variety of programs were provided by the Advanced English for Migrants Program (AEMP) at TAFE colleges. These included Migrant Advanced English (MAE), Job-Oriented Migrant English courses (JOME) and Courses in Academic and Professional English (CAPE).

Furthermore, OMI, [14] believed that a case-management approach is needed to provide the clients with a pathway that is suitable to their needs and conditions. Lack of awareness of available English language programs may prevent many culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) clients from joining the most appropriate program. Moreover, lack of continuity

between English language programs represents an obstacle particularly to the CaLD learners gaining maximum benefit from the programs [14].

Reviewing the state sector EL programs, there is some ambiguity when clients want to choose the right course for their needs because there are many programs with long names and complicated acronyms. Some providers also use different names for the same course for example: the AEMS Australia refers to the AEMP – (CSWE I) as English for Living in Australia while the AEMS NSW refers to it as the AEMP (CSWE I). This paper suggests that public sector programs should be assigned with short meaningful names, delivered under the same names by all provider and combined under categories in relation to their types, purposes, class options and locations.

6.2. The Private Sector

The main feature of the private sector is the ELICOS regulatory framework. Findings showed that the legislative instrument under ESOS Act use the national standards as guidelines for determining whether providers should be accepted for registration on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students. It ensures high quality training and provides protection for international students such as the Tuition Protection Service (TPS), which is a placement and refund service for international students.

Moreover, according to Idecon (2007), there are a number of strengths, which the private EFL/ELICOS sector has:

- High quality standards.
- An extensive range of quality third level educational institutions which integrated with ELICOS/EFL training.
- The relatively low costs facing students.
- The friendly perceptions of the country.
- Australia very attractive climate and travel opportunities.

Foundation Studies is an excellent preparation for further studies, which combines English language with other subjects. According to the Department of Education and Training international students data, in 2014 about 24% of all international students in Australia enrolled in the ELICOS English language courses. Of all international students enrolled in the ELICOS sector, as shown in English Australia fact sheet, about 41% of them transitioned into further studies. This indicate that a large number of students undertook ELICOS course as a pathway into higher education in other sectors.

Although Australia is starting to attract an increasing number of EL students from different regions, Asia is consistently the largest source of ELICOS enrolments. According to English Australia fact sheet, in 2014 about 163,542 international students, from over 140 different countries, commenced English language programs in Australia. About 66% of them came from Asia, with 16% from Europe, 13% from the Americas and 5% from the Middle East & Africa. It is obvious from the figures that Australia as an EFL destination relies heavily on Asia markets when compared with the UK and US as a highly diverse EL destinations in that the leading source countries of students are not likely to be located in just one region.

Notwithstanding this challenge, Indecon [11] argued that Australia has significant opportunities to further improve its ELICOS sector in terms of non-Asian markets and the development of courses which include cultural and activity-based dimensions that capitalize on the country's strengths.

6.3. ELT Approaches in Australia

Findings revealed that English language methods have gone through many changes in Australia. For example, there has been growing dissatisfaction with communicative language teaching used in AMEP classrooms since the late 1980s. Newly arrived students were not used to the less hierarchical roles of teachers and learners, activities that focus on communication and language use rather than grammar and the lack of a textbook. In a response, the genre-based approach emerged [5]. In 1992, the AMEP developed a competency-based curriculum, the CSWE, which are widely taught language qualifications in Australia. The language competencies of the CSWE are linked to the use of whole texts and therefore a syllabus needs to be a text-based syllabus (Fees, 1998). Hence the pedagogy used in the AMEP is competency and text-based. It integrates reading, writing and oral communication and which teaches grammar through the mastery of texts rather than in isolation. The CSWE includes the following text-types: exchanges, forms, procedures, information texts, story text and persuasive texts. The competency-based frameworks have become adopted in many countries, as has happened recently in countries such as Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines [17].

Moreover, a content-based approach (CBI), topics were chosen as the basis for the course and primarily to cater to the students' needs and interests, is used in a program prepared for ESL students in an Australian high school (Wu as cited in Richards, [17]). This approach offers unlimited chances for teachers and course designers to match students' interests and needs with interesting and meaningful topics and as a result, all of these lead to more successful program outcomes than the other language teaching approaches.

7. Conclusion

The Australian EL industry is unique and respected globally due to the cohesive and professional collaboration between public and private sector organizations within the national framework and Australia's ELICOS National Standards. This cooperation can serve as a global model for other EL destination countries to follow.

In terms of the Private sector, international students have a wide choice of well-regulated institutions and high quality ELT programs. Indecon, [11] revealed that Australia has chosen to approach the language travel market in a way similar to that of the UK. This is illustrated by the integrated visa regulation and accreditation system (PRISMS). Language learning is also integrated into other education sectors in Australia

The State sector (the Department of Education and Training, the AMES, the NSW TAFE); in addition to their critical role in promoting ELT industry, they have noble humanitarian endeavors. They assist refugees and migrants to settle successfully in Australia. Moreover,

they help jobless people to live decent lives by developing their English language level and numeracy ability to achieve the required demand of the workforce.

Acronyms

TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language
ELT	English Language Training
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
LLNP	Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme
SEE	Skills for Education and Employment
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
AMES	Adult Migrant English Service
HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
ELICOS	English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students
SPP	Special Preparatory Programme
SLPET	Settlement Language Pathways to Employment/Training
CSWE	Certificates in Spoken and Written English
CSVP	Certificate in Skills for Vocational Pathways
CGEA	Certificate in General Education for Adults
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Ratings
PTA	Pre-Training Assessment
HTS	Home Tutor Scheme
ACSF	Australian Core Skills Framework
SDAs	Service Delivery Areas
VET	Vocational Education and Training
A&GE	Access and General Education
BSA	Business Service Area
ESAs	Employment Service Areas
ESOS	Education Services for Overseas Students
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
AQF	Australian Qualification Framework
JOME	Job-Oriented Migrant English
MAE	Migrant Advanced English
CAPE	Courses in Academic and Professional English
CaLD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
LLN	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
PRISMS	Provider Registration and International Students Management System
OMI	Office of Multicultural Interests
TPS	Tuition Protection Service
NEAS	National ELT Accreditation Scheme

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