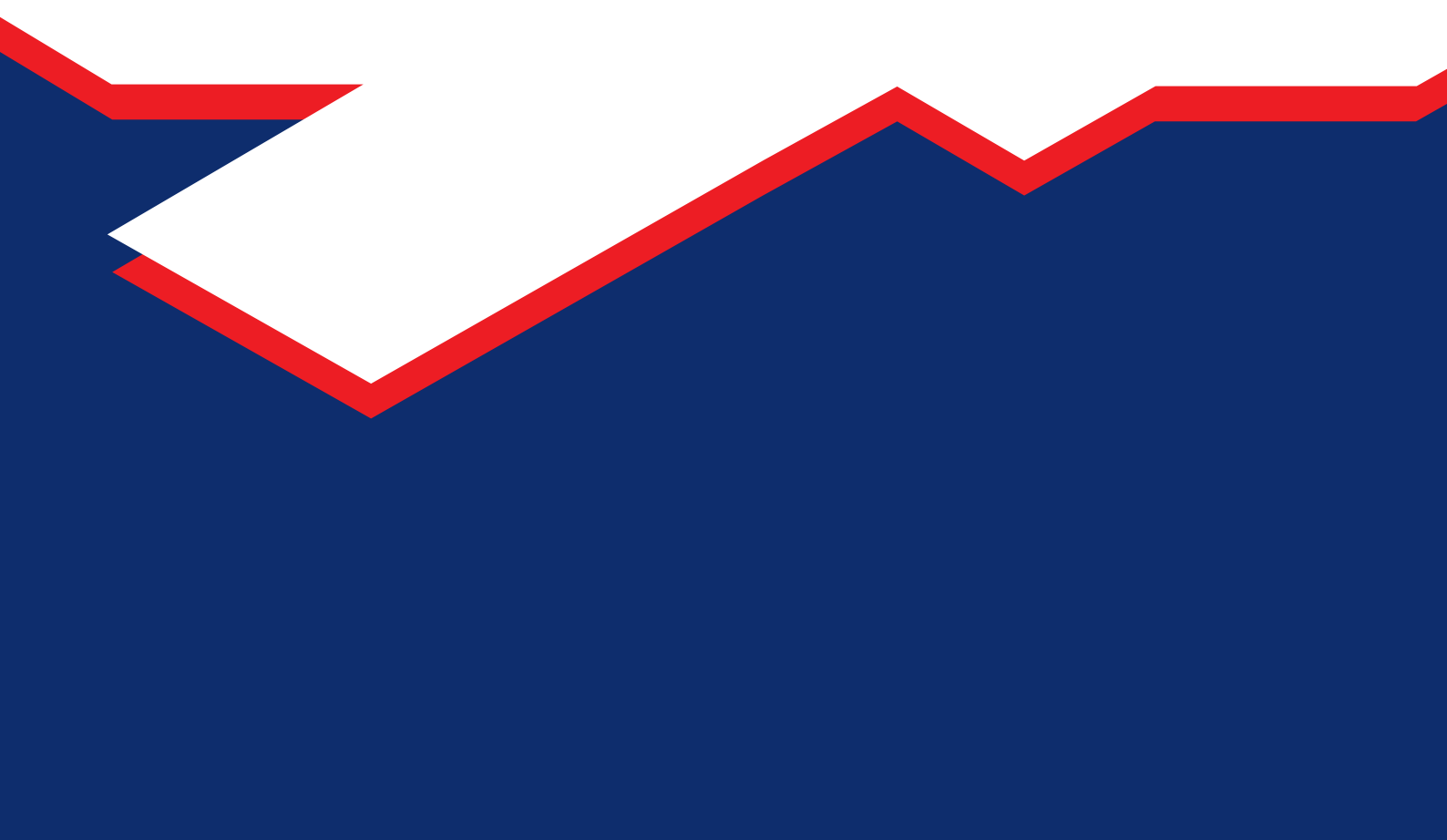




**SECURING
OUR BORDER
CONTROLLING
MIGRATION**

POINTS-BASED SYSTEM TIER 4 ATTENDANCE AT PRIVATELY FUNDED COLLEGES

March 2011



POINTS-BASED SYSTEM TIER 4: ATTENDANCE AT PRIVATELY FUNDED COLLEGES

CONTEXT

Tier 4 of the points-based system was introduced in early 2009 as the principal route for individuals who wished to study in the UK. Since then, abuse of the visa route has been repeatedly identified. Changes to Tier 4 are currently under review.

In 2010 an exercise¹ was conducted to track the outcomes of 17,000 students, of which just over 3,000 were at privately funded institutions (i.e. private colleges and English language schools). The study highlighted that the rate of compliance² was significantly poorer for students at private institutions as opposed to public institutions. 26 per cent of students at private colleges were potentially non-compliant, and 14 per cent at English language colleges. This paper seeks to provide further information on the outcomes of students studying at private institutions (note that this study does not distinguish between private colleges and English language schools when referring to privately funded institutions).

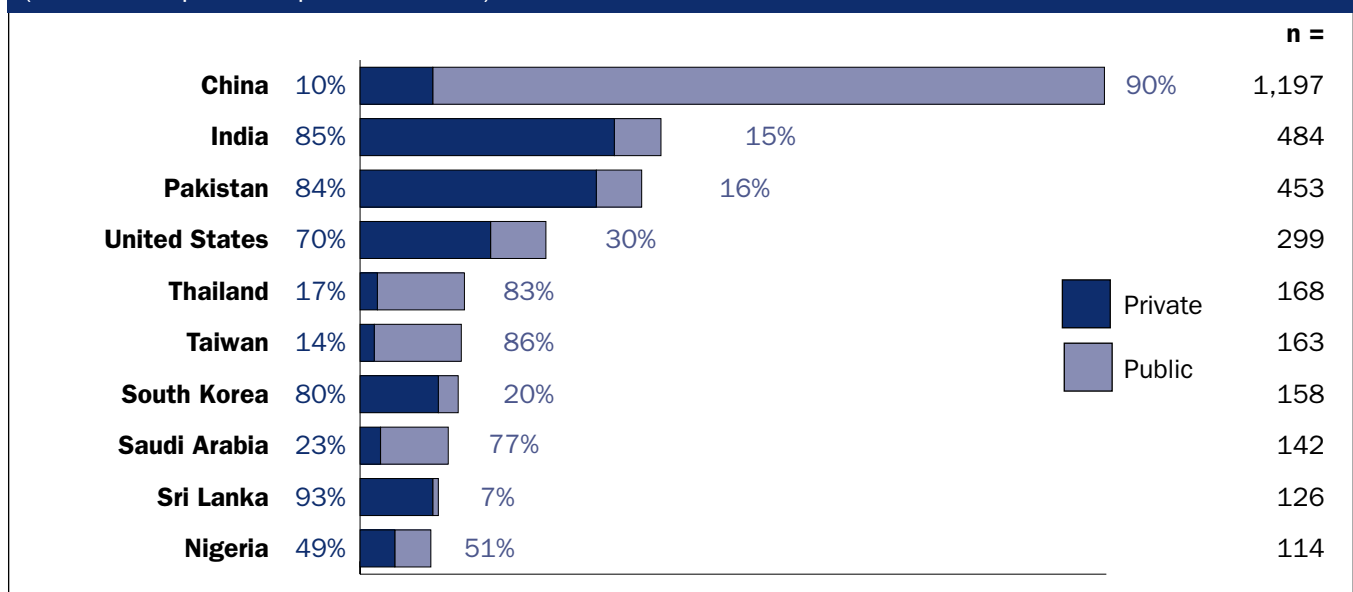
METHOD

A random sample of 4000 Tier 4 (General) visa holders whose visa started between April and September 2010 was selected.

From this list 1000 students at private institutions were selected at random. The UK Border Agency made contact with each student's nominated college to verify if the student was in attendance. For those students who were reported as not in attendance, further checks were completed to ascertain if the student had left the country or switched to another sponsor.

Figure 1 shows the breakdown between study at private and public institutions for the top ten nationalities in our dataset.

Figure 1: Top ten issued nationalities for Tier 4 visas; ratio of study at private vs public institutions (data from April to September 2010)



1 Overseas students in the immigration system: Types of institution and levels of study, published December 2010

2 A student was deemed non-compliant if they have no record of leaving the UK and do not have a valid reason to remain

FINDINGS

Of the 1000 records, 911 positive matches were made (in the other cases either the college did not reply or there was an error in the data). Of these 911 students, 757 were verified as in attendance by the college. Of those marked not in attendance, flight data and college records indicate 32 had left the UK. College reports, confirmed by UK records, suggest 3 had transferred to a different college. The whereabouts of 19 students who were reported as not in attendance could not be confirmed; they have been included in the figure for non-attendance.

This means **the total non-attendance rate for the sample was 13.1 per cent** (119 out of 911). This compares with a figure of 18 per cent in the previous study for private colleges and English language schools combined. The difference can be partly explained by the fact that the previous study’s figure for non-compliance also included some students who had finished their studies and there was no record of them having left the UK. This study specifically looked at whether the student had attended their course, and not whether or not they had left after completing it.

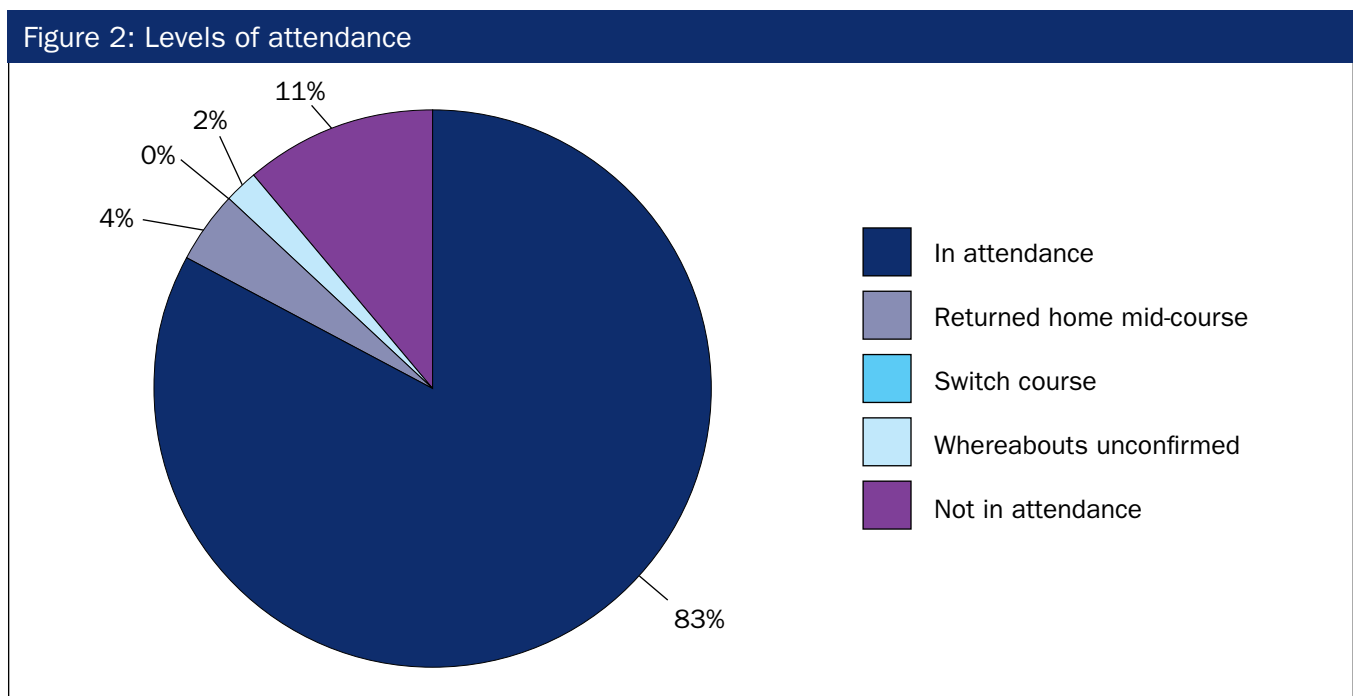
Figure 2 shows the overall outcomes of the 911 students who were matched in our data.

RESULTS BY NATIONALITY

Within the sample of 911 the attendance rates for some nationalities varied widely. The table below shows the level of non-attendance for the fifteen nationalities with highest representation in the sample. The rates for Pakistani and Indian students in our sample were the highest. These nationalities also had the greatest numbers of students studying at private institutions. Students from the United States were the lowest risk, with all 82 students in our study attending their course. The three students who were confirmed to have switched course were all from Saudi Arabia.

Figure 3: Levels of attendance by nationality

Nationality	Total Students	Non-attendance
Pakistan	209	21%
India	168	25%
United States	82	0%
Sri Lanka	63	10%
South Korea	45	7%
Philippines	44	9%
China	34	15%
Colombia	31	3%
Nepal	29	7%
Saudi Arabia	19	11%
Brazil	18	0%
Turkey	18	6%
Japan	17	6%
Iran	11	18%
Bangladesh	7	0%
Other	116	6%



RESULTS BY COLLEGE

Levels of non-attendance varied widely from one college to another. One college reported that 51% of the 57 students from our sample were not in attendance, while others reported 100% attendance rates.

RESULTS BY AGE

There was not a significant variation in the overall levels of attendance by age.

Figure 4: Levels of non-attendance by age of student

Age	Total Students	Non-attendance
Teens	58	9%
20s	724	13%
30s	116	13%
40s	12	8%
50s	1	100%

RESULTS BY VISA LENGTH

The non-attendance rate for 2-3 year long visas was greater than shorter visas, and also greater than the relatively small number of lengthier visas in this study.

Figure 5: Levels of non-attendance by visa length

Length	Total Students	Non-attendance
< 1 year	259	8%
1 - 2 year	455	13%
2 - 3 year	170	23%
3 - 4 year	23	13%
> 4 year	2	0%

ASYLUM MATCHES

Four individuals from our dataset were linked to asylum claims, three Sri Lankans and one Iranian. One of the Sri Lankans was reported to still be in attendance at his college, the other three were not in attendance.