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**CHANGES TO THE IMMIGRATION RULES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM**

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The Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO) in London, United Kingdom has reported that the United Kingdom (UK) Home Office has announced a number of changes to the Immigration Rules effective 1 October 2013. The labor-related changes are as follows:

*1. Removal of the English language requirement for intra-company transferees.*

Deregulatory change was made to remove the English language requirement for applicants in the Tier 2 (ICT) category extending their stay beyond three years. Presently, only those paid £152,100 annually are exempted.

*2. Easier switch into Tier 2 for graduate entrepreneurs.*

The change was made to add Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) to the list of categories which could benefit from the post-study work provisions when switching into the Tier 2 (General) category.

These provisions waive the requirement for Sponsors to carry out a Resident Labour Market Test, and allow applicants to be paid "new entrant" rather than "experienced worker" salary rates.

*3. Waiving share ownership restrictions for some senior staff.*

The change was made to waive the rule that Tier 2 (General) applicants cannot own more than 10% shares in the Sponsor's business, for those who earn £152,100 or more.

*4. Corrections made to the Code of Practice which set among others, minimum appropriate rates of pay for occupations under Tier 2 and the work permit arrangements.*

The correction amends the weekly hours on which the rates are based in line with the information from the salary sources used to derive the rates.

*5. A "genuineness" test was added to the Tier 2 (Minister of Religion) category as with Tier 1 (General) and Tier 5 (Temporary Worker).*

The change was made to address concerns that the category is not always being used by those with the skills and experience to do the jobs they are