

NOT-SO-FOREIGN

Overseas Insight For American International Educators

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Abroad Perspective

The August edition of *IB World*, the magazine of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) reports that IBO has recently introduced a new series of documents, such as redesigned diplomas, certificates and other official documents. This is part of an effort to better protect the IBO and its authorized schools from fraudulent reproduction. Several of the new designs are printed on paper with security features, from small overall designs that are not easy to copy, to silver threads that turn black when photocopied.

IBO is a not-for-profit foundation based in Switzerland. As of September 30 2002, there were 1,365 authorized IB world schools in 112 countries.

IB student transcripts are available for online viewing and downloading (with permission of the student) by education institutions. To register for this service, visit the official site at www.ibo.org. The website also has a listing of member IBO schools, as well as information on its programmes. ♦

The Playing Field

India's Times News Network reports the United Kingdom is fast turning into the white-hot destination for Indian students. "According to the British High Commission, there has been a whopping 128 per cent jump in the number of Indian student visas for the UK this fiscal," the report stated.

A British High Commission spokesperson said 6,000 visas were issued by September, and the total for this year is likely to go up to about 9,500. Indian students are an important source in the race to achieve a cumulative increase of 75,000 foreign students in Britain by the year 2005, which Prime Minister Tony Blair set as a target two years ago.

British government policies directed at foreign students are also enticing Indian students looking to subsidize their education and plan for the future. Foreign students can work part-time for a maximum of 20 hours a week during their studies, and can stay in the U.K. for a maximum period of two years upon completion of their course (academic or vocational qualification).

Despite all the positive moves, the UK is lagging behind the US by a fair margin, with 19,998 student visas issued by the US embassy in India from Oct. 2001 to Aug. 2002. Nevertheless, this figure marks a drop from the 21,512 student visas issued for the previous twelve months. The article quotes a spokesperson at the US Embassy, "All we can say right now is that the increase (8-10 per cent) in the number of students that we have come to expect every year will not happen this year. There could be a slight decline." ♦

Over the Counter

In the rush to internationalize its student population, New Zealand's eight universities have heavily targeted China. An astounding thirty percent of the New Zealand's fifty thousand foreign students are Chinese citizens - a staggering ratio compared to other countries (for example in the USA, Chinese students make up about 10 percent of the total). The flood of Chinese students in New Zealand has resulted in an overflow of problems and complaints that are now being taken seriously by the Chinese government. Allegations include ghettoizing Chinese students in NZ schools, classes taught by unqualified teachers, misrepresentations by New Zealand schools and Chinese families being enticed to the country by false expectations. The problems are serious enough that education ministries in both countries are meeting with each other. New Zealand Minister Trevor Mallard admitted to "problems that have emerged because of the rapid growth in the sector." (<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=3004782&thesection=news&thesubsection=general>)

The fingers are pointed in both directions. "Unscrupulous agents," are a major source of the problem according to Jason Matangi. The Manager of Marketing and Recruitment for Victoria University in Wellington was very candid in his comments to Higher-Edge. "I blame the Chinese agents [for the misrepresentation of language schools as universities]," said Matangi. "This is a classic ploy of the agents and for many students the mention of the word *university* in the same sentence as *English language* might be enough to give them the impression of a pathway. All universities have strict IELTS and academic entry requirements so I do not know how this idea can come from within New Zealand."

Matangi also blames NZ schools saying they are "eager to fill classrooms and have joined forces with agents with little quality assurance."

There is a lot of money at stake. Education New Zealand programme manager John Sargent claims Chinese students could be worth \$1.5 billion this year to the New Zealand economy. ♦

Globe Tipping

Travelling to Tokyo? Taxis are extremely expensive and often subject to traffic jams. The more reliable way is by train in that timing is much more predictable. However, the system can be daunting to a newcomer. Tokyo has scores of different lines, operated by several different companies. Changing trains, platforms, levels and companies is commonly required.

To navigate the system with confidence it is recommended to travel with a supply of several system maps as well as detailed instructions in Japanese and English regarding the routes, and particularly the details of changing trains. Maps are available at http://www.tokyoMetro.go.jp/network/map_english.html and <http://www.bento.com/subtop5.html>. Remember each company has its own system map. New fares must be paid each time one enters a new company system. ♦

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