

Abroad Perspective - New Zealand an unsafe education destination

Recent releases made by the Chinese government indicate it perceives New Zealand as an unsafe study destination for its youth. Of late, the minor criminal activities attributed to some of the 31,000 Chinese students studying in New Zealand have been getting wide coverage in Chinese media, causing New Zealand education sector advocates to worry about their market's reputation.

The New Zealand Education Ministry has recently announced revisions to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students for international student caregivers. For example, extending the Code to international students in short-term courses, and ensuring more stringent guidelines for accommodations and communication with guardians and parents who are overseas.

Sources: <http://xtramsn.co.nz/news/0,,3882-2580267,00.html> and <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,2598810a11,00.html> •

The Playing Field - Too little too late

News that the U.S. State Department is giving priority to foreign students, researchers and professors is welcomed by this group waiting for their visas. A June 3rd announcement indicated these groups will be placed ahead in line for in-person interviews, and it comes as a relief to those American universities and colleges concerned with keeping international import numbers up in the face of the more stringent security measures.

In the last year, Higher Edge offices in Jakarta, Delhi and Karachi have seen dozens of students who have given up on the US, and have looked instead to Canada for further studies. Mong Xeng, a Malaysian student currently studying in Ontario (Canada) said, "there are ample amounts of opportunities available in other places; why focus on the US? There is always Canada, and the UK, or Europe".

Source: www.auburn.edu/academic/other/international_education/visa/70303chronicle.htm •

Over the Counter - South African institutions conduct verification work

A penchant for corruption, along with a high unemployment rate in South Africa, is blamed for the high incidences of individuals making misrepresentations regarding their educational qualifications. Sixteen leading higher education institutions in South Africa have undertaken their own verification work and found that 15 to 18% of candidates claim untruths with regards to their academic history. This trend is apparently growing stronger, with a 7% increase in the number of cases from 2001.

Institutions such as Unisa and Technikon Witwatersrand are said to be determined to screen all applicants for fraud. "It's absolutely frightening", said Susanne Taylor, an information specialist at Technikon Witwatersrand. "In a study of 29 human resource companies, everyone said [they] are aware of the problem, but often don't check qualifications because it's expensive and time consuming."

Source: http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=105&art_id=ct20030810102700900E323120&set_id=1 •

Globe Tipping - Hiring a driver in Nigeria

Travel in Nigeria within Lagos, and between Lagos and Ibadan, can test even the best of planned itineraries. For example, Lagos - Ibadan by road can be a 2 to 6 hour affair, depending on the many forms of traffic tie-ups the road is notorious for. Within Lagos, travel times can similarly be wide ranging. A suggestion is that a local driver, with expert knowledge of Lagos, be employed for one's time in the Lagos - Ibadan area. Also, ensure that your meeting schedule has the benefit of someone familiar with the range of times it might require between meeting locales (keeping in mind not all local counterparts will be thoroughly informed in this regard).

Dani Zaretsky of Higher-Edge brings us in-depth reports from his recent visit to Nigeria. Keep posted for further insights in the following weeks. •

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