

This is the last issue of *Not-So-Foreign* for 2003.  
We will resume publishing in early January.  
Higher-Edge wishes all of its readers a happy holiday season.

## Abroad Perspective - Australian Visa Policy Changes

As of December 1, Indian students seeking to study in Australia will need to comply with easier financial regulations to be awarded a visa. As reported in *Not-So-Foreign* 3.30, these visa changes are part of the overarching plan to promote Australian education internationally and to ensure a streamlined visa policy. Indian students previously had to display proof of financial capability for their entire period of study. Under the new rules, it will only be required to provide evidence to finance the first two years of study.

The Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) informed Higher-Edge that more changes to the visa policy are expected to be introduced by July 1, 2004. With the number of Indian students studying in Australia increasing by 34 percent last year (Chinese students represented a 23 percent increase), there are expectations that the country may become an even more attractive destination for international students.

Source: "Australia to relax student visa norms," *The Economic Times*, 5 December 2003. •

## The Playing Field - Assessing Mexican Institutions

When Mexico shut down 88 private universities earlier this year, critics of the government claimed that there remained some institutions that provided a poor education and even lacked basic teaching facilities. Of concern to American institutions was whether Mexican students studying in the United States on exchange programs were from legitimate and accredited schools. As one of the leading American universities to enroll Mexican students, the University of Texas at Austin has had experience in such matters. According to Jerry Wilcox, Director of the International Office, a current faculty member must have first hand experience with a Mexican institution before any sort of arrangement can be made. Sixteen institutions have exchange agreements with the University.

The International Office provides a website on quality indicators for assessing Mexican institutions [at this link](#).

Source: Marion Lloyd, "Mexican Government Has Closed 88 Private Universities," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 29 May 2003. •

Please direct questions and comments to [editor@higher-edge.com](mailto:editor@higher-edge.com)

## Over the Counter - Sri Lankan Student Choices

Sri Lanka, a country known in recent years more for political tensions and internal strife, can be an alternative source of international students for universities willing to look beyond the conflict. Following trips in February and October 2003, Higher-Edge found that although the number of students that do go overseas to study is low, those interested tend to consider the US, Britain and Australia as possible destinations. At one particular school however, Singapore was gaining popularity as a choice, given a lower tuition cost than American institutions, proximity and a "forced" employment rule that says graduates from Singaporean institutes must work for three years in the island state.

Higher-Edge's *From Colombo to Kandy* is an extensive look at the country, and provides universities with additional insight on recruitment possibilities. For more information or to order, visit: <http://www.higher-edge.com/sl.htm>. •

## Globe Tipping - Holiday Edition

While Christmas is around the corner, for those countries that don't celebrate them, here are some important dates to remember for late 2003, early 2004:

Hanukah: December 20 - 27  
Coptic Christmas: January 7  
Orthodox New Year: January 14  
Chinese New Year: January 22  
Hajj: January 30 – February 2  
Hijra (Islamic New Year): February 22  
Holi (Hindu Spring Festival): March 6

If you are traveling during some of these religious observances and festivals, expect some countries to completely shut down, while in others, banks, government offices and perhaps some streets may only be affected. •

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