

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *German universities to charge tuition fees*

Germany's free education regime has been terminated by a recent directive of the Federal Constitutional Court. The court ruling allows German higher education institutions to charge tuition fees from students. Currently, students pay around US \$ 65 to \$ 260 per semester for administrative and transport expenses.

Some in the academic fraternity and student unions have criticized the court order on the grounds that the imposition of tuition fees would discourage students from underprivileged homes, and lead to a decline in international students. Others feel that German universities will improve global competitiveness once they charge tuition fees and set higher salaries for faculty.

Currently, there has been a gradual increase in the number of overseas students in Germany. The German Academic Exchange Service reports the country is benefiting from tougher visa regulations in the U.S. post "9/11."

Source:

["To halt brain drain, Germany adopts competition mantra,"](#)  
[Christian Science Monitor, 31 January 2005](#)

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *Scottish qualifications scandal in China*

A Chinese university has been accused of selling Scottish qualifications to local students interested in immigrating to Britain. Staff of the Sea Rich Sino-British College, which had a contract with Changchun's Northeast Normal University to deliver the courses, have revealed that students were promised a two-year Higher National Diploma validated by the Scottish Qualifications Authority at US \$ 2168 irrespective of whether they cleared the final exams or not.

Another story doing the rounds is that the Northeast Normal University had promised to help the students enter the UK by giving them false financial documents. While the university has denied the allegations and has initiated legal action against the college, executives of the Scottish Qualifications Authority are on their way to China in order to investigate the matter.

Source: ["Exam Body Probes Qualifications for Cash Claims," Scotsman.com, 30 January 2005](#)

## THE PLAYING FIELD

### *U.S. move against fake degrees*

In a bid to prevent students and employers from being cheated by organizations peddling fraudulent qualifications, the U.S. Department of Education has set up a website, [www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation](http://www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation) listing accredited colleges and universities in the country. While this school listing will help employers identify and punish individuals using fake qualifications for a job or promotion, it will help prospective students distinguish between a legitimate institution and a fake school with a similar sounding name.

Counterfeit qualifications pose a serious threat to the global education and training industry. Of late, there has been an increase in the number of unscrupulous organizations using sophisticated technology to produce and sell fabricated educational or professional certificates via the internet.

The \$200 million industry, often referred to as "fake diploma mills," sell fraudulent undergraduate, postgraduate and professional qualifications such as medical or business management degrees.

Source:

["U.S. Opens Campaign Against Fake Diploma Mills,"](#)  
[Reuters, 1 February, 2005](#)

["New methods used to expose diploma mills,"](#)  
[CNN, 2 February, 2005](#)

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *New Indian airline with cheap fares*

Domestic air travel in India for foreigners is not cheap, albeit private airlines Jet and Sahara offer world-class standards. Recently, a new private entry, Air Deccan, is catering to the enormous Indian middle class population with air fares from 50% to 90% cheaper than competitors. The earlier the booking, the greater the savings. Tickets can be purchased on line at [www.airdeccan.net](http://www.airdeccan.net). While there are no reserve seats (it's first come, first serve) and no Business Class section, it is inexpensive and a glimpse of where the future of Indian air travel is headed.

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