

THE PLAYING FIELD

Ministry of Education strips private high schools of diploma granting status

In recent weeks, this space has covered the importance of Provinces taking the lead in regulating education providers, to protect overseas students and the reputation of the country as a whole. This past week, the Ontario government took a significant step in the right direction by stripping the right to grant its high school diplomas from five Ontario schools, that depend on foreign students.

It has not been a very well kept secret in Ontario, that many such schools have engaged in the practice of marks inflation. Moreover, some have recruited students on misleading premises, such as guaranteed university admission, for students whose past records would otherwise make them long-shot candidates. In other instances, students with satisfactory qualifications for university admission, are being told that they must complete a provincial secondary school diploma before applying for admission to Canadian universities.

Further convoluting the mire, for foreign students, is the issue we touched upon in a previous issue - confusion around the word "college" in the education space. The disciplining of these "colleges" has now appeared on the Chinese government website set up for the purpose of warning Chinese students of abuses they face abroad. How readily will students be able to distinguish these institutions from those private Canadian colleges that uphold high standards, and again from those that are publicly-funded, and increasingly, degree-granting. Unfortunately, the reputation of Canada, and in particular "colleges" will bear some of the brunt of this episode.

Source: "[Visa students stripped of credits.](#)"
[Toronto Star, June 24, 2005](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

International Telephoning made easy

Not sure how to compose your dialing string when calling abroad? Trying to find a country code or an area code? There are a number of helpful resources on-line. One such resource can be found at www.countrycallingcodes.com. Just indicate where you are calling from and the destination of your call, and the site will help compose the correct dialing string. But be careful: there are some tricky nuances to getting just the right dialing string. For example, at times the overseas party will provide a "0" in the number that is only used intranationally and not internationally.

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Cheating on the rise on Russian campuses

Corruption is on the rise in educational institutions in Russia. In a bid to boost career prospects, students are often using dishonest means to gain admission into leading institutes. Accepting the help of substitutes to write entrance examinations, using the Internet to buy coursework and assignments written by teachers and bribing lecturers to gain admission into colleges are just some of the methods being used by students.

A report published by the Ministry of Education and Moscow's Higher School of Economics (HSE) revealed that more than US \$300 M was paid by students in bribes to enter the country's educational establishments last year.

Source: "[Cheats hit Russian colleges.](#)"
[The Guardian, June 24, 2005](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

Britain viewed as expensive study abroad destination

Increasing student visa costs, value of the sterling, expensive tuition fees and competition from other countries have led to a decrease in international students' enrollment at British universities and colleges. While British educational institutes are greatly dependent on revenue from overseas students, around £10.2 bn (US \$ 18.5 bn) a year, these recent developments have led to Britain being viewed as an expensive option for many students.

Students outside the European Union have also been hit by the increase in visa fees. The fees have increased from £36 (US \$ 65) to £85 (US \$ 154) with the fee for a student visa extension having increased to £250 (US \$ 454) from £155 (US \$ 281) for applications via post and, to nearly double at £500 (US \$ 908) for applications submitted in person.

Source: "[Britain faces competition for foreign students.](#)"
[The Daily Telegraph, June 23, 2005](#)