

THE PLAYING FIELD

British university heads criticize new visa rules

The British Government's plans to abolish the right of appeal for student visas has met with severe criticism from heads of universities. Academics have argued that the new directive, which is part of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill, will prevent some 200,000 foreign students from applying to the U.K. for higher studies, leading to a loss of export earnings to the tune of £4 bn (U.S. \$ 7.1 bn).

Higher education action group, Universities UK (UUK) is trying to mobilize support from business and industry groups in its fight against the visa clampdown. There has been a 12 per cent increase in student applications to Britain from the Middle East and Asia due to U.S. visa restrictions, and universities fear that the new visa rules coupled with the visa fee hike will lead to a slump in overseas recruitment. A drop in applications from Chinese students is already a cause for concern.

Ivor Crewe, the president of UUK, told *The Guardian* "that more than half of refused visas are eventually granted, although only one in four go through a formal appeals process. This is the third in a triple whammy of visa measures that send an entirely wrong message to the best and the brightest students around the world whom we should be encouraging to study in the U.K. The benefits to the U.K. conferred by international students are enormous."

Source: "[Visa measures deterring overseas students.](#)" *The Guardian*, July 5, 2005

GLOBE TIPPING

Hong Kong travel

Most foreign nationals are not required to obtain visas for Hong Kong for periods ranging from seven days to 180 days, depending on the country. More information about visa requirements, and the visa-free period for different countries are provided on the Immigration Department's website www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/hkvisas_4.htm. For frequent business travellers to Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Travel Pass allows business travellers to visit Hong Kong without a visa or entry permit. For more details on the Travel Pass, visit the Immigration website, www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/hktraveldoc_3.htm.

NOTICE: Our office will be moving into the "Summer Schedule" of publications, with the next issues coming out August 3rd and 17th and then returning to regular weekly service on September 7, 2005.

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

G8 support for science and technology development in Africa

At the conclusion of the annual summit in Scotland, G8 leaders have promised to back the development of "centres of excellence" within science and technology institutions in Africa. While the G8 leaders have followed the recommendations of the Commission of Africa and agreed that development of the science, engineering and technology capacity of Africa was vital, no specifics have been put forward regarding various objectives or the kind of funds to be spent behind this initiative.

A team of academics from leading African universities met in Dundee, Scotland, in June 2005, to discuss ways in which wealthy nations can increase funding for institutions of higher education in Africa. The Commission of Africa, an international commission set up by British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, recommended that developed nations contribute an increased US \$8 bn investment in higher education, \$5 bn for universities, and \$3 bn for centres of research excellence. The strategy drawn up at this conference, titled "The Abertay Conversations" was to be presented at the G8 summit for approval.

Source: "[G8 Leaders Give Indirect Boost for Science in Africa.](#)" *AllAfrica*, July 8, 2005

OVER THE COUNTER

Chinese medical degrees under scanner

Providing recent instances of Indian students being duped by Chinese medical colleges offering cheap degrees, Indian diplomats have been warning students about pursuing medicine courses in China. Lack of infrastructure and proper curriculum, absence of an English-speaking faculty in several Chinese medical colleges has been a cause for complaint. Also, diplomats claim that the Chinese MBBS degrees are not recognized by the Medical Council of India (MCI). The Indian ambassador to China, Nalin Surie, indicated that the Indian embassy has taken the matter up with the concerned Chinese medical authorities as well as the Ministry of Education. Tianjin Medical University in Tianjin, Three Gorges University in the Hubei province and, Xingxian University in Henan province are three institutions that many Indian students have enrolled in.

Source: "[MBBS from China? Not made for India.](#)" *The Economic Times*, July 5, 2005