

THE PLAYING FIELD

Britain to use US-style aptitude test

The UK Government has given the go-ahead for a trial project that allows universities to select candidates on the basis of their results in aptitude tests similar to the American Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Thousands of British students will write the aptitude tests as part of their university applications this November.

The SAT, pioneered in the US, is the most widely-taken admissions test in the world - with more than 1.4 million students writing it every year. *The Independent* quotes research in the US that indicates use of the tests has increased the number of pupils from poor backgrounds getting into top universities such as Harvard. The British Government hopes the scheme will widen university access to include more students from underprivileged backgrounds.

The British Government will provide funds to the tune of £1.6 m (US \$ 2.9 m) for the trial. Around 50,000 A-level candidates will write the tests in November and admissions officers will be able to use the results to select candidates on the basis of aptitude rather than predicted A level grades. The trial will be carried out over five years by the National Foundation for Educational Research. All schools and colleges in England with A-level students will be invited to take part.

Source:

["Aptitude tests for university entry to be piloted,"
The Independent, September 20, 2005](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

Travelling by cabs in India

Taxi and auto-rickshaws fares keep changing in India and you may find that they do not always conform to readings on meters. To avoid confusion, insist on seeing the latest fare chart available with taxi/auto-rickshaw drivers and pay accordingly. Taxis and auto-rickshaws do not have meters in all cities, but where they do, insist on the meter being flagged in your presence. In case the driver refuses to cooperate, seek the assistance of a policeman. Where there are no meters, ask for assistance at your hotel and agree on the taxi fare in advance.

Source: NDTV Travels

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Australia offers scholarships to British students

Universities in New Zealand and Australia are offering scholarships to British students unable to get university admission through Clearing. The financial aid offers have been prompted by media reports that there is a scramble for seats at British universities due to the rush to avoid the £3,000 (US \$ 5,429) top-up fees.

Chris Madden, pro-Vice-Chancellor of Griffith University in Queensland was quoted by the *Times Online* as saying, "Tuition fees are the biggest change British universities have had in years. Before they were importers, but now with tuition fees, and given the exchange rates, the cost of studying here is not much."

Griffith University, which has 30,000 students of which 7,000 are international, is offering a full scholarship for tuition fees, which is open to all except medical students. According to the *Times Online* report, last year around 1,400 British students chose to study in New Zealand and Australia taking up courses such as dentistry, veterinary science and physiotherapy. Other universities such as Macquarie University, Curtin University of Technology, Tasmania University, Newcastle University, James Cook and the University of Canterbury in New Zealand are also offering financial aid to British students.

Source: ["Australia to fund students who miss out in rush,"
Times Online, August 30, 2005](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

Indian business school gets AICTE rap

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has withdrawn recognition to Amity Business School (ABS), Noida, from the current academic year. According to the AICTE, the decision was taken following reports that teaching quality at ABS Noida was below standard and unapproved courses, including foreign university courses, were being taught at the school. Also, ABS has been pulled up for charging high tuition fees, allegedly to the tune of Rs 15 lakh (US \$ 34,207) for some courses.