

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

U.K. Plans Deals with India, Russia, South Africa and China

Britain is planning to triple its exports in education through a slew of partnerships with some of the world's most economically dynamic, populous and education-hungry countries: India, Russia, South Africa and China, Gordon Brown, chancellor of the exchequer, announced in his budget speech last week.

The new budget, which followed warnings from many British universities that the U.K. is attracting fewer and fewer students from outside the European Union, also included incentives in the form of new, easier-to-get work permits for graduates of English universities. "From May this year, we will make it easier for those with specialist skills who graduate from English universities to work here for one year," the chancellor said.

Source: Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2006 Budget statement, available on the [U.K. government website](#).

OVER THE COUNTER

Blair: Developed Countries Must "Gear Up" to Face China and India

Western countries are going to have to ramp up their education spending considerably if they want their universities to remain competitive against emerging rivals in China and India, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said last week.

"China is building over the next few years world-class universities that are going to be places of research and development and academic excellence that I believe will compete with anything in the developed world, including in America," Mr. Blair said to a gathering of British and Australian political and business leaders in Canberra. "We've got to gear ourselves back up again." India, he said, is already producing more qualified engineers than the entire European Union.

Source: "[Pep Talk to MPs over India and China](#)," *The Age*, March 28, 2006

THE PLAYING FIELD

International Graduate Applications Up in U.S.

American graduate schools may have turned a corner on the post-9/11 slump. According to a report released last week by the Council of Graduate Schools, foreign applications were up by about 11 per cent last fall.

"Clearly the broad gains are welcome news," said CGS President Debra Stewart. "Applications are up from all countries and regions that we study" including India (up by 23 per cent) and China (21 per cent).

Ms. Stewart cited improvements in universities' admissions systems and better self-marketing, as well as improvements in the U.S. government's visa processing system, as likely reasons for the increase.

She cautioned, however, that "it would be a mistake to presume that things are back to normal," as numbers are still down from 2003. U.S. graduate schools suffered a 32-per-cent drop in applications from 2003 to 2005.

Sources: "[International Students Show New Interest in Coming to U.S.](#)," Associated Press, reprinted by *Houston Chronicle*, March 22, 2006 and "[International Graduate Applications Up, but Still Below 2003 Levels](#)," *Research Research*, March 23, 2006

GLOBE TIPPING

Gratuities Around the World

Conventions regarding tipping are far from universal. In many eastern Asian countries, such as Japan and Korea, it is never done, and restaurant-goers leaving change behind on a table may well end up being chased by a waiter trying to return their money. In Egypt it's common for local people to ask for *bakshish* (which also means "bribe") for all sorts of services. Useful tips on tipping around the world can be found on the web sites of the [BBC](#), [Wikipedia](#) and [Time Asia](#).