

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Student Visa Scam Feared in U.K. After Spike in Numbers

Britain's opposition Conservatives say the country's current student visa system could be admitting huge numbers of non-students. The number of student visas issued to people from five countries—Nigeria, Pakistan, India, Turkey and Ghana—increased from 17,723 in 2000 to more than 40,000 in 2004/2005. One Conservative member of Parliament said that the increase coincided with a decline in numbers of asylum-seekers and that the figures suggested an "immigration scam."

In response to questioning in Parliament, Immigration Minister Liam Byrne admitted the U.K. had had a "diminished ability" since 1994 to keep track of the number of student visa holders who returned to their home countries after finishing their studies.

The issue of fraud need not be so daunting. For example, Higher-Edge represents its clients in these countries using a sophisticated screening system to individually explore student bona fides. Its system has been lauded by many Canadian ambassadors and other senior officials. We have found due diligence to be the best defense against abuses of university admission offices.

Source: "[Big Rise in Student Visas Raises Fear of Scams](#)," *The Telegraph*, June 14, 2006

THE PLAYING FIELD

Delhi U.S. Embassy Looks to Surpass Last Year's Student Visa Tally

U.S. embassy officials in Delhi have received more applications for student visas this year than last, and are hoping to top last year's total of 18,000 student visas processed, the embassy's non-immigrant visa chief said earlier this month.

"There are a lot of masters and doctoral candidates applying for visas, and this year we are having a sharp increase in applicants wishing to pursue undergraduate studies," Sally Ironfield told New Delhi reporters. "There is no congressionally mandated limit for issuance of student visas. Possibilities are limitless."

Source: "[More U.S. Student Visas for Indians](#)," *The Times of India*, June 14, 2006

OVER THE COUNTER

Students Plan Lawsuit Against Australian University

Thirty Japanese, Thai and Chinese RMIT University students were planning to meet with lawyers last week, claiming the Melbourne-based school misled them about the amount of supervised teaching hours included in its courses.

One of the students paid \$6,700 Aus. (\$4,917 U.S.) for an intensive six-month translating and interpreting course that was to include 300 hours of student contact time, according to the RMIT web site. The course actually included just over 200 hours of student contact, the student claims.

According to the university, the 300 "nominal contact hours" mentioned on its web site includes study at home and also the time instructors take to assess a student's work.

In May, RMIT gave a Thai student \$1,000 Aus. (\$730 U.S.) worth of project material after he complained the university had overcharged him for a \$24,000 Aus. (\$17,600 U.S.) two-year furniture design course. The university, however, denied it had given him the material to compensate him for alleged overcharging.

Source: "[Overseas Students May Sue Over Uni Courses](#)," *The Australian*, June 20, 2006

GLOBE TIPPING

Getting Around in Lagos

The rush "hour" in Nigeria's sprawling (population estimated at anywhere between 8 million and 15 million) generally runs from 3:00 pm and lasts until 9:00 pm. According to the [Economist's Cities Guide](#), travelers making even short trips within the city should allow themselves an hour to get through the crush.

A note on our summer schedule: Not-So-Foreign will be published this summer on July 12, July 26, and August 23, before returning to its weekly schedule in September.