

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Saudi Arabia Announces More Scholarships

Another wave of scholarships will fund the studies of some 7,500 young Saudis in countries including Canada, France, New Zealand, China and India, Saudi Arabia's deputy minister of Higher Education announced recently.

Some 10,000 students from the Kingdom came to the U.S. on the King Abdullah Scholarship Program last September (see [Not-So-Foreign, Sept. 13, 2006](#)). As expected, the Saudi government last month announced another 5,000 scholarships for studies beginning this year. It also unveiled plans for the "third stage" of the program, involving 7,500 scholarships. It's unclear from news reports what academic periods will be covered by this third stage.

Among the 5,000 scholarships were 300 to fund studies in New Zealand—a windfall the New Zealand government estimates will mean more than \$10 million NZ (\$6.8 million U.S.) in economic gains to the country each year.

Sources: "[5,000 More Scholarships for Higher Studies Abroad](#)," *Arab News*, Jan. 28, 2007; "[New Zealand Universities Attract over 300 Saudi Arabian Students](#)," *Workpermit.com*, Feb. 7, 2007

OVER THE COUNTER

U.K. Schools Target Foreign Students with Tailor-Made Programs

British universities are reported to be increasingly offering programs specially designed to appeal to the demands of international students.

The University of Edinburgh, for example, launched last year an MSc program in International Business and Emerging Markets. Among the topics covered by the program are the challenges faced by Indian and Chinese companies interested in investing internationally. And the University of Greenwich recently started offering a full-time MSc in biomedical sciences because so many international students expressed interest in it.

Source: "[U.K. Varsities Tailor Courses for Indians](#)," *Business Standard*, Jan. 15, 2007

THE PLAYING FIELD

Australian Academics Report Pressure to Pass Foreign Students

Weeks after the release of a controversial report on English-language levels among international students in Australia, some academics in the country are complaining of having been pressured to give unmerited passing grades to students from overseas.

At least one Australian academic is reported to have resigned his post because of pressure he says was put on him by senior staff at the university to pass foreign students he says shouldn't have come close to passing.

"If it were a mark out of 100, I would have given them a five and yet I was told to somehow get them through," the academic, who asked not to be named, told one Australian newspaper.

Another lecturer said she estimated about half her students had plagiarized their written assignments because the level of English in them was so much higher than the speaking ability they showed in class. She said a colleague warned her against failing her students.

The rash of anecdotes follows the release early this year of a study by an Australian demographer, according to which a third of international graduates of Australian universities have such low standards of English that they shouldn't have been accepted in the first place.

Australian Education Minister Julie Bishop has said she has seen no evidence that foreign students who deserve to fail because of their English are getting passing grades.

Sources: "[Free Pass to Foreigners](#)," *The Courier-Mail*, Feb. 10, 2007; "[Pressured to Pass Poor Students](#)," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Jan. 30, 2007

GLOBE TIPPING

Tipping Taking Hold in China

Leaving gratuities was until recently almost unheard of in China, but as capitalism has taken hold on the country, tipping has become more widely practiced and more widely expected. Still, travelers to China aren't expected to tip everywhere—cab drivers don't expect to be tipped, although waiters at more expensive hotels might.