

THE PLAYING FIELD

France rolls out red carpet for foreign students

French universities are viewing foreign students as tools to increase their brand value in an increasingly competitive global education marketplace. Institutions such as Sciences Po are opening up to the international student community by adapting their admissions procedure for foreign students and creating a financial aid programme for overseas students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The institute currently accepts students from 260 universities worldwide.

The American University of Paris (AUP), a U.S. institution established in France, was one of the first institutions to publicise the country's new outreach policy. Of AUP's 900 students, 15 percent are French, 35 percent American, 9 percent from the Middle East and the remainder from various European countries. AUP even has counselors who specialize in geographical areas, deciphering transcripts, establishing relationships with international schools abroad and communicating with the students.

Other institutes are fast joining the bandwagon. Take for example, the Reims Management School, in the Champagne Ardenne region of eastern France, which has gained accreditation for its Master's business programs from the Association of MBAs, a global network of business schools based in London. Reims now has students of 17 nationalities in its international MBA class and 65 percent of its full-time MBA students are international students.

Source: ["France takes the plunge into globalized education," International Herald Tribune, Feb.12, 2007](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

UK exam boards asked to switch to Pakistani grading system

The Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), responsible for coordinating between the different boards of intermediate and secondary education in Pakistan, wants British boards such as Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and Edexcel to adopt the local grading system. According to the IBCC, students of British boards seem to be getting higher grades than those examined by local Pakistani boards.

IBCC is demanding that the two boards start announcing the examination results subject-wise and the Grade Point Average (GPA)-based results should be replaced by the result displaying the total numbers scored by the students in every subject.

Earlier, representatives of the two British boards had requested the IBCC to consider their O and A levels certification equivalent to the Pakistani matric (secondary school certificate) and intermediate (higher secondary school certificate). The international boards also wanted their students to be allowed admission in public colleges and universities on open merit.

Source: ["IBCC asks UK education boards to abandon GPA system," Daily Times, Pakistan, Feb. 10, 2007](#)

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

UNESCO portal on recognised higher education institutions

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) plans to develop a portal aimed at increasing the transparency of quality provision in cross-border higher education. The pilot project on Recognised Higher Education Institutions will provide free and easy access to online resources on validated institutions and programmes in a number of countries. Each of the countries under the project will be responsible for generating their own national content on the website. The project is a follow-up to the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

Source: [UNESCO website](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

Travel during Holi

The Indian festival of colours, *Holi*, will be held on March 3 this year. Travellers to North India and many cities in West and East India such as Mumbai and Kolkata be warned! Enthusiastic locals have a tendency to spray colour and water on unsuspecting passerbys so it is best to put away your fine clothes if stepping outside your hotel. Also, it is not uncommon for taxi drivers to consume *bhang*, a drink containing cannabis that can leave them too intoxicated to drive safely. So be cautious about using taxis.