

## THE PLAYING FIELD

### *EU help for Lebanese varsities*

The Quality Assurance for Higher Education in Lebanon (QAHEL), a project aimed at improving higher education across universities in the country has been launched. The project is being funded by Tempus, the European Union's program for cooperation in higher learning.

"The idea is to use Europe's experience in the field to illustrate the advantages and problems linked to the development of quality management in higher education," said Dr Mohammad Loutfi, the administrator of the project grant, to the Beirut-based *Daily Star* newspaper.

The Bologna Process, which was initiated in 1999, to create a unified higher education area in Europe, will be used as a general guideline for the QAHEL.

Source: "EU helps Lebanese universities improve standards," *The Daily Star*, Feb. 22, 2007

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *India to regulate foreign institutes*

After much discussion and debate in government circles, last Thursday the Indian Cabinet cleared the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill. The Bill is a vindication of the Human Resource Development ministry's stand, which proposed that foreign education providers be regulated and follow national laws, including reservation. Reservation is the Indian system of reserving significant classroom allocations for the lower strata of Indian society (those who are both culturally and economically at the bottom).

According to the bill, the University Grants Commission (UGC), India's higher education watchdog, will play a predominant role in regulating foreign educational institutions (FEI). All FEIs will receive deemed university status. A deemed university is an institution that has been given university status under a provision in the University Grants Commission Act of 1956.

All regulations of the UGC Act, which are applicable to deemed universities in India, including admission, fee fixation and quality teaching standards, will be applicable to FEIs.

Source: "[Foreign institutes to be regulated](#)," *The Times of India*, Feb. 23, 2007

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *Austria in row with EC over student quotas*

The European Commission (EC) has initiated legal action against Austria for capping the number of foreign students at its universities at 25 percent. Austria's quotas were imposed mainly to restrict the number of Germans studying medicine in the country, most of whom return home after their studies leaving the Austrian health system with a lack of doctors. The EC, however, is pushing for equal access of all EU students to Austrian medical education facilities.

Source: "[Austria attacks Brussels over student quotas](#)," *EU Observer*, Feb. 7, 2007

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *Moscow's airports*

Moscow has two airports, both of which offer domestic flights. So be sure which airport is your destination. Check-in counters may only open 90 minutes before departure. If your checked bags are over the posted weight limit, you will be sent to a separate desk to pay the fee, then you will have to return to the initial check-in counter to collect your boarding pass after you show your payment receipt. Over-sized bags, such as display poster tubes, will be taken to a third counter.

Security can be time-consuming, so make sure you have sufficient time on hand; there are checks to enter the airport building, as well as to get into the gate section. You will need to show your passport, paper airplane ticket and boarding pass to enter the secure area. You do not need to show your laptop, but you will have to remove your coat and shoes. You will also be patted down by security.