

THE PLAYING FIELD

Malaysia promotes itself as education hub

Malaysia has stepped up efforts to promote itself as a quality education hub in Asia. The government has travelled to Kenya, Dubai and Vietnam as part of a promotional drive to attract foreign students. Vietnam, with a population of 80 million, is a potential market because of a growing rich middle class and economy driven by much foreign direct investments. China is being viewed as another important student market. An education delegation headed by the Malaysian Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed is currently visiting Beijing and Shanghai.

According to Mustapa, Malaysia already ranked behind the United Kingdom, United States and Australia in popularity among Vietnamese students and urged more Malaysian institutions to explore partnerships in Vietnam. "We want to do better and we have our strong points too because of our proximity with Vietnam and the students can obtain U.K. and U.S. degree courses in Malaysia at cheaper costs through twinning programmes," he said. The government is also trying to partner with top foreign universities for academic exchanges.

Source: "[Malaysia stepping up efforts to woo international students](#)," [The New Straits Times Online](#), November 14, 2007

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

New security checks for foreign students in Britain

Britain has introduced a new system of security checks for foreign graduate students to prevent sensitive scientific information from being used in other countries to develop weapons of mass destruction. The new program requires students from outside the European Economic Area and Switzerland to complete an online questionnaire asking about their backgrounds and families. The documents will be vetted by British security agencies before the students can apply for visas to enter the country.

The list of 41 disciplines at issue under the new program includes biology, physics, chemistry, engineering and mathematics. The government estimates that about 14,000 students will be affected each year. Foreign undergraduate students will not be affected by the new program, which came into effect from November 1, 2007.

Source: "[New UK Vetting for Foreign Students](#)," [Associated Press](#), November 7, 2007

OVER THE COUNTER

Foreign students' visa deal expanded

Britain's Home Office will soon allow students outside the European Union to stay in the country for two years after they graduate.

Earlier, only graduates of Scottish universities were allowed to remain in the Scotland for two years after graduation as part of the Fresh Talent Initiative. ([see issue dated June 22, 2005](#)). However, this arrangement drew flak from English universities who felt they were losing out on foreign students opting to study in Scotland.

Source: "[Foreign students' visa deal expanded](#)," [The Herald](#), November 12, 2007

GLOBE TIPPING

Flight Stats

Before you head to the airport to catch that important flight, check out www.flightstats.com. This useful web site tracks flight status, flight departures, flight arrivals, airport delays and other flight and airport information in real time. One can check flight status in the web site's search engine by entering one's flight, route or airport. The web site also has sections on travel planning, travel tools, maps and country information sheets which are really useful when flying overseas.