

THE PLAYING FIELD

Ireland to double foreign students

Ireland's Higher Education Authority (HEA) plans to double the number of full-time foreign university students in Ireland over the next ten years. According to the HEA, the Irish education system should adopt a more international focus and integrate non-Irish students into activities at universities and colleges.

There are 12,000 non-Irish tertiary students now studying in Ireland. The tertiary education sector in Ireland consists of universities, institutes of technology, and colleges of education (collectively known as higher education institutions or HEIs). Of these, more are from the United States - 2,416 students, or 20% - than any other single country. Malaysia follows with 1,134 students. Britain, Germany, and China are the remaining three countries sending the maximum amount of students. Overall, there are students from 114 different countries studying in Ireland.

"Ireland will have to be careful," says Mel Broitman, Higher-Edge Managing Director in Asia. "We've seen previously where Ireland has virtually shut out student visa applicants in some countries due to the significant numbers of fraudulent applicants promoted by the recruitment agencies Irish institutions have engaged."

Source: "[HEA plans to double foreign students.](#)"
[RTE News, April 7, 2008](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

China Bans Multiple-Entry Visas?

There have been recent reports that China is banning multiple-entry visas for foreigners ahead of this summer's Olympic Games. This could mean complications for business travelers. Several visa agents across Hong Kong, a popular entry point into mainland China, said they received direct word from the China visa office here last week that it was barring the popular multiple-entry visas for foreigners effective immediately and until after the Olympics in Beijing this August. Single- and double-entry visas are being issued instead, they said.

Source: "[Hong Kong Travel Agents Say China Bans Multiple-Entry Visas.](#)" [The Wall Street Journal, April 8, 2008](#)

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Warning to Scottish universities over rise in overseas students

Foreign postgraduate students in Scotland are fast exceeding the number of domestic students in the country. In 2000, there were just 7395 postgraduates from outside the U.K., compared to 13,660 from Scotland, but sharp annual increases since then have seen the gap close dramatically. Last year, there were 15,540 overseas postgraduates in Scotland, compared to the 15,855 local students. The increase can be attributed to a huge surge in applications from students outside the European Union, from countries such as China and India. With foreign students paying full fees, universities greatly benefit from having significant overseas student numbers.

According to *The Herald*, Tony Axon, policy officer for the lecturers' union UCU Scotland, said: "There is a possibility universities start skewing what they do to suit overseas students, because they are the ones paying the highest fees. That could cause problems for Scottish-based students. If the driver is purely an economic one, then that should be resisted. There has to be an academic rationale for all courses on offer."

Mr Axon also warned about becoming "over-reliant" on the fees of overseas students. "Countries such as China and India are building huge universities and there is a danger that, as students go to universities in their own countries, the market will suddenly collapse," he added.

Source: "[Warning to universities over rise in overseas students.](#)" [The Herald, April 7, 2008](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

University of Massachusetts to Offer Online Classes in China

According to a report in *The Boston Globe*, the University of Massachusetts will be the first international university to offer government-sanctioned online classes in China. The University will offer the classes for the next five years, reaching up to 5,000 students a year throughout the country, generating \$5 million a year as revenues for the university. UMassOnline, the university's online arm, is one of the largest accredited distance-learning programs, offering 1,500 courses to about 33,000 students.

Source: "[University of Massachusetts makes deal to offer online classes in China.](#)" [International Herald Tribune, April 1, 2008](#)