

THE PLAYING FIELD

U.S. universities eye British students

In a bid to attract overseas students, particularly those from the U.K., American universities are increasingly relying upon recruitment agencies and lucrative scholarship schemes. U.S. institutions are prohibited from using agents to recruit domestic students. The ban does not apply to foreign students.

With the cost of an undergraduate degree in the U.K. estimated at £ 40,000 (\$ 70,325 U.S.), scholarship-aided U.S. university degrees are becoming more appealing. The exact numbers for the last academic year are due from the Institute of International Education's Open Doors Report in early November. But last year's figures showed an increase of 2% in 2006-07 (8,438) in the numbers of Britons heading to the States for their higher education.

According to Will Archer, director of the research firm i-graduate, "The U.S. is the largest market for international students and yet it has not had a particularly commercial approach. Now that this has been recognised, there's real movement from an increasing number of universities to appoint education agents."

Source: ["American universities target British students."](#) *Guardian*, September 8, 2008

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Finland to charge tuition fees from foreign students on trial basis

Finland is planning to start charging tuition fees from foreign students. A five-year trial program in which foreign students from outside the European Union and the European Economic Area will be charged tuition fees to attend Finnish universities is set to begin in 2010.

The universities will be allowed to decide on the appropriate tuition to be charged. A few years ago, a working group proposed a range of between EUR 3,500 (\$ 4,942 U.S.) and EUR 12,000 (\$ 16,946 U.S.).

Source: ["Tuition fees for foreign students to be introduced on trial basis in 2010,"](#) *Helsingin Sanomat*, August 15, 2008

OVER THE COUNTER

Australian visa for higher education gets tougher for Indians

Abuse of the Australian visa laws by foreign students have led to the country adopting stringent procedures recently. India is among nine other countries which have seen their immigration risk assessment levels upgraded from three to four on a scale of five beginning September 1, 2008. Assessment Level 1 represents the lowest immigration risk and Assessment Level 5 the highest.

While these changes will not affect "genuine" students, applicants will now need to submit a higher level of evidence of their English language ability, academic qualifications and their financial capacity to support themselves during their studies in Australia." Indian students seeking to enrol in the higher education sector will have to demonstrate that they can financially support themselves for 36 months instead of the earlier 24 months.

Source: ["Australian visa for higher education gets tougher for Indians,"](#) *The Economic Times*, September 3, 2008

GLOBE TIPPING

Using seat belts abroad

If travelling in your car at home has gotten you used to the idea of wearing seat belts, be cautioned that regulations in some countries are not as stringent. At times, one may find a seat belt strap but no buckle, or a seat belt only in the front but not in the back seats. In India for instance, you may also find dubious looking seat belts being sold at street corners. Please be advised that you would probably be safer without having one of these! In cities such as Beijing and Karachi, wearing a seat belt is not a requirement of the law at all, or a requirement only while driving in certain parts of the city.

One will find drivers who go as far as draping the strap across their laps without actually buckling-up. If conscientious about using a seat belt, one's best bet is to sit in the front where a seat belt is usually found. Taxi drivers may often load the front passenger seat with personal effects, so calmly insist that space be made for one to occupy that seat.