

OVERSEAS, OVERWHELMED

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Abroad Perspective

The Beijing Education and Testing Institute will introduce a 3+X pattern for college entrance examinations this spring. Eighteen provinces and cities have already implemented this plan, in which the number "3" stands for mandatory subjects - Chinese, mathematics and a foreign language (either English, Russian or Japanese), and the letter "x" represents the stream taken by the student (either arts or sciences).

In addition to the three main subjects, students applying for the arts stream take a comprehensive test combining history, geography and politics; those who apply for sciences get tested in physics, chemistry and biology.

This new standardized testing system may represent a more consistent and reliable tool for institutions which are processing Chinese student applications.

For further insight on the Chinese market, contact Dani Zaretsky at dani@higher-edge.com

Let's Go Canada!

Student unions have an important role to play in making sure that international students' voices are heard and that they receive the support they need. Jo Holliday, International Student Advisor at the University of Sheffield in the UK, provides ideas on how student unions can become *internationalized*.

International students should be given the opportunity to influence decision-making through an International Student Committee, responsible for such things as coordinating social activities and offering language support.

Unions should consider conducting an international audit, with the aim of enabling them to become aware of the barriers preventing international students from participating in specific services and activities, to identify the gaps in service provision, and to identify positive steps and financial implications.

You can find Holliday's complete article at www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/pub.htm ♦

Over The Counter

It may be the most brash education scam yet. It screamed across the front page of the Singapore Straits Times newspaper on February 11, 2002. One can now buy bogus degrees from U.S., U.K. and Australian Universities which are "verified" as legitimate.

It's not cheap, but for 7,000 USD you can buy a veritable undergraduate degree from Monash University in Australia. Graduate degrees are a little more expensive, at 9,000 USD. Australian institutions are the chief targets of the scam, but even renowned U.S. universities such as Duke and Wisconsin, and Cambridge in the U.K., are advertised as having degrees which can be bought and verified as real.

The scam was only uncovered after one internet domain site, "Australia.edu" was found to be a base for advertising and offering fake degrees to Malaysians and Singaporeans.

Even more chilling to those concerned with the integrity of real degrees are allegations that the crooks have hacked into university computer systems, and worse, have accomplices inside the institutions. ♦

Globe Tipping

Airlines' regrouping under two major alliances over the last few years has greatly simplified the lives of frequent travelers.

Star Alliance regroupes 12 airlines, servicing 894 airports in 129 countries worldwide. As a member of any Star Alliance airline frequent flyer program, such as Air Canada's Aeroplan, you can accrue miles/points on all Star Alliance airline flights in a relatively fast way. You can then redeem these for award travel on any of the alliance's 12 participating airlines.

Oneworld, the second major alliance regroupes eight other airlines and functions in much the same way.

Most Frequent flyer reward plans have extended their partnerships and allow you to gain points through hotel reservations, car rentals, financial transactions, and more. Check www.aircanada.ca/aeroplan/partners/ for a complete list of Aeroplan's partners. ♦

Please direct questions and comments to Isabelle Faucher: isabelle@higher-edge.com
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