

OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

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Abroad Perspective - New UK visa fee questioned

A new regulation passed by the British Government requiring foreign (non-European Union) students to pay an additional £155 to £250 (approximately \$340 - \$550 CAD) for a visa application is drawing heat. The British High Commission in Delhi, India claims that the costs will go to supporting administrative functions, some critics have gone as far as claiming the move to be exploitative of foreign students. UK Universities, a consortia of 121 UK institutions, has also expressed opposition to the move, claiming it was not involved in the consultation process.

Meanwhile, there is a growing resentment among by British students and administrators who claim some UK institutions restrict local intake to admit foreign students who may be less qualified but pay higher fees.

Sources:

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/stories/2003080802001300.htm> (link unavailable at the time of publication), <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2003/08/06/stories/2003080604711100.htm> (link unavailable at the time of publication) and <http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityaccess/story/0,10670,550147,00.html> •

Over the Counter - Student visa fraud on the front pages

The arrest and detention this past August in Toronto of 22 Pakistanis (and one Indian) on allegations of student visa fraud and suspicion of links to terrorism, highlight the great challenges to curb abuse of international education. The majority of detainees had either entered Canada or extended their stays in Canada by purchasing admission letters from a bogus institution. Leaving the terrorism threat aside, the attempts to use the student visa route to enter Canada illegally is growing, and the difficulties for Canadian visa officers abroad to stem this tide is also growing. The numbers of applications to Canadian schools are rising every year, but the resources spent abroad to screen students and detect fraud are not. The worry is that as legitimate universities and colleges are targeted by fraudulent applications and they do little (or nothing) to verify applicants, Visa Officers will have no choice but to be tougher on the front lines and refuse more applicants, potentially disqualifying more bona fide students in the process. The arrests in Toronto were sensationalized by front page stories of terror links, but the important angle which has been missed thus far is what Canadian schools are doing (and not doing) to avoid being targets of visa scams. We'll have more on what schools should be looking for in next week's Over the Counter. •

Let's Go Canada - New Zealand's example in India

New Zealand universities report staggering growth in their intake of new students from India. The New Zealand High Commission in India says the country's tertiary institution intake from India swelled from 150 in 1999, to 3,000 students in 2003. NZ's Deputy High Commissioner Michael Swain told Indian media that he credits the success of education fairs in promoting New Zealand academic institutions. New Zealand has only eight universities, but they appear with another dozen of the country's tertiary institutions to push the NZ brand in India. The ability to fully brand New Zealand and combine education with the country's wider trade efforts has paid great dividends. Today, New Zealand attracts more Indian students than Canada.

Canada, which has eight times the number of universities compared to New Zealand and ten times the population, in recent years gets fewer universities than New Zealand to appear at Canada's lone education fair in India. As one highly ranked Canadian official in New Delhi told Higher-Edge, given the few Canadian universities who come, Canada does not show itself in India as a high end education destination, but rather as a mishmash of medium to lower end tertiary institutions. Canadian institutions will fly the maple leaf at education fairs in New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore from September 24 to 30.

Source: <http://www.business-standard.com/today/story.asp?Menu=2&story=22776> •

Globe Tipping - Finding a netbar in China's small cities

Locating China's over 180,000* internet cafes, or '*wang ba*', may prove challenging when one is in a remote region. Netbars may look more like corner stores from the outside, may be located in a residential area, and usually do not have English language signs. When looking for an internet cafe, it might be useful to print out the attached file which features the characters for '*wang ba*', and a Chinese phrase to assist in the search.

* Figure based on a 2002 article:

http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200205/17/eng20020517_95869.shtml •

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