

OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

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A Bulletin for Canadian International Education Professionals

This is the last issue of *Overseas, Overwhelmed* for 2003.
We will resume publishing in early January.
Higher-Edge wishes all of its readers a happy holiday season.

Abroad Perspective - Australian Visa Policy Changes

As of December 1, Indian students seeking to study in Australia will need to comply with easier financial regulations to be awarded a visa. As reported in *Overseas, Overwhelmed* 3.30, these visa changes are part of the overarching plan to promote Australian education internationally and to ensure a streamlined visa policy. Indian students previously had to display proof of financial capability for their entire period of study. Under the new rules, it will only be required to provide evidence to finance the first two years of study.

The Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) informed Higher-Edge that more changes to the visa policy are expected to be introduced by July 1, 2004. With the growth of Indian students studying in Australia increasing by 34 percent (Chinese students represented a 23 percent increase), there are expectations that the country may become an even more attractive destination for international students.

Source: "[Australia to relax student visa norms,](#)" *The Economic Times*, 5 December 2003. •

Over the Counter - Sri Lankan Student Choices

Sri Lanka, a country in recent years known more for political tensions and internal strife, can be an alternative source of international students for universities willing to look beyond the conflicts. Following trips in February and October 2003, Higher-Edge found that although the number of students who decide to study overseas for tertiary education is low, those who do tend to consider the US, Britain and Australia as possible destinations. At one particular school however, Singapore was gaining popularity as an alternate choice, given the lower tuition cost, proximity and a "forced" employment rule that says graduates from Singaporean institutes must work for three years in the island state.

Higher-Edge's *From Colombo to Kandy* is an extensive look at the country, and provides universities with additional insight on recruitment possibilities. For more information or to order, visit: <http://www.higher-edge.com/sl.htm>. •

Let's Go Canada - Discussions With CIC

A November 24 meeting between members of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), Case Processing Centre (CPC) Vegreville, Alberta, and Minister Denis Coderre's office discussed delayed visa issuance, and the solutions needed to prevent future problems. The CIC recognized that CPC Vegreville (which processes international student visas) has been faced with staffing issues, and is working towards a solution.

CBIE suggested several possible remedies, which include establishing a specialist to answer complex and specific questions regarding student visas, and modifying the definition of "implied status" for students changing institutions. Jennifer Humphries of CBIE told Higher-Edge that the discussion was very helpful, and that CBIE will be monitoring the proposed solutions and their applications. She stressed the importance of CBIE members communicating with the CIC, as many deal "with the reality of their students fearing deportation." •

Globe Tipping - Holiday Edition

While Christmas is around the corner, for those countries that don't celebrate them, here are some important dates to remember for late 2003, early 2004:

Hanukah: December 20 - 27
Coptic Christmas: January 7
Orthodox New Year: January 14
Chinese New Year: January 22
Hajj: January 30 – February 2
Hijra (Islamic New Year): February 22
Holi (Hindu Spring Festival): March 6

If you are travelling during some of these religious observances and festivals, expect some countries to completely shut down, while in others, banks, government offices and perhaps some streets may only be affected. •

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