

OVERSEAS OVERWHELMED

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EDGE

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LET'S GO CANADA

Taskforce to study overseas students in Australia

The government of Victoria, Australia is setting up a taskforce to examine problems that affect the international education industry, the state's biggest service exporter. Of late, a lot of media attention has been focused on unscrupulous education institutes, corrupt landlords and lack of affordable and safe housing for foreign students in Australia.

The taskforce, responsible to the Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation, Jacinta Allan, will contribute to a new International Education Strategy to counter fierce competition from other countries. According to Allan, 48% of Victoria's international students came from India and China. International education, classified as an export because foreign students buy a service that Victoria provides, contributed \$3.9 billion (\$3.27 billion Cdn.) to the state's economy last year. There were 133,000 foreign students enrolled in 2007, a 25% increase on the year before.

Source: "[Taskforce to study overseas students.](#)"
[The Age, September 19, 2008](#)

OVER THE COUNTER

Pakistan's students suffer as visa centres shut down

With Britain and the United States closing their visa offices in view of the security situation in Pakistan, students interested in studying in these countries are in a fix. While the U.S. visa centre was shut down after the Marriott Hotel blast, the U.K. visa centre had been shut down earlier. In fact, several students who have already got admission in British and U.S. universities are unable to get ahead with the visa process due to this situation.

Source: "[Students suffer as visa centres shut down.](#)"
[Daily Times, September 28, 2008](#)

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Government to inspect Thai universities

Thailand's universities are gearing up for quality assessments to be conducted by the government starting 2010. The parent universities and affiliated learning centres which do not meet standards will not be accredited. "The 2010 assessment will be tough. If any centre fails the assessment, the main campus will not be accredited. The aim is not to pressure them to close the centres, but to stress quality," said Somwung Pitayanuwat, director, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Onesqa).

In 2006, a survey by the Office of the Higher Education Commission found there were 250 to 300 learning centres nationwide, mostly run by Rajabhat universities, which serve around 150,000 students. One province would typically have four such centres. Education Ministry regulations require centres to offer consistent quality, a suitable location, adequate research facilities and at least five full-time lecturers per programme.

Source: "[Universities face tough assessments.](#)"
[Bangkok Post, September 15, 2008](#)

GLOBE TIPPING

The art of giving gifts

When meeting business associates overseas, giving gifts as tokens of appreciation can be an expected custom in some countries, such as in Japan or Egypt. Present gifts with both hands in China and Japan, although only use your right hand when in Malaysia and many other countries.

Another point to remember when selecting a gift is to consider the culture of the country you will be in: alcohol in a predominantly Muslim country would be inappropriate, while a pen, considered a symbol of knowledge in Japan, would be well-received.

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