

# AGENTS

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## IBT Education buys agency in India

IBT EDUCATION, an organisation that provides pre-university and university pathway programmes for international students in its network of colleges in Australia, the UK, Africa, Canada, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, has acquired Study Overseas Limited (SOL), the largest British education consultancy in India, and its associate company Employment Overseas Limited (EOL), for £3.74 million (US\$7.3 million).

SOL currently operates 10 offices throughout India and provides student recruitment services to UK and Australian educational institutions, while EOL, which operates under the business name Study Overseas UK, offers students already in the UK immigration and employment advice from its office in London. It also provides a UK-based student recruitment service for UK and Australian educational institutions.

Chief Executive of IBT Education, Rod Jones, said that the acquisition would expand the company's recruitment network to include the important Indian market, while also providing the company with a presence in the UK. "We are extremely pleased to add SOL's extensive Indian market coverage to our strong student recruitment presence in China through EduGlobal China," commented Jones.

IBT Education has its biggest presence in Australia, with 13 institutions including ACL in Sydney and Darwin, ACE in Sydney and Melbourne and Celusa at the University of South Australia in Adelaide. ■

# Student decline halted in USA

Higher education institutions in the USA received the biggest indication yet of an increasing confidence among international students for US academic programmes after the annual Open Doors census revealed a halt to declining numbers of overseas students in the 2005/2006 academic year.

The survey produced by the Institute of International Education (IIE) indicates that international student numbers plateaued at 564,766 for the 2005/2006 academic year, an almost identical figure to the previous year's total of 565,039.

Numbers of international students studying in US universities and colleges have been suffering a downturn since 2002/2003, when numbers peaked at 586,323. For this first time this year, the survey noted the number of new students enrolling – as well as overall international student body – and reported an increase of eight per cent in new admissions.

Reasons for this change lie partly with more concerted efforts made by institutions themselves to market their courses to students overseas. Faiza Shereen, Director of the International Center at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, CA, said, "We have a goal of increasing the number of international students on campus, and we have a more aggressive, pro-active strategy for recruitment." Shereen added

that the statistics showed a "recognition among institutions of the value international students bring, and consequently a commitment to recruit and facilitate the process for their enrolment."

The most important nationalities remained the same as before – India, China, Korea and Japan. However, both the Indian and Japanese markets saw numbers decline last year, by five per cent and eight per cent respectively, while the best performing markets included Nepal,

which increased by 25 per cent; South Korea, by 10 per cent; and Hong Kong, by nine per cent.

The more positive survey results coincide with growing government recognition for the need to foster educational exchange. At the end of 2006 a delegation of US government and higher education officials, including US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, went on a seven-day trip to Japan, South Korea and China to promote US education in these countries. ■

## Rules for private colleges under the spotlight in Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA in Canada has announced plans to draft new regulations for the 500 private career colleges and career training institutes in the province after the Chinese government issued a warning to students about the lack of regulation among private education institutions in Canada.

The Chinese Education Ministry has warned Chinese students wanting to study in Canada to avoid private post-secondary schools due to doubts about standards. Students were instead encouraged to choose public institutions regulated by the government. Jianhui Xia from the Chinese consulate in Vancouver said that China was not able to distinguish between good and bad private institutions, adding, "We want to protect our students from being cheated."

Canada has meanwhile announced it is to extend its off-campus work permit programme for students to include those enrolled in private higher education institutions. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Monte Solberg, said that the government was in discussions with interested provinces and territories to extend the scheme on a pilot basis. "We want to help more international students get the Canadian work experience they need to adjust to life in Canada, particularly if they wish to stay," he said.

The off-campus work permit allows 20 hours of work per week and more during holidays. Since the programme was launched in April last year (see *Education Travel Magazine*, March 2006, page 53), over 8,300 students have signed up. ■

NZ appoints education counsellor in India  
New Zealand has appointed a South Asia education counsellor in India in order to strengthen the education relationship between the two countries. This complements other education counsellors that have been appointed in Beijing, Brussels, Washington and Kuala Lumpur. Counsellors are also to be appointed in Santiago and Seoul in the future.

Finance for Chinese students who return home  
The China Scholarship Council has introduced a sponsorship programme that will provide 5,000 students with funding every year on the condition that they return to China after their studies. Eligibility will depend on a student's course of study and they will receive travelling costs for one round trip, as well as living expenses.

Student decline in UK  
The number of non-EU international students enrolling on their first year of study at a UK university decreased by seven per cent between the 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 academic years, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. This is the second year that such students enrolling on their first course of higher education study in the UK has shown a decline.

Koreans use mobile phones to study  
Korean students can now use their mobile phones to study for the Toeic and Toefl English language exams after KTF, Korea's second-largest wireless operator, started offering users educational content. For a monthly fee of US\$3.7, subscribers can receive programmes relating to the English language exams. Around 1.9 million Koreans take the Toeic exam every year.

Australian cricket programme launched in India  
Education Adelaide and the South Australian Cricket Association have developed a new programme to encourage Indian students to study cricket in South Australia. The cricket courses, which include study tours of two and three weeks, as well as summer and winter holiday coaching clinics, were launched late last year. Education Adelaide hopes to expand the programme in the future by working with universities, colleges and secondary schools to develop further study options.

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q&a



Full name: Education and Training Export Consortium  
Year established: 2004  
Organisation's main role: to promote the export of California education and training services in Asia by matching the needs of international clients with providers; developing channels for marketing education services; and providing a network for collaboration.  
Full contact details:  
Education & Training Export Consortium (ETEC), 14745 Riverside Drive, Riverside, CA 92518, USA.  
Tel: +1 9095716458  
Fax: +1 9096531051  
Email: mdcprmanager@rcc.edu  
Web: www.educationsocal.com

What promotional activities have you been involved in recently?

For the second year ETEC coordinated a highly successful business-networking event in conjunction with FCS Shanghai. The reception in Shanghai in October matched more than 20 licensed study abroad agencies from Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou and Jiangsu with representatives from Cal State Los Angeles, Concordia University and Santa Ana College. Nine schools from California, Florida and Ohio also joined the ETEC delegation at the OCSC Student Fair in Bangkok Thailand in November last year. California schools repre-

sented included: California State Universities East Bay, Monterrey Institute of International Studies, UNiversity of La Verne, Pepperdine Graziadio School of Business and University of California Riverside, Extension.

Do you work directly with education agents at all? ETEC is committed to matching qualified study agents in Asia with our member schools.

What challenges do you members face? Since January 2004, ETEC has coordinated 15 meetings with representatives of California universities, colleges and for-profit

education service providers. These meetings have identified some key challenges that members face promoting US education services including: competition from neighbouring states and English speaking countries, visa acceptance in emerging markets, limited marketing and travel budgets and lack of brand awareness. Interested agents are encouraged to contact ETEC to learn more about our organisation and how we might assist study agents worldwide to establish further linkages with CA education providers. ETEC will also be leading a delegation of California education providers to China and SE Asia in 2007.