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Many avenues for info to choose right foreign varsity

I REFER to last Saturday's letter by Mr Pavithran Vidyadharan, 'Set up accreditation panel for foreign varsities', suggesting that the Government set up an accreditation agency to screen degrees awarded by foreign universities and colleges.

There are a few thousand universities and colleges in the world and it would be a mammoth task for anyone to put these institutions through a single accreditation process.

In the home countries where foreign universities operate, there are already credible accreditation agencies doing a good job of putting their universities through a quality assurance process.

In the United States, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation is one such agency.

There are various bodies in Singapore which exist to help parents make the right university choice, depending on which country their child is going to. These include the US Education Information Centre, British Council, IDP Australia, New Zealand High Commission and Canadian Education Centre. They represent the five major destination countries for Singapore students.

Parents can also check the following websites for more information: Council for Higher Education Accreditation US (www.chea.org); Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Britain (www.qaa.org.uk); Australian Universities Quality Agency (www.auqa.edu.au), Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (www.aucc.ca) and New Zealand Educated (www.newzealandeducated.com).

For foreign universities offering degrees in Singapore, parents can consult the Guide to Recognised Universities in Singapore at www.edupoll.org, which features more than 100 foreign universities offering degree programmes in Singapore. These degree programmes are offered in partnership with local universities, polytechnics, private education institutions or through their own locally set-up campuses.

Going forward, the new Council for Private Education set up by the Ministry of Education is likely to play a key role in screening foreign universities which offer degree programmes in Singapore.

So, as it is, there are information channels available in Singapore for parents to check if a certain foreign university is bona fide and accredited by a recognised accreditation agency.

Jaren Chan

Director

Edupoll.org

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