

MABECS

MONITOR

Issue No. 1

July 1989

Message from Tan Sri Dato' Haji Murad, Chairman of MABECS

I am delighted to have the chance to introduce you to the first edition of this Newsletter produced by MABECS.

Making the right choice about your further studies is never easy. The content of some subjects is constantly changing. In certain degree courses such as electronics or computing, if the final year course has not changed by the time you graduate, that course will be old-fashioned and out-of-date! Even in more traditional subjects like accountancy or law, courses are more varied than they used to be. Courses in different institutions may have the same title, but the content will be very different. Universities and polytechnics are beginning to concentrate on specific aspects of these subjects to cater for the many different needs of today's world. You must find out the content of the various courses before making your decision.

The MONITOR will try to guide you in making that decision, but cannot tell you everything. That would be impossible. One reason is that there are over 100 institutions in the UK offering thousands of different degree courses. Our counsellors do not aim just to provide you with information and nothing else. They also think it is important to help you look for and interpret information yourself. They point out the major differences between different courses and make you aware of the wide range of opportunities available to you.

They can, of course, advise you on which questions to ask when finding out about a particular course and provide some of the answers. The final decision is up to you, though. It is a very vital one and needs a lot of thought. Your choice of degree is a major decision that could affect the rest of your life. Think about it carefully and wisely!

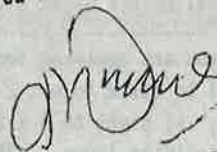
We hope the MONITOR will help you do this. In each copy of the MONITOR you will be able to

find out about the subject areas of most interest to Malaysians. In this edition, for instance, there is a feature on Law. Later we will cover Accountancy, Business Studies, Architecture, Computer subjects, Engineering, Pharmacy and Medicine. We will have regular features on application procedures, explaining the advantages of applying early as well as what to do if you apply late. There will be a series of articles examining the crucial matter of the cost of overseas education as well as features on some of the Universities, Polytechnics, Central Institutions and Colleges of Higher Education.

There will be articles on various aspects of living and studying in Britain like the weather and how to cope with it, obtaining visas and finding accommodation. We will also tell you when British universities are visiting Malaysia. Finally, there will be competitions and quizzes with prizes offered by British institutions. Why not have a go?

Please write in with any questions about studying in Britain. Your participation can help us make the MONITOR for you!

The MONITOR is edited by the Senior Adviser to MABECS, Mr. David Guard. Our aim is to give students and their parents information that can be read at leisure about British Higher Education and Degree courses. Having worked with David for 15 years, I know you can depend upon him to give you honest and accurate advice.



Tan Sri Dato' Hj. Murad Mohd. Noor
Chairman (Former Director-General of
Education, Malaysia)

APPLICATIONS FOR DEGREE COURSES

DEGREE courses at British Universities, Polytechnics, Central Institutions and Colleges of Higher Education start in the first week of October or the last week of September.

The best time to apply for a place is before December of the previous year.

Applications to Universities are all made through UCCA, the Universities Central Council on Admissions.

Applications for the first year of degree courses at Polytechnics and at many Colleges of Higher Education are made through PCAS (Polytechnics Central Admissions System).

For places on degree courses at the Scottish Central Institutions application is made on their own individual forms direct to each institution.

You may apply to all three groups at the same time, through UCCA and through PCAS and to the Scottish Central Institutions, but it is best to do it before December of the year before you wish to go.

But ... I will not have got my results by then!

Quite right. 95% of applications for UK degree courses are made before the qualifying examination results are known.

Then how do they know whether I'm a good student or not?

Firstly, they will look at your SPM results. Secondly, they will look at the forecast of your exam results. Finally, they will take into account the reference written for you by your school Principal.

But ... how will they know whether to give me a place?

They will, we hope, give you an offer of a place on condition that you obtain certain results in your exams as long as your forecasts, etc. look good.

What sort of conditional offers might I get?

It depends on what you are applying for, and where. For Medicine you might be asked to get 2 X A grades and a B. For Accountancy, it might be 3 X B grades, for Civil Engineering it could be lower. The more popular a course or fewer the places available, the higher the grades. Generally, but not always, universities ask for higher grades than do Polytechnics, for the same course.

Why not wait until I've got my results?

Because most places are already promised by the end of

December, especially in the most competitive subjects. So if you wait until, say, March, even if you have a 4 X A grades you might not get a place, because all the places have been promised already.

But ... I know people who got places at the very last minute.

Quite right. There are always a few places left at the last minute, because students drop out, for instance, but there is a lot of luck in it, and you have almost no choice in the matter of where you go. You take the offer or go without.

So ... if I apply early I am sure to get a place?

No! If you apply before December in the previous year you are much more likely to get an offer of a place. To get a place you have to meet the conditions of the offer. And whether you get an offer or not depends on how good a student you have been so far, what you apply for, and where you apply (and even how well you complete your application form).

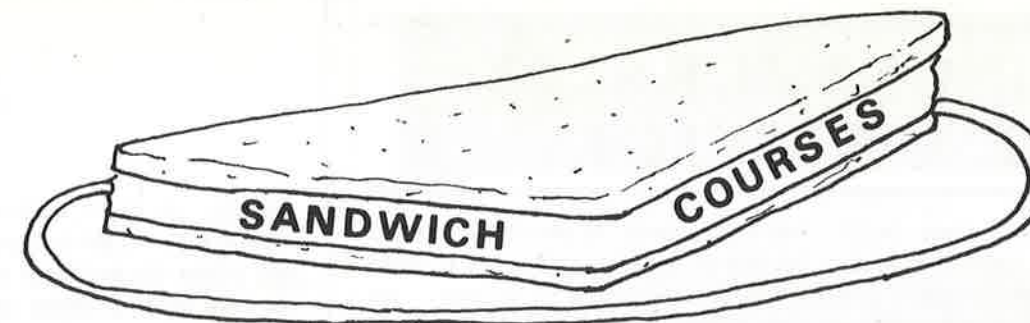
PUZZLE

The West Midlands Higher Education Football League, Fourth Division, is nearing the end of the season's matches. Unfortunately, the League Secretary has mislaid the pieces of paper on which he had kept the results. Fortunately, he has a fairly good memory and so was able to complete the table of results shown below. Unfortunately, no one is perfect including the secretary; he has got one figure wrong:

Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals for	Goals Against
Aston Aardvarks	2	0	2		4	4
Birmingham Butterflies		1	0		3	1
Coventry Casuals	2					
Warwick Wonders	3	3			5	3

Which figure was wrong? What should it be? Find the correct score in each match played that season.

A small prize will be presented to the sender of the first correct and complete solution received by Vanessa Lim, MABECS Sdn. Bhd., No. 9, Jalan Barat, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.



WHAT

is a 'Sandwich Course'?

A 'sandwich course' is not part of a degree in Hotel and Catering Management! It is a degree course just like any other except that 12 months supervised work experience are a key part of the programme. Because not everybody has the same tastes there are two main types of sandwich courses. The 'thick' sandwich has a single filling of one year's continuous work experience in the middle of the course. The 'thin' sandwich, on the other hand, has two fillings of work experience, each lasting six months.

WHY

a Sandwich Course?

It is getting more and more difficult for graduates to get their first job. Employers are asking for people with working experience, but it is very difficult to get work experience without having a degree. One way round this problem is a sandwich course.

This kind of course is ideal for some students. The actual 'hands-on' in a real working environment helps them to learn. It gives a practical insight into what has been taught and discussed in theory. Work experience can bring a subject 'alive' and help some students see the practical relevance of their course work.

Another important consideration is that many professional associations such as Engineers, Lawyers and Architects require graduates to have some years of practical experience before being admitted to full membership. The work experience you acquire on a sandwich course is counted and will help you to meet these requirements.

WORK PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

The Universities and Polytechnics will try to help you find a job, but in the end it depends on your academic performance and personal attitude.

The availability of work experience placements varies a lot from subject to subject, and from one area of the UK to another. For these reasons no institution will guarantee you a work placement although in most situations nearly everyone is successful. However, thick sandwich courses are almost always available as full-

WHERE

to do a Sandwich Course?

A wide range of sandwich courses are available at the universities of Aston, Bath, Bradford, Brunel, Cardiff, City, Lancaster, Loughborough, Salford and Surrey. The latest statistics show that graduates from these universities have some of the highest employment rates of all UK universities.

In addition, almost all Polytechnics, Central Institutions in Scotland and Colleges of Higher Education offer sandwich courses, particularly so in technical subjects such as Engineering, Applied Science and Computer subjects as well as Business Studies (but not Accounting).

HOW

much does it cost?

The costs of your sandwich year need not be very heavy and, in some cases, you may even be able to save a little.

While universities usually charge the full amount for your work experience year, you may be lucky enough to get a scholarship towards those fees.

In any case, during the year you will be paid the 'rate for the job' by your 'employer'. The rates of pay are very variable, but you should expect them to cover the university fees, but probably not much more.

Most polytechnics do not charge full fees during the sandwich year. They only collect a supervisory fee which is usually less than £1,000. Your pay will cover these fees and your cost of living, and maybe even leave a bit over.

HOWEVER, YOU MUST MAKE SURE OF THE FEE AND SALARY SITUATION BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR FINAL DECISION.

time degree courses, even if you are not able to get paid work experience.

Sandwich courses certainly help to satisfy some peoples' appetites. However, before you consider taking a bite into one, it is a good idea to seek as much advice and information as you can. Remember! The 'best' course for somebody else may not always be the right course for you.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Founded in 1965 as a purpose built campus university in Central England, Warwick pioneered very close links with industry. Working with Rolls Royce, Jaguar and Lucas as well as over 30 other high-tech companies on its Science Park the university is proudly entrepreneurial, and now receives the highest increase in the level of funding from the UK government in recognition of the quality of the research there in Engineering, Business Studies, Manufacturing Systems, Law, etc.

The 500-acre campus is on the edge of the city of Coventry, an attractive 'green field' site, but only ten minutes from the centre of the city. The spacious but distinctly modern campus not only has all the academic facilities on one site but also accommodation for more than 3000 students. All accommodation is self-catering and is cheaper than average for the U.K.

Also to be found on campus is the Arts Centre, the largest in Britain outside the Barbican in London, with an Art Gallery, a 1300-seat hall and two theatres, altogether offering a cultural programme of international standard. On campus sports facilities include a swimming pool, 16 tennis courts, squash courts, etc., in fact, every facility for sports either for relaxation or for competition at the highest level.

Entry standards to Warwick are high, but the university is flexible in terms of the qualifications it accepts, (as long as they are high), and generous in terms of the number of offers they make. Warwick also runs a 1-year pre-university foundation programme for students who have taken university entrance level exams, (such as A-Level), but who have not achieved high enough grades to obtain a university place. This programme has achieved more than 95% success for its students in obtaining degree course places, but does not guarantee a place in Warwick.

Warwick has a wide range of courses including Accounting and Finance, Industrial Economics, Law, Management Science, Sciences and Engineering. Sciences include Biochemistry, Chemistry and Computer Science but also microbial technology, virology, psychology, etc. There is also an unusual 4-year course giving a degree plus qualified teacher status.

Particular features of the academic programmes include: a strong law course with a law-in-society approach; a common first year course for all engineers, with specialisation starting only in the second year; a very high level of continuous assessment in most degrees, though at least 50% of final degree marks come from normal examinations.



Arts Centre

Focus on COVENTRY

Coventry is one of Britain's cleanest and most modern cities. Unlike many other British towns and cities its buildings are not coated by the dirt and grime of heavy industry. The centre of Coventry was almost completely rebuilt after the Second World War. As a result, its planning takes account of the needs of today's busy traffic and provides wide roads which ensure easy access to the city centre from the surrounding areas. In fact, many people consider the road into Coventry from Kenilworth to be one of the finest approaches to a city in Britain.

The excellent public transport system means that students at Warwick are within easy reach of the facilities available in the city whilst students at the Polytechnic are never far away from the beautiful Warwickshire countryside.

The Polytechnic campus is located on a secluded site near to the Cathedral. Nearby are the two main bus terminals. The first is Pool Meadow, for national routes, including the 'Flight Link' service to London. This fast and efficient service removes the need for expensive taxis, and is near one of Coventry's best hotels, the De Vere. The other major bus terminus, Broadgate, is the place where local buses arrive, including the regular service that operates to and from the Warwick campus.

When students get off the bus they can step directly into the Precinct which is Coventry's covered and traffic-free shopping centre where all the city's major stores are located. All the major government and administrative buildings are also nearby. Coventry has a thriving Asian community and shops in the Foleshill and Stony Stanton Road areas provide a wide range of Asian food including halal meat.

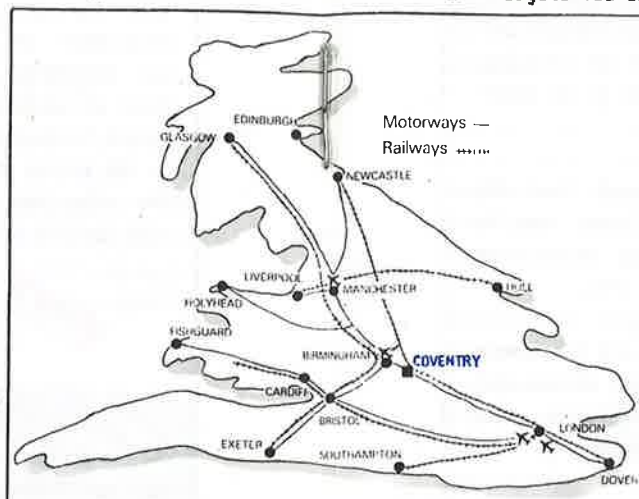
Coventry Railway station is just a short walk from Broadgate via one of the safe pedestrian underpasses that criss-cross the city.

London is only an hour and ten minutes away via high speed electric train whilst England's second city, Birmingham, is just fifteen minutes away.

Just outside Coventry lies the village of Meriden which is the exact centre of England.

In fact, if he had conquered England, Hitler intended to move the nation's capital to Coventry because of its central location. A wide variety of accommodation is available and easily accessible in the city and the surrounding areas.

The great advantage of Coventry is that it is easy to get to and easy to move around in. Students do not have to worry about walking long distances along cold, wet streets to get what they want.



DEGREE COURSES

Warwick U	Coventry P	Warwick U	Coventry P
* Accounting & Finance	★	* Engineering Electronics	
* Business Studies	*	* Manufacturing Engineering	
* Economics	*	* Manufacturing Systems Eng.	*
* Industrial Economics	*	* Mechanical Engineering	*
* Management Science		* Communication Studies	*
Building Management	*	* Art & Design Degrees	*!
Building Engineering	*	* Fine Arts	*
Civil Eng. Construction	*	* Graphic Design	*
* Civil Engineering	*	* Indust. Design (Transportation)*	
* Computer Science	*	* Theatre & Dramatic Arts	
Computer & Control Syst.	*	* Maths & Applied Maths	*
* Computer Systems Engineering		* Science & Applied Science	*
* Computer & Management Systems		* Law	★
Information Systems Eng.	*	* Business Law	*
Electrical & Electronic Eng.	*	* Psychology	*
* Electrical Engineering			

* Degree courses; ★ Part of degree; ! Special Application

COVENTRY POLYTECHNIC



The Polytechnic campus

COVENTRY POLYTECHNIC is one of the longest established Polytechnics, with a single site in the centre of the city adjoining the Cathedral Precinct. Being in the heart of the industrialised Midlands it is perhaps not surprising that the Poly has long enjoyed a high reputation for its Engineering degrees and courses. However, its rating as joint third in the U.K. for Maths teaching in a recent survey including universities as well as polytechnics shows the wide range of expertise available there.

There are some 4500 undergraduates of whom about 100 are from overseas, 60 from Malaysia. There are several halls of residence, some of which are on the city centre site. First year overseas students are guaranteed poly accommodation. The Students' Union offers a good range of social and support facilities.



Students' Union Building houses extensive social and recreational facilities

including civil, mechanical, electrical and electronic engineering and production engineering. But there are also much respected programmes in computing, business studies and business law. The Faculty of Art & Design has degree courses which include Graphic Design, Communication Studies and the unique BA in Industrial Design (Transportation). A recent development is the BA in Business Administration which offers a specialist field in Law giving graduates the qualifications required by the legal profession as well as business courses.

There are Masters degree courses in Robotics, Computer Aided Engineering, Electronic Graphics, Information Technology for Management, etc., while the Poly has one of the highest rates of graduates obtaining first class or upper second class honours of all polytechnics.

A recent survey of employers ratings of Polytechnics picked out Coventry as one of the best in the country, particularly for engineering subjects, economics, business studies and computer studies.

Entry to Coventry is through the PCAS system, A-levels, STPM, South Australian Matriculation, Ontario Grade 13 and other qualifications being accepted. Grades vary from subject to subject but 3 X C, or about 65% in SAM, would be normal.

As mentioned earlier, Coventry is well known for its engineering courses,

Did You Know ...

... that nearly every UK degree awarding institution guarantees accommodation for the first year?

LAW

There are 33 universities and 25 polytechnics in England/Wales whose law degrees are recognised as meeting the academic requirements of the Malaysian Bar Council.

How do you choose which universities or polytechnics to apply to?

There are 5 main points to consider: **environment; course content; course style; location; entry requirement.**

ENVIRONMENT. Would a university in the heart of a city suit you best?

Or would you be better suited to a university with a campus in a rural setting?

Or a combination of both: a campus set in a city?

There are real differences in the lifestyle and academic environment between city, rural and city campus universities which can be important for some students.

COURSE CONTENTS. All law courses detailed in the MABECS "Guide to Law Degrees" teach and examine the 6 'core' subjects (Contract Law, Criminal Law, Constitutional and Administrative Law, Land Law, Equity and Tort). Passes in these subjects are essential in order to meet the professional requirements of the legal profession. But you will have to do other options to make up your degree. Different law schools offer different options.

These options can be non-law subjects such as Politics, Economics,

Psychology or Business Studies, or they could be specialist law subjects varying from Business Law to Conveyancing, from Human Rights to International Law, Japanese Law, Islamic Law or Law of Aerospace, all studied in English.

COURSE STYLE. Some law courses these days place considerable emphasis on the interactions between society, government and the judiciary, sometimes referred to as Law in Society.

At the other extreme, some courses teach a traditional academic course. Most law schools incorporate aspects of both approaches.

Other differences of style concern the emphasis placed on course work (non-examination work) in assessing the degree obtained by students. There are also differences in the number of papers taken in final degree exams, and the years in which degree exams are taken.

Once again these factors can mean that a student is better suited to the style of some law schools rather than others.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS. The final degrees from all law schools are of the same academic standard. But entry to all law schools is competitive; some universities require much higher grades in A-level or STPM than others; some universities offer places to holders of the South Australian Matriculation or Ontario Grade 13 while others do not.

It is vital before making applications that a student makes a realistic match between his or her qualifications and the requirements of the different law schools.

LOCATION. There may be personal reasons why you might wish to go to a particular area of Britain. Relations living nearby can significantly affect the cost of living; friends nearby can also be an important plus point.

But you should remember that the factors discussed already can be applied to several law schools in the same geographical area.

Some areas of Britain are a bit more expensive than others, unless special personal circumstances are available to reduce costs.

COMPARATIVE COSTS. The most important factor in working out the cost of obtaining an Honours Degree in Law is the **length of the course.**

Honours degree courses in England and Wales last only 3 years rather than 4 as in Australia. Partly for this reason the UK is some 25% cheaper as the 1989 costs demonstrate:

Australia (Monash) : M\$122,624
Britain (anywhere) : M\$ 93,541

To assess these factors carefully you need to read prospectuses thoroughly and obtain skilled advice from an experienced counsellor at your school, from the British Council or MABECS.

IS THERE A 'BEST' UNIVERSITY FOR LAW?

Yes, but the 'best' university for law for you may be different from the 'best' university for law for your friend.

Remember - the key factors are : the **environment**; the **course content**; the **course style**; the **location** and the **entry requirements**.

For different people different universities are 'best' But all the degrees are the same!

COSTS & Recognition of Degrees

THIS is the first in a series of articles which will deal with the various factors that affect the cost of obtaining a degree overseas.

That first paragraph shows where some of the problems lie: **what degree?**; **where overseas?** In this article we will concentrate mainly on 'what degree'.

Education has certain similarities to any other product one buys. It is available in different forms, offering different advantages and at different costs. We all know the Proton Saga is the cheapest car available in Malaysia, the Rolls Royce is the most expensive and an Isuzu bus carries more people. Cost can only be examined after you have decided what you need the vehicle for.

National education systems reflect the needs and values of the country and so result in quite wide differences in the degrees they offer. Perhaps the most obvious examples are those between the United States and the United Kingdom.

America has made university study available to a large proportion of its citizens and at the same time has put a high value on wide and flexible degree programmes. The British university system has been available to a much smaller proportion of its population and has been more specialised.

The result is that British first degrees are usually quite different from American ones; British Graduates at first degree level have a deeper knowledge of a more specialised field.

In Malaysia there are several official markers to assess the level of degrees. The first is that of the JPA (Public Service Department), which compares degrees with Honours Degrees of the University of Malaya. Overseas degrees are either 'recognised' if they are thought to be equivalent to those at UM, or not recognised if they are thought to be of a lower level.

There are also the Professional Associations in Malaysia, such as Persatuan Arkitek Malaysia, who set standards of professional competence, and so recognise some degrees and not others.

Words of caution. Lack of recognition is not necessarily a comment on the quality of the degree. It is often a comment on the level of the degree. Secondly, there is a time lag between the introduction of a new degree overseas and its recognition in Malaysia.

The present situation can be summarised quite simply:

Almost all Britain first degrees are recognised.
Almost all Australian honours degrees are recognised.
Very many Canadian degrees are recognised, but not all.
Some American first degrees are recognised, but not most.

So when assessing the cost of overseas education it is vital that you take into account the level of degree you want: Do you want a degree recognised as equivalent to a degree from the University of Malaya? Is recognition by one of the Malaysian Professional Associations important (or essential)?

That leads directly to the point to be discussed in our second article on cost:

How many years study overseas does it take to obtain the level of degree I want?

PRIZE QUIZ

1. What are the 6 'core' subjects for law degrees and why are they important?
2. State two ways in which law courses at universities may differ from each other.
3. How long does an English honours law degree usually last?
4. Which UK institution offers a Business Administration degree that gives a recognised law qualification?
5. Where is the second largest Art Centre in Britain?
6. What is the best time to apply for a degree course at a British polytechnic?
7. Why is March not a good time to apply for a university place?
8. What has the University of Malaya to do with the recognition of degrees?

A M\$50 book token will be awarded by Warwick University for a short essay. To take part in this you need to read their prospectus, pages 8 and 9, describing 'Life on Campus'. Then write between 200-250 words concerning the most attractive feature for you, and any matter about life on campus that you would like more information about. The best essay together with the correct set of quiz answers received by Vanessa Lim at the MABECS office by 18th August will win the prize and the winner will be featured in the following issue.

A similar prize will be awarded by Coventry Poly for a correct set of answers and a short essay based on pages 9-12 of the Coventry prospectus. The subject matter and conditions of competition are the same as for Warwick.

Please state which college you are studying in, your address and telephone no. when sending in your answers.

Did You Know ...

... that some degree courses include a year's paid work experience? (See Page 3.)

MABECS SERVICES

The cost of higher education everywhere is increasing, so is the choice of overseas universities. At the same time entry standards are becoming more flexible and courses more varied. There is a greater need than ever to get complete and accurate information you can before deciding which courses and institutions to apply for.

Counsellors at MABECS are employed to help you do this by giving you the best information they can on Degree courses at British Government institutions of higher education. That means at Universities, Central Institutions, Polytechnics and Colleges of Higher Education. MABECS does not give advice on private sector colleges in Britain, though we can often advise you on the quality and recognition of the qualifications for which they teach.

The process of obtaining a place on a British degree course is quite a long one. At the initial stage we are pleased to give you information on the content and style of different degree courses, on the entrance requirements of the universities and polytechnics, on the cost of living and the tuition fees, on the facilities available, in fact, we'll try to help you sort out what are the right places for you. But the decisions will be your decisions; it is, after all, your life.

We will also advise you on the best way and time to present your application forms, and at the later stage when the universities and polytechnics make offers, we are still available to give you help if you want it. In fact, MABECS will take a supporting interest in all stages of your application until everything is finally arranged for you to go to Britain.

There are some 45 universities in Britain, 30 Polytechnics and 6 Central Institutions. For entry in October 1989 students applying with the assistance of MABECS have so far obtained offers of places at 33 universities and 22 polytechnics. The courses they want to study vary from Accountancy to Medicine, the institutions ranged from Plymouth in the South West to Robert Gordon's in the North East, from Queen's Belfast to Cambridge, from London to Glasgow.

MABECS counsellors will be available at your college one day a week from August until November. You can get the day and exact time from your counsellors. If you wish to see us outside school hours, with your parents, we are available throughout the year in our offices in Petaling Jaya. It is best to call us on the phone first; this could save you a long wait, and make life easier for us, too!

Did You Know ...

... that the degrees given at Polytechnics and Central Institutions awarded by the Council for National Academic Awards are all recognised by the Public Services Department?

NEXT ISSUE:

- * The late, later, latest ways of applying for a place in British universities and polytechnics
- * David Guard, the man from MABECS
- * The right medicine for studying to become a doctor in the UK
- * The 'How Much' and 'How Long' of UK degree courses
- * Student life in Glasgow, Britain's bright and exciting second city

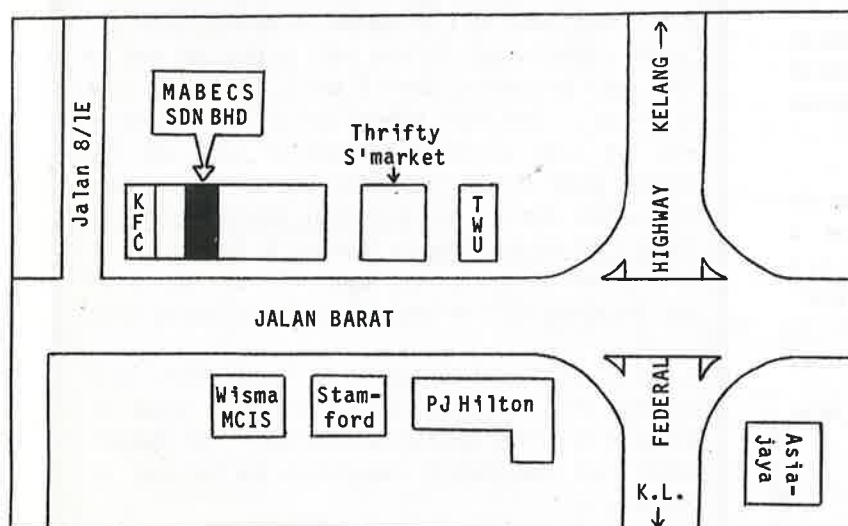
PLUS: A selection of readers' letters!

PLUS: Messages from students studying overseas!

PLUS: More exciting quizzes and competitions!

AND MORE!!

SO DON'T MISS IT!



MALAYSIAN BRITISH EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION SERVICES

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