

## **Elite Technology Institutes in India Double Their Tuition**

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Faced with an increasing financial deficit, India's seven elite, government-subsidized Indian Institutes of Technology are set to nearly double tuitions in June, in what will be only the third fee increase since the institutes were set up in the 1950s.

The country's other public universities may also increase tuition for both undergraduate and graduate programs. India's higher-education regulator recently set up committees to determine the ideal tuition structure. And the National Knowledge Commission, an advisory body to the government, has recommended increasing tuition substantially to cover more operating costs.

Higher education in India is heavily subsidized, and admission to the undergraduate engineering program at the Indian Institutes of Technology is highly coveted. The institutes are considered among the best engineering schools in the world, and many of their alumni are in top positions in multinational corporations. In April a record 320,000 applicants took the entrance exam for fewer than 7,000 seats.

A four-year undergraduate engineering degree at the technology institutes will now cost \$5,000. That is up from \$2,700, said Prawal Sinha, dean of students' affairs at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur. The institutes last raised tuition in 1998.

"The ministry wants all Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management to be self sufficient, so we had to increase our source of income," said Mr. Sinha, adding that students already enrolled in the bachelor's program won't be affected by the tuition hike. "We have still maintained our standards without hiking fees all these years because we feel we are responsible to society."

Local news reports said the Indian Institutes of Technology have complained to the government that they were not given enough money in the budget for 2008-9. Instead, they said, a huge share of the funds has been diverted to the three new institutes scheduled to open this year. Some of the seven existing institutes said they did not have enough money to pay salaries and had also received notices from municipal agencies and electricity-supply companies for failing to settle their bills.

In early April, the six premier Indian Institutes of Management also said they would raise tuition in June, with one of the institutes, in Ahmedabad, tripling tuition for its two-year program, to nearly \$29,000. The five other management institutes also announced hikes of between 25 percent and 75 percent. The institutes' officials say the tuition increases are

necessary to combat faculty shortages and to retain valuable human resources that are being lured away by the private sector.

India's minister in charge of higher education called the Ahmedabad institute's steep hike "unwarranted" and said it would lead to poorer students being denied access to the two-year graduate management program.

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