

## Who are Kaplan?

Kaplan international colleges are part of a network of Kaplan enterprises under the division of Kaplan Inc., a subsidiary of The Washington Post Company.

The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO) is a global media conglomerate whose main operations are 'educational services, newspaper and magazine print and online publishing, television broadcasting and cable television systems.'

The company owns Kaplan, Inc., a 'global provider of educational services to individuals, schools and businesses, serving over one million students annually with operations in more than 30 countries. Its programmes include higher education, test preparation, language instruction and professional training.'

The company profile can be found at: <http://bit.ly/9HeMMI>

Kaplan Inc., is organised into four divisions:

### Kaplan Higher Education

offers diplomas and certificates, undergraduate programs, and graduate programmes through Kaplan University, a mainly online provider

### Kaplan Test Prep

offers college and graduate prep programs, after-school tutoring, prep for medical and nursing licensure tests, Bar review, licensing prep for financial services, real estate, architecture, and engineering professionals, and continuing education programmes

### Kaplan Ventures

# Challenging the Market in Education

Kaplan International Colleges

In addition, the fear with Kaplan, as with other private companies, is that the pressure to guarantee progression, generated by their marketing and the need to please their consumers, places unsustainable pressure on the maintenance of standards at entry, through tuition and at progression to their chosen degree.

Staff at Kaplan International Colleges have contacted the union to raise a range of concerns about the pressures on quality and standards.

Concerns raised by staff included:

- ‰ that students entry levels of English were not being rigorously checked
- ‰ that unsuitable 'off-the-shelf' materials were being used
- ‰ that class sizes were too big, being in excess of 20 or sometimes 30
- ‰ that students are not streamed by ability and despite variable results, few have to resit.

As one member of staff put it:

'If the students do not get into their departments, they will be justifiably angry, having believed, due to marketing and publicity, that by enrolling with xxx they have guaranteed progression to the university, irrespective of their level of English.

If the students do, somehow, get into their departments, it may become obvious that for some, at least, their English is far below what is needed to enable them to succeed in a course at that level.'

Staff report that they feel a huge sense of responsibility to these students whose parents have invested heavily in

# Challenging the Market in Education

The US for-profit sector is currently under intense scrutiny from the Obama administration following a series of similar allegations and court cases against private education companies:

<http://bit.ly/cmglGP>

<http://bit.ly/a7IWox>

On 4 September 2008, a local Pittsburgh paper reported that the Kaplan Career Institute, a private higher education centre in the city, was being sued by two former teachers. The two teachers claim that the school 'illegally rewards admissions recruiters, dupes prospective students with false promises about their futures and encourages teachers to pass failing students.'

The school was also accused of violating the US government's Higher Education Act since at least 2002, by claiming federal funding, which is open to some private centres that successfully place over 70% of their students in employment. The Kaplan Career Institute is accused of skewing its figures to win the funding.

According to the lawsuit, a graduate's crew leader position at a fast-food restaurant was reported as being in the criminal justice field, while an accounting management graduate was counted as landing a job in his field after being hired as a Wal-Mart sales associate. Kaplan officials also listed a former student's telemarketing job with Dial America as being in the business administration fashion merchandising field, the lawsuit states.

<http://bit.ly/aK1iIT>

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