Dear Sir,

Students coming from abroad under the Colombo Plan are fortunate in finding the Commonwealth Office of Education ready to help them in all sorts of ways. From the first they have a friendly Australian ready with advice on housing, food, shopping and other matters which are strange to them. English classes are arranged for those who need them, and tutoring is available later when they are studying for a degree. All this is provided by the Commonwealth Office of Education for Colombo Plan students.

How different is the fate of unsponsored students. Orientation is just as difficult for them as for the officially sponsored students, but no one in the Commonwealth Office of Education adopts them.

The only service available to such students is provided by the Australian Organisations’ Coordinating Committee for Overseas Students in N.S.W. who act in a voluntary capacity and whose resources are limited.

No amount of training will benefit students who cannot write or understand spoken English, but many of the Asian students admitted to this University have been in that position.

The University is not the place to give the sort of help these students need. Teaching English as a foreign language is a specialist job. Surely it could be accepted by the Commonwealth Office of Education as a natural extension of the very fine job they do now for sponsored students, that they accept the responsibility for testing all incoming students in their knowledge of English and, if they intend proceeding direct to University work, of making lessons in English available to them.

Sheila Rowley,
School of Economics.