

Valuing pastoral care as a key component in sustaining New Zealand's export education industry

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In recent times a Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students has been introduced in New Zealand. This code requires minimum standards in the international education industry in New Zealand. However there is a danger that regulated minimum standards can become prescriptive and reduce performance to the lowest common denominator (which in turn, defines the highest standard). The spirit and intention of the code is to encourage high standards in the practice of quality care, which enhances our reputation as an international study destination, but can also impact long-term strategies and consequences. This paper will argue that the practice of high quality pastoral care is a necessity in enhancing our reputation, developing a long term strategy, and maintaining integrity in our marketing. Discussion within the paper will explore the effects on the sustainability of the international education industry by endorsing and adopting high standard best practices in the care and welfare of international students. Additionally, the moral considerations that arise from the realisation that international students are people, not commodities will be explored as further motivators for quality care.

It will be argued in light of a variety of global effects increased competition is being experienced in the international education industry and the choice of an international education destination is made around a number of factors including price, quality, safety and the overall education experience. The country and educational institutions that gain a reputation for academic quality, cost efficiency, high standards of care and safety, in short the total education experience will be the ones preferred by those choosing an international education. In short high standard pastoral care is a key to sustainability in New Zealand's export education industry.