

Setting standards in international student support: The challenge of complying with concepts

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The National Code 2007 was developed with extensive consultation, and exhaustive discussion with stakeholders, but there remain questions about particular expectations and obligations. One of these, Standard 6.6 of the Code, requires 'sufficient support personnel to meet the needs of students...'. What do providers understand by this? What are our obligations to meet this specific requirement? Have we adequately defined the needs of international students? What is being done to implement this Standard? How do we fulfil our 'promise' to students?

There is little formal data across institutions and sectors that quantifies or compares international student support services, or describes the allocation of staff resources according to student enrolments and types of student cohorts. It is therefore challenging for international student support managers to measure success of their programs and services against similar programs elsewhere.

This session follows up a session delivered at the AIEC 2007 where a small cross-sectoral research study is presented and discussed. The study was an initiative of ISANA Council members and includes data from approximately 50 institutions.

The implications of Standard 6.6 will be critically examined in the light of staff resources and changing student enrolments. We focus on the effective use of staff resources to offer maximum opportunities for international student success.

This session will be coordinated by Paula Dunstan, immediate past president of ISANA.

ISANA has, since its establishment in 1989, argued for adequate staffing and professional support, including skills and knowledge development. The delivery and promotion of professional development has been a key objective for the association, and an examination of this area of the National Code draws on the collective experience and research of ISANA.