

Internationalisation In New Zealand Universities – Moving It Up A Notch

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New Zealand Government internationalisation goals include that students will be enterprising, international citizens, and that education will increase their skills to operate cross-culturally. At the same time, New Zealand universities are looking to define what a globally-engaged and confident graduate is, and embedding internationalisation targets in institutional plans.

For both government agencies and university staff, increased recognition of the need to internationalise, while positive and welcomed, comes with a responsibility to achieve real and demonstrable change, within set timeframes, and under considerably more scrutiny than in the past.

It seems a singular challenge: how to get more students engaging in ‘international learning’ and international research opportunities. But when unpicked further, the true scale and multi-faceted nature of the job at hand becomes clearer. As the literature reveals, internationalisation is a complex business with many obstacles to overcome.

This session will provide a big picture view of the current state of internationalisation efforts in the New Zealand higher education sector, while highlighting the internationalisation ‘journey’ of one New Zealand university – The University of Auckland.

There are interesting similarities with the development of intercultural competence in an individual – discerning an effective approach to providing all students international learning and research opportunities is a dynamic, ongoing, iterative, reflective process. Our experience to date has been that driving internationalisation requires exactly the skills it is hoped international learning will foster in our students: inventiveness, critical analysis of the evidence, resourcefulness, an ability to collaborate across cultures, open-mindedness and the willingness to ‘change tack’ when new information suggests a better approach or things are not working.

Key Words

Internationalisation, higher education, university, New Zealand, Auckland, government