

The ‘one and onlies’ – developing our knowledge of Chinese culture to best support Chinese international students in education

[Non-Refereed Workshop](#)

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Chinese students make up the largest group of internationals at Victoria University of Wellington (Victoria), as they do in many New Zealand educational institutions. It is well known that students from China grow up with academic, social and cultural backgrounds that are vastly different from New Zealand students; and adjusting to life in New Zealand brings many challenges for them. Developing our knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture, student concerns and challenges is essential to ensure we are providing the best support and services. With this in mind, staff at Victoria International have been facilitating a training session for professional staff who work with Chinese students within the university. The session is based on Crystal Li’s story as a former international student, her experiences growing up in China, and the many challenges she faced moving to New Zealand to study. Crystal’s story is eminently transferable across many Chinese students’ experiences. This workshop will use Crystal’s story as a basis to discuss the issues Chinese students may have adjusting to life in New Zealand and how we can best support them before and after they arrive. We will also review what is currently being done in this space to improve services and support, using international research and current staff and student experiences. This ISANA workshop is open to anyone who works with Chinese students and has an interest in learning more about their culture, and how we can better support them within our institutions.

Biography Kelly Atherton

Kelly Atherton (BHSc (OT)) is the Team Leader, International Student Support at Victoria University of Wellington. Kelly is fascinated by the cultural challenges international students face and enjoys the face to face aspect of working with students in her role. She is about to begin her Masters looking at the mental health of Chinese international students utilising her experience from her previous role as Mental Health Coordinator at Victoria’s Student Counselling Service.

Biography Crystal Li

Crystal Li (BCOM and PG in Commerce) came to New Zealand as an international student from China in 2003 to study at Victoria University of Wellington. Since completing her degree, she has worked directly with international students at Victoria for over 10 years and is currently the International Student Advisor (Insurance). Crystal has a wealth of knowledge from her work with international students and many personal experiences of studying and living in New Zealand.