

Outside the classroom: The student led experience

Krystal Agourram

Deakin University English Language Institute (DUELI), Deakin University, 70 Elgar Road, Burwood, VIC, 3125

International students, especially those in ELICOS programs, want more than just the classroom experience. They expect a holistic educational experience that prepares them not only with academic skills, but also culturally and socially so that they can confidently engage with, and integrate into, the university and the wider community. ELICOS students in particular need English to communicate, but without confidence in their ability to engage with those outside their language and cultural groups, they risk isolation and disappointment with their educational experience. To equip Deakin University English Language Institute (DUELI) students with the skills necessary for this, we offer an extracurricular program aimed at developing and enhancing leadership, communication, teamwork and social skills. The program is multilayered to provide a variety of opportunities to students dependent on where they are in their academic lifecycle. The training undertaken, skills developed and role requirements progress in complexity along the journey from student volunteer to graduating professional. Those students not wishing to participate in these programs are still able to benefit by attending the weekly social program run by the student leaders and student volunteers. Through this program we have been able to watch students' progress from student volunteers, to student leaders, to confident professionals who feel better equipped in both their academic and professional lives and who, in turn, want to give back to the university community.