



Australian Government

**Department of Education, Employment
and Workplace Relations**

Examples of good practice in assisting international students to integrate with Australian students and the wider community





The issue of social integration for international students is an important consideration for all Australian TAFE Institutes. At TAFE Directors Australia, we welcome our part of the Social Integration Project, lead by Australian Education International. The strength of TAFE institutes is their record in delivery of accredited courses, and their product offer to a diverse range of students from all ends of the globe – onshore and offshore. Our members across the 58 TAFE institute network, are committed to the highest quality of education provision both within and outside the classroom. As you can see in the cases highlighted here - the practice of how this social integration is managed, encouraged and supported varies depending on the institute. TDA entered this project with the expectation that what you see and read here today is just the start of opening up opportunities to share good practice across the industry and to learn from others experience. TAFE Directors Australia and its members recognise the importance of social integration of international students as a top priority - we will continue to support efforts that will enable the highest quality student experience for the 25,000 international students who choose to study in TAFE each year.

Mr Martin Riordan
Chief Executive Officer
TAFE Directors Australia



Social integration is a fundamental and complex issue that goes right to the heart of student success. Socially included, connected students are more able to fully explore the rich dynamic that an international education experience provides. Students expect to obtain not just an education from their education and learning provider (university or otherwise) but also social engagement which enables them to mix with local students and the community. Programs and activities to encourage this are essential. The examples included here are but some of the excellent initiatives universities engage in to enable our students to fully experience life on-campus and in Australia.

Dr Glenn Withers, AO
Chief Executive Officer
Universities Australia



I am delighted to support the Social Integration Project and on behalf of ACPET would like to commend AEI for its leadership of this important initiative. Through this project five of our members have each shared a valuable case study example of the social integration of international students. These examples demonstrate the benefit of sharing ideas, strategies and experiences in a way that enables the industry to manage its own community of practice. I certainly commend these individual case studies to you as typical of the range, diversity and depth of commitment by Australia's world standard international private education and training sector.

Mr Andrew Smith
Chief Executive Officer
ACPET

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Building understanding: postgraduates and staff coming together

University of Western Australia

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

LACE

The University of Western Australia, (UWA) Student Services introduced The Language and Cultural Exchange (LACE) program in 2005. The program was developed to foster intercultural friendship and understanding through regular free events. LACE helps students transition into the UWA community by sharing culture, friendship and food among fellow students and staff.

Coursework and research students are able to practise their English and make social and academic connections beyond their field of study. LACE provides staff with an appreciation of the breadth and diversity of the international student community within UWA.

The positive response from the wider university community has allowed the initial group of 45 participants to grow to close to 300 registered members.

Participants have indicated they found LACE sessions interesting and enjoyable, with 96% indicating that it helped them feel more connected with others at UWA. As one participant said, "You get to meet new friends and people at every gathering. It is nice to know people from other cultures and fields of study." The program has eased the transition and helped the engagement of international students while improving levels of communication across the University community.

LACE members have also been invited to speak at a number of public forums, such as the Western Australian Universities Teaching and Learning Forum, UWA staff training sessions for new international postgraduate research advisers, and UWAs Teaching Month events.



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CRICOS Provider Number: 00126G

Project-Based Learning: learning together

Chisholm Institute of TAFE

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by TAFE Directors Australia.

Chisholm Institute's project based learning and work experience

Chisholm Institute operates over Frankston, Cranbourne, Berwick, Rosebud, Wonthaggi and Dandenong campuses, Victoria. The Institute is focused on developing a welcoming community for international students in the most culturally diverse region in Victoria, Dandenong.

Project-based learning encourages student collaboration under the guidance of the teaching staff in the Building Design and Management program. Projects between groups of three or four international and domestic students are encouraged as a key learning style and to build relationships and cultural understanding.

Students are integrated via project work with third-year carpentry students employed in the construction industry. This helps local students appreciate a range of cultural traditions whilst helping international students develop practical skills and an understanding of the construction industry culture.

Students also participate outside the Institute with community-based organisations and building companies to gain pre-employment experience in their chosen industry. A recent project tasked students with designing an administration building. This involved client liaison, briefings, site inspections, design and presentation works, redesign, and final presentation to the client organisation, a not-for-profit body.

Field trips to various construction sites and design opportunities are also offered to the student groups, allowing them to gain the experience in a range of industry practices.

The Building and Furniture Department now utilises this rationale with most of its learner groups. Projects are determined and students, not only of diverse nationalities, but a range of life experiences, work together offering mutual assistance and guidance, advice, knowledge and camaraderie, to build a sense of community. The resulting social engagement has led to higher retention rates and higher completion rates.

Next steps

Chisholm data shows how heightened cross-cultural social experiences greatly assist international students to not only succeed in their studies but also in gain meaningful employment in their study field.

This practice is being extended across a number of Chisholm programs in other departments, with further opportunities for interaction to be explored, and to further staff professional development in cultural studies.

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Study with friends from over forty different countries

International College of Management, Sydney

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Australian Council for Private Education and Training.



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The International College of Management welcomes students from around the world.

The International College of Management (ICMS) student body has a local to international student ratio of almost 50:50, with students from over 40 different countries.

Interaction between local and international students is encouraged through on campus facilities and the communal courtyard, 24-hour computer labs, Marketplace, library, tennis courts, gardens, Sandbar and residential facilities.

Students living on campus are supported by Residential Assistant (RA) and Graduate Assistant (GA) staff, comprising both international and local students. RA and GA staff provide a variety of student support services, including emotional support, academic guidance, student safety guidance, floor meetings, kitchenette maintenance; and free coffee and pancakes during exam time. All students have access to the RA and GA contact details and are encouraged to request their support.

New students are supported by the Orientation Week (O-Week) Team and the ICMS buddy program. The O-Week Team consists of a support team of cross-cultural students and operational staff who accompany new students to course information sessions, conduct guided tours, and encourage their interaction in team building activities and social events during the week.

The buddy program allocates first year students to a second or third year ICMS student from their country of origin. The 'buddy' offers advice and provides information and further assistance, enabling discussion with others from their home country, and sometimes in their native language. The ICMS subject, Organisational Culture, assesses final year students assisting a first year international student transition to ICMS, with their results contributing toward a final grade.

The undergraduate student program consists of nine months paid industry training, where students interact with colleagues, managers, customers and clients. Feedback received from international students indicates that industry training helped them develop language skills, learn about Australian business practices and build friendships.

Students at ICMS participate in community and social life; including the Community Contribution Scheme (CCS), through which many international students volunteer at Bear Cottage, one of many ICMS community partner organisations.

Student groups at ICMS, including the Student Representative Council (SRC), Class Representatives and Asian Student Association play a critical role in the social life of the College. For example, The Asian Student Association (ASA) is famous for hosting Asian-themed dinners (complete with spectacular traditional costumes), an annual festive celebration of Chinese New Year and Karaoke and Mah-jong nights.

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Peer Mentors bring students together

University of Adelaide

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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The Peer Mentor Program

Coordinated by the University of Adelaide's International Student Centre (ISC), The Peer Mentor Program recruits peer mentors among international and local, postgraduate and undergraduate, and non-award students.

The Program provides leadership and training opportunities and encourages interaction between international and local students. Further it helps new international students become familiar with the University and academic expectations, and importantly to develop social networks in the University and wider Adelaide communities.

Mentors work in teams to prepare material and resources for publications and workshops aimed to assist new international students. They also contribute significant time in practical tasks such as setting up a 'Welcome Centre' during orientation week. In February 2009, 32 mentors (15 local and 17 international students) contributed 1,626 volunteer hours in preparation, operation, and after-hours activities. While the life-cycle from recruitment to recognition is about 6 months a select group of senior mentors have continued in the program for up to 3 years.

Student evaluation and feedback from eight years of Peer Mentor Programs indicates the value students place on such support programs, highlighted by local and international student interaction in University clubs and societies. Mentors indicate that the training and experience has been valuable when differentiating themselves as they search for employment after finishing their studies.

The University's international student Peer Mentor Program was judged the best in the country by a student panel at the 17th ISANA International Education Conference in Sydney in 2006—winning the 'ISANA award nominated by the National Liaison Committee'.

Next Steps

With increasing student numbers and capacity limits, the best use of resources is a key issue. The use of existing staff resources to train mentors is both efficient and effective in achieving orientation goals, while allowing flexibility to address increased capacity.

Communicating with incoming international students, who arrive following the orientation program was an identified issue. The Peer Mentor Program has been expanded to offer support for late arriving students.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00123M

Social interactions through Community service

University of Western Australia

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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Student Leadership Mentoring Program

The University of Western Australia developed the Student Leadership mentoring Program and Community Service Program to encourage community service and ensure new students were immediately connected to a mentor to support their social and academic transition.

The Student Leadership Mentoring Program was offered for the first time in 2008, and is continuing to support new College residents. In 2009, international students comprise approximately 40% of the UWA student body living in residence.

The Programs learning modules encouraged students to build trust within the group, to act as mentors, to work through a number of problem-solving activities, and to manage community-based initiatives. Many of the international students are committed to the Program to 'add value' to their academic studies.

The leadership sessions were interactive and included a mix of international and local students on all occasions. The immediate outcomes were both knowledge gain and also cultural interaction between the students.

The regularity of the group coming together within a defined framework throughout the year ensured that frequent, meaningful and social interactions occurred between the 'younger' and 'older' students, and between cultural groups.

Community-focussed activities brought together students from different groupings to achieve specific aims such as fundraising, selling chocolates and flowers, donating blood, participating in fun runs, and cooking for families with specific needs. The shift away from the College and its study environment provided an impetus for new friendships.

Students also participated in a mid-program *Retreat at Bickley* which was an opportunity to combine the program with some travel outside of Perth.

Not all students finished the course for various reasons, but most residents stayed engaged for the year. At the end of the Program, a Leadership Graduation Dinner was held. This was a formal occasion with a three course meal and a guest speaker. Additionally, students were affirmed with special certificates to reward their achievement in completing the year long course.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00126G

Welcoming more international students into the Townsville community

Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by TAFE Directors Australia.

Cultural awareness programs

Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE (BRIT) has experienced strong growth in international student enrolments over the past 3 years. A growing awareness of Townsville as an ideal environment for international students to study, has been supported by programs of cultural awareness and adjustment including academic support and orientation events.

In 2009, there were 225 international students enrolled at BRIT, with further increases expected in 2010. To support continued international enrolments, BRIT has implemented some key programs including a 4-day 'International Induction Program', to introduce international students to Australia, Queensland, and Townsville. One result has been a number of international students joining local sporting clubs.

BRIT intentionally encourages international and local students across discussion groups and work placements. Strong relationships have developed as students work through assignments together.

An international student was nominated by teachers and peers and elected in 2008 into the Student Representative Council (SRC). As a result, the SRC has adapted its focus and engaged in a number of issues relating to

international students. This move has helped other Student Council members realise that the needs and aspirations of international students are similar to their own.

The Institute Director approved the first annual Australia vs India Student *World Cricket Series* in November 2008. A number of Indian students enthusiastically accepted a challenge from the BRIT staff and created their own team. BRIT looks forward to broadening its scope and holding an 'international' sports day, encompassing a variety of activities to include all of its student members.

As Chair of *Study Townsville Inc*, BRIT has been instrumental in driving the annual Mayoral Reception for all of Townsville's international students—a welcome morning tea held at the Council Chambers, now in its third year. The Mayoral Reception has raised the profile of international students as being a growing and significant part of the Townsville community, both from a cultural and economic perspective.

Next steps

BRIT staff will continue to build on the successes to date, and endeavour to provide new opportunities for international students to experience the sport, culture, and lifestyle of Australia's largest tropical city.



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CRICOS Provider Number: 02001E

Community Connections

University of Newcastle

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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The Community Connections Program at the University of Newcastle provides opportunities for members of the local community to welcome, befriend, and support international students. Through this program, volunteers and students are able to share their culture, learn from each other, and develop greater understanding and tolerance of individual and cultural differences.

The Community Connections program was initiated in 1997 to help international students feel welcomed and supported in their new environment. The Program recognises the important role that members of the community can play in assisting international students.

Over the past eleven years more than 700 volunteers from the University and across the local Newcastle community have participated in the Program, supporting more than 1000 international students. In 2009, the program has 66 active volunteers, providing support to a similar number of international students, with a waiting list on each side.

Volunteers attend information sessions before joining the Program and are introduced to an international student through a careful matching process, facilitated by the Program Coordinator.

Regular newsletters, excursions, and social events organised by the University bring volunteers and students and their families together.

A special event is also held each year to recognise the contribution of the volunteers and local community groups to the well-being of international students. New volunteers receive certificates of participation presented by the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor.

When volunteers and students meet, they engage in a range of activities including shopping, having coffee, cooking, walking, visiting each other's homes, going to the movies, the theatre, the beach or museums, and playing with children. In an internal program evaluation in 2007, students identified that chatting and sharing food were the most important activities for building the relationship with their volunteer.

The evolution of the Program

The Program has undergone regular internal evaluations every two years, most recently in 2007. One of the most significant outcomes from the ongoing evaluations has been around the Program philosophy. The Program has evolved from the objective of delivering practical support, to a philosophy that recognises the reciprocal relationships that develop between volunteers and students and the considerable learning that takes place for all participants. Reflecting this shift in philosophy has been the change in name from 'International Student Care Program' to 'Community Connections' in 2006.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00109J

GLoBALL Program

RMIT

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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About the program

The GLoBALL Program is a joint initiative of the Essendon Football Club (EFC), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), City of Melbourne and the Australian Federation of International Students (AFIS). It is designed to assist international students learn about Australian culture and connect with the local community.

Mentors from the University and the Australian Football League (AFL) host international students for free games and skills sessions with players. These sessions encourage participation in physical skill development and engage in broader themes such as leadership, respect, communication, and teamwork.

Community events are also held at the football grounds to highlight social aspects of Australian culture and expose international students to some of Australia's history and traditions.

The Program will also help to broaden the knowledge of the game overseas as participating international students have the potential to become ambassadors of the game in their country of origin.



The program has received very positive feedback from participants, educational institutions, and community organisations. The first engagement activity saw 50 participants from 13 institutions attend an Essendon/Fremantle game. The initial target of 100 participants for 2009 has been exceeded.

Next steps

Securing the commitment of students has been a challenge. The project committee have introduced specific measures, which include setting up program guidelines before the commencement of student activities to ensure all interested students can participate in the program.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00122A

Community Building within the International College of Hotel Management

International College of Hotel Management

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Australian Council for Private Education and Training.



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Management College encourages adventure, fun and learning

International students comprise eighty percent of student body at the International College of Hotel Management (ICHM). The College emphasises tolerance, mutual support and respect across the 40 or more nationalities on campus.

The College offers a range of activities each semester including an Adventure Learning Day, and a range of student recreational activities and events organised and run by the Student Representative Council. Adventure Learning Day includes a 'buddy' program to encourage first-year students to interact with third-year students throughout the semester. Student recreational activities include surf camps, on campus intra-school soccer championships and a yum cha lunch.

The Student Representative Council organises end of semester functions which attract participants from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including for example, the International Food Festival. Students from each cultural group decide on the dishes they want to prepare and take over the residential kitchen for the day. Dishes are served in the dining room for all students and staff. Many students wear their national dress and the dining room is decorated to represent cultural groups.



A Recreation Officer is employed at ICHM to organise recreation, sport, leisure and sightseeing options for students both on and off-campus each weekend and during the mid semester break. The Recreation Officer manages a budget that goes toward subsidising some of the student activities and to purchase sporting and other recreational equipment.

Regular feedback is obtained from students participating in programs via on-line surveys. Results are shared with all staff and students, with projects developed dynamically according to student need and interest. Regular review and tailoring of programs has achieved positive results with international and local students engaging in programs across campus.

Building new cultural capital

University of Adelaide

Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD) Volunteer Scheme

Adelaide University introduced the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD) Volunteer Scheme (the Volunteer Scheme) in 1995 to encourage international students to spend time with members of the local community. Typically, a student and a volunteer meet for an hour a week at a mutually convenient location, to share interests around a common area of study.

The Volunteer Scheme helps international students develop their English language communication skills and understanding of local culture while encouraging members of the local community to engage with the University.

Formal programs offered by the University provide additional academic language and learning support, however, it is the informal meetings between students and volunteers that provide opportunities to build relationships.

Programs offered by the International Student Centre, including the Volunteer Scheme, received a strong, positive commendation in the 2008 *International Student Barometer* report. The University is committed to continue to build closer links between international and local students, and within the wider Adelaide community.

Since 1995, the program has expanded steadily, starting with

25 volunteers and 30 international students to 60 volunteers working with around 100 students in 2007. By early 2009, over 100 volunteers were involved in the scheme and it is expected the numbers will continue to increase. Students are keen to be involved and, once involved, are reluctant to leave. There is also a high retention rate among volunteers, some of whom have been part of the program since its inception 14 years ago. Formal feedback from participants has been universally positive.

The Volunteer Scheme has received international acclaim. A paper reporting on the program was presented at 10th Annual Conference of the UNESCO International Centre for Engineering Education held in Thailand in 2007. It won the Best Paper Silver Award for 'the most significant contribution to the field of engineering education.'

Next steps

The rapid increase in international student numbers and the changing demographics of domestic students can limit the opportunities for international and Australian students to interact on campus.

A program, which is social rather than academic, can have significant benefits for student welfare and participation in academic life.

A great strength of the current program is its simplicity and flexibility, however meeting the needs of significantly greater numbers of international students within the University would likely involve more complex coordination, ongoing funding, and other resource support.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00123M

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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Welcoming Muslim students to Melbourne

Victoria University

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



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The Muslim Student Guide and Orientation Day

Nearly one-quarter of Victoria University (VU) students are from more than ninety nationalities, with a strong concentration from Asia and Middle Eastern communities including a substantive Muslim population.

The *Muslim Student Guide* was developed following a 2007 review focused on the needs of Muslim students and consultation between the International Support Team and Victoria University Muslim Chaplains. Victoria University worked with members of the Islamic Society of Victoria to develop the Guide. There was strong support by community groups including the Australian Intercultural Society, Muslim Community Co-operative Australia Ltd, Islamic Council of Victoria, Selimiye Foundation Ltd, and the Muslim Women's Council of Victoria.

The Guide includes information about where to access religiously acceptable services, halal food and health services throughout Melbourne.

The Guide was launched by Victoria University's Vice-Chancellor Elizabeth Harman at a halal barbeque in August 2008, following Friday afternoon prayers. Hard copies are provided on request to all enrolling students and the Guide is also available on the University website.

Feedback received since its inception in 2008 has been positive, and

has resulted in the production of an Arabic language version of the Guide. The Muslim Community Co-operative Australia Ltd, (MCCA) and the Islamic Society of Victoria (ISV) have supported the continuing development of this resource and will assist VU to develop the next edition.

Encouragingly, the University of Melbourne's Graduate Students Association has bought the rights to the *Muslim Student Guide* for revision for use by their student body in January 2009.

New international students are encouraged to attend the University's orientation activities, to meet continuing international students and learn about the campus facilities, including places for worship, childcare, sports centres, and clubs, and societies, student advisory and welfare services, and the International Student Support team.

Next steps

VU offers its services to both local and international students in partnership with the Horn of Africa Community Network Inc., the Western Bulldogs, Victorian Multicultural Commission, and the Victoria Police Multicultural Liaison Unit. These links enable its diverse student body to interact across cultures and the communities in which they live.

In 2009, Victoria University will be releasing a general student survey to better understand the entire VU student experience.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00124K

Broadening cultural context

TAFE NSW - Riverina Institute

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by TAFE Directors Australia.

International Student Activity Day

TAFE NSW Riverina Institute International Student Activity Day was initiated when a local student suggested a specialised international project in 2007, in response to an assessment item within the Diploma in Community Welfare.

During the student's discussions with an international student from the Philippines, the local student realised just how much he did not know about a 'typical international student' and suggested a range of activities to reduce this knowledge gap.

The first International Student Activity Day was held in 2008, attended by all international students and leading to the formation of an International Student Association.

A range of activities encouraged social interaction between local and international students including food preparation, cooking, and sharing a meal around a BBQ. Party games, including a Frisbee competition, two-up, thong throw, egg and spoon race, sack race, and tunnel ball, were also shared.

The Activity Day achieved positive rapport between international and local students, by increasing local student's understanding of international students and building trust and self-disclosure between groups.

Next steps

With the success of the first International Student Activity Day, the Institute is now focused on establishing a working group to develop an International Student Association to organise future activities.



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International Students @ Home @ SWSI

TAFE NSW - South Western Sydney

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by TAFE Directors Australia.



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Orientation and ongoing support

South Western Sydney Institute's international student population for 2009 accounts for less than 1%, of the 79,000 student enrolments located across 9 campuses. The international students come from Vietnam, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Lebanon among others.

The Institute has developed several key programs to assist international students to enter and adjust to the local area and academic life. College international coordinators conduct orientation and induction to introduce new students to library facilities, counselling service and the Student Association. The coordinators are available to provide students with ongoing support.

As part of the orientation process, some International Coordinators attend the TAFE International Education Centre (TIEC) and meet the English language course students. They return again for the graduation ceremonies.

Their presence provides a point of contact for the students as they continue their studies.

Students are also provided with information about specialised services available to them, particularly counselling, English language support and Student Association Services (prayer rooms etc.)

The Student Association holds regular social events such as barbeques, entertainment, Give Away Days, Refugee Week, Environmental Day, Shave for a Cure, and Harmony Day to promote socialising among the student body. International student barbeques also provide opportunities to mix with international students of different cultures.

Teachers at South Western Sydney Institute promote a class environment where international students work with local students in team and project work. This work is not only restricted to the classroom but may also require meetings and communication in their personal time to complete projects. In some instances this results in social interactions and friendships being formed.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00591E

Empowering students of all nationalities to find their true potential

Australian Institute of Commerce & Language

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Australian Council for Private Education and Training.



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The Australian Institute of Commerce and Language: Culture Day and Industry Support Programs

The Australian Institute of Commerce and Language is a Registered Training Organisation established in 2000 to deliver English language and vocational education and training courses to students from over 50 countries.

In 2004, AICL and TAFE NSW Sydney Institute formed a partnership to deliver select courses to international students and have won both state and national awards for their contribution to industry and the skills shortage. However, to ensure that AICL students have a well-rounded experience in Australia AICL organises a range of activities including the annual ELICOS Culture Day, held in association with Harmony Day, and AICL's established network of industry guest speaker events.

Culture Day is community focused, beginning with an "Around the World in 80 Minutes" campus tour including cultural exhibitions, cuisine and costume displays. The day culminates in a cultural concert with prizes recognising outstanding contributions to the Day's success. Preparation for Culture Day is guided by ELICOS teachers who mentor different cultural groups and provide support with presentation and language skills.

AICL delivers a wide range of vocational courses, working

closely with industry on course development and organising guest speakers, industry visits, assessment validation, membership of industry bodies and professional development seminars. AICL Lecturers are involved in industry networking and inviting guest speakers to ensure maximum relevance to students.

The *Preparation for Work in Australia Professional Development Seminars* focus on Australian and international business trends and practices and personal money management. The Institute's Welfare Officer provides workshops for AICL students to develop curriculum vitae writing skills and job interview skills, further supporting students ability to participate professionally within their industry.

The success of the professional development focus is evidenced by the large number of AICL students working in their respective industry at graduation. One of the major student graduation awards is the 'Contribution to Industry' award presented by Mr Brian Wexham, CEO Institute of Trade and Skills Excellence.

Future steps

AICL will continue to focus on engaging in a range of activities that integrates students into Australian cultural life by developing an internal support network. That will be in addition to the Welfare Officers who now assist students to have an enriching life experience while studying in Australia.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 02048A

Using technology to promote communication with international students via SMS

TAFE NSW - Hunter Institute

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by TAFE Directors Australia.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

Communicating with international students through SMS

The majority of international students at TAFE NSW Hunter Institute are under 25 years old and form part of a techno savvy generation of young students. To communicate with this group, the Institute utilised the power of SMS.

Messages are sent using an email interface where the message is typed like an email or normal word document. Responses are received in the email message box and the Institute can view who has read the SMS and whether it was delivered.

This simple tool is used to contact students with reminders about on-campus events, for example *'remember pizza lunch 12.30 pm block A Newcastle campus'*. SMS has been a very successful tool to remind students of local events also, for example, *'football tryouts at Mayfield oval on Sunday at 10am'* and *'Jazz in the park free 9pm at Foreshore Park on Saturday'*. It is also used to send details about where and how support services may be accessed.

Positive results

The Institute did not want students to feel as if they were receiving spam or that they were being bombarded. The Institute therefore, tracked the number of messages sent and kept them as an email record to document the number of student responses. The messages were worded carefully to differentiate serious information from social messages.

It has enhanced international students' connection with their peers and the community. Student surveys conducted in 2007 and 2008 revealed 96% of students indicated a preference of SMS messages over email or printed letters.

The cost is minimal and much cheaper than sending out printed material. A response rate of 95–98% is the highest of any medium used by the Institute, other than a personal phone call or other direct contact.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00591E

The 3Cs (Cross-Cultural Communication) Program

RMIT

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

Understanding Australian culture

The Cross-Cultural Communication Program (3Cs Program) was developed in 2006 to provide international students with the opportunities and skills to assist their transition to life in Australia. Careers counselors and student advisors at RMIT identified that students felt disconnected from their courses and isolated from other students and life in Melbourne.

The 3Cs Program encourages international students to engage with, and be mentored by local students in a workshop setting. The Program runs once a semester for seven weeks and covers a range of student-relevant topics, such as interviewing techniques and exploring cultural differences. Student volunteers are heavily involved in the planning and execution of the 3Cs Program, providing an outcome that is both collaborative and inclusive, while giving the student a sense of ownership in the educational experience. The Program won the Best Practice Award from the National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services in 2006.

Local and international students initially meet as one large group, then move into smaller groups of five to seven for the remainder of the Program. The 3Cs Program consists of six one-hour lunchtime workshops provided as a fun, engaging, and supportive Program. A new topic is covered each week relating to transition, work, or study.



At the conclusion of the Program, mentors and mentees complete an evaluation form. Students are encouraged to provide honest feedback for the purpose of continually improving the Program. This feedback is then used to make any adjustments to the Program.

Students consistently report how much they appreciate the 3Cs Program, particularly the friendships and connectedness they develop. Students also report increased confidence in communication skills, greater enjoyment from sharing information and cultural experiences, and generally more satisfaction at university by immersing themselves into Australian culture.

Local students appreciate meeting new people and helping their mentees settle into university and life in Melbourne. They also enjoy a greater awareness of the complexities of other cultures, having responsibility for their own group, and being able to include their mentoring role into their resumes.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00122A

Student Representative Council (SRC), Think: Education Group

Think Colleges

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Australian Council for Private Education and Training.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

SRC bridges campuses for positive student connections

Think: Education Group comprises seven colleges across three campuses in Sydney with colleges also in Brisbane, Gold Coast and Melbourne, offering vocational and higher education courses. The international student body from over 40 countries represents approximately 40% of the total student body.

Think: Education Group introduced a Student Representative Council to improve social interaction and integration across the various Colleges, emphasise the diversity of cultures and address the specific needs of international students.

Student feedback indicated a willingness and desire to be involved in the promotion of social activities and improvements to general campus life, particularly decision making around timetables, access to resources and support services.

The Student Representative Council was developed through an election process and includes structured meetings where international and local students exchange views and feedback sessions with management and staff.

Since its development, Think: Education Group has improved a range of facilities, including IT, and increased the number of social activities involving interaction between domestic and international students



Communication to management of the issues raised by the students is of fundamental importance. It reinforces to domestic and international students that the SRC can be relied on to improve or address areas of concern that may arise in the future.

Positive results include facilities improvements, social evenings, lunches, movie nights, sporting activities, pancake days, barbeques and national celebrations such as Anzac Day and Melbourne Cup. The success of these events relies on consideration to cultural and ethnic differences within the College community.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00246M

Scholarship/Ambassador Program, William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism

William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Australian Council for Private Education and Training.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

Building bridges at William Blue

William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism forms part of Think: Education Group, which includes seven colleges across three campuses in Sydney and in Brisbane, Gold Coast and Melbourne, offering vocational and higher education courses. The international student body from over 40 countries represents approximately 40% of the total student body.

The Elite 08 project was initiated in 2007 in response to research and student feedback indicating international students' desire for interaction with domestic students. The program aims to encourage this interaction through a small group of student advocates.

Advocates were selected from a group of scholarship applicants from the high school sector. Student applicants participated in a two-day workshop aimed to identify those with the enthusiasm, cultural awareness and empathy to become leaders and ambassadors within William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism.

The successful Scholarship recipients play an active role in the College. They attend enrolment and orientation weeks, participate in mentor programs for new students, lead on field trips, help at functions, act as SRC representatives and attend weekly staff meetings to give and receive feedback on student life.



In order to maintain the standard of previous programs, William Blue College of Hospitality and Tourism continues to focus on attracting quality applicants, while communicating the requirements of the scholarship holders clearly and formalising scholarship conditions.

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CRICOS Provider Number: 00246M

Mackillop Club Project

Australian Catholic University

An example of good practice in social integration by international education providers endorsed by Universities Australia.



Australian international education providers are registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

The Australian Catholic University, North Sydney campus, introduced the Mackillop Club Project in 2008 to encourage students across all years of the Nursing program (Years 1-3) to share time together.

The Project, involving 25 students in 2009, was developed to encourage social and academic support between local and international students. New students are welcomed and supported by referring them to university support services as well as participating in orientation days.

Since inception, the group has become an important social network for new and established students, with members participating in picnics, trips around the city, movie outings, lunches, lunchtime meetings, and in 2008, World Youth Day activities.

The group includes a mix of local and international students from across academic year cohorts with students supporting the ongoing growth of the group by encouraging friends and acquaintances to join. A number of study groups have formed.

University staff mentors assist the group on a voluntary basis, giving members the benefit of qualified and experienced academic support.

Although no formal evaluation of the project has been carried out, students involved in this project are succeeding academically and have no fail grades in their academic progress. Students involved have reflected that the small size of the group is a positive factor along with its informal nature.



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CRICOS Provider Number: 00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B

