

University Aims to Create International Leaders

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Education New Zealand has awarded Victoria University of Wellington an **International Education Excellence Award** for Innovation in International Programme for their new internationalisation programme, the Victoria International Leadership Programme (VILP).

"Victoria University has taken internationalisation a step beyond the usual," says Robert Stevens, CEO of Education New Zealand. "They are not satisfied to simply bring in students from overseas, and encourage their own students participate in Study Abroad programmes. They have taken it upon themselves to put international issues and cross-cultural communication on the student agenda to prepare students for international leadership roles."

The programme, launched in October 2008, is open to both domestic and international students at no additional cost. It comprises a range of lectures and activities outside of the students' normal course load. Not only do the participants attend speeches and seminars on relevant topics, they are also expected to participate in hands-on activities such as volunteer service in New Zealand and offshore, and international forums on issues of global importance.

Upon completion of the VILP (which runs the length of a full degree programme) participation is noted on the students' academic records. A shorter version of the VILP is also available to Study Abroad and Exchange students.

"Students who study abroad have already shown an interest in international perspectives. Education New Zealand believes that this opportunity to gain international leadership skills gives them another good reason to choose to come to New Zealand, and gives our own students the tools to become great ambassadors for New Zealand overseas," says Robert Stevens.

In its first year, over 700 students have participated in the programme, with 20% of those being international students.

Education New Zealand awards institutions for their achievements in international education at their annual **International Education Conference**. Winners are awarded in three categories: Innovation in International Programme, Excellence in Marketing and Excellence in Student Support.

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