

International Education Excellence Awards 2007

Summaries of winning entries

The Excellence in Marketing Award is for excellence in marketing. The judges will be looking for innovative marketing ideas and techniques that have increased student flows from either mainstream or emerging markets, or a combination of both. Marketing activities may include in country promotions, on-line or other electronic promotions or a combination of these and other activities that have demonstrably increased recruitment.

2007 WINNER: Mount Maunganui College

Mount Maunganui College has used a huge variety of methods to market their school – and New Zealand – to prospective students, all of which have had great success and have led to increases in the number of students attending the school.

Mount Maunganui College has developed a number of programmes that make use of its location. Golf and Marine Studies programmes have been introduced and are successful because of the physical location of the school – within minutes of multiple golf courses, mussel farms, islands, harbours and other watery environments. The college's Outdoor Education programme has been tailored to suit the advantages of the local environment, with a marine focus again evident.

Apart from tailoring programmes to fit their location, the college has also banded together with local and like-minded institutions to strengthen their profile in large markets, such as the USA and Brazil. Mount Maunganui College has also produced collateral in partnership with a like-minded South Island college to offer a unique 'two mount' experience to students, and through partnering with a local intermediate school and language schools, the college has given a clearly defined 'pathway' for students in the area, even meaning they can stay with the same homestay family for the duration of their Tauranga stay.

In addition, the college has been a regular fixture on inbound agent visits run through PACE and independently, used local migrant knowledge to assist in market, made numerous visits to their markets. To ensure the student experience matches their marketing, Mount Maunganui College has worked redeveloping the website, recruiting new high quality homestays families (with interest in outdoor activities) and has not increased student fees.

The hard work Mount Maunganui College has put in seems to be paying off. The college has had a fifty percent rise in students from non-Asian markets and overall an increase in international student numbers of ten percent in just 12 months.

"Our offerings of Golf, Marine Studies, Outdoor Education and Multisport as part of academic programmes, together with high quality host families near Mount Maunganui beach provide a tempting option for students in 'non-traditional' markets contemplating study abroad."

The Excellence in Student Support Award looks for institutions that have consistently demonstrated continued excellence in pastoral care and student support programmes.

2007 WINNER: Victoria University of Wellington

Victoria International (VI) decided that ensuring new students' first impressions were as positive as possible was to be a priority for 2007. After working with their current students to find out what they should be offering in a welcome and an orientation programme, VI completely redeveloped their programme to help students feel as prepared as possible for a new start in a brand new country.

As a result of student feedback through focus groups VI introduced completely new welcome and orientation material in 2007. Items such as a specially designed pocket-sized map pointing out local food, banks, nightlife and other information identified by students as useful, were included as part of a redesigned welcome pack given to students at the airport. The Orientation programme was rewritten and run like a conference providing plenty of opportunity for students to split into different groups and meet as many new students as possible early on. The Orientation Booklet was rewritten to include important information identified by students. Orientation included a Welcome Party for new students with cultural performances, and encouragement for students (and staff) to dress in ethnic costume. Attendance by all VI staff and the Pro Vice Chancellor at this function was considered compulsory. Current university students who want to make their new peers welcome, were encouraged to attend.

VI understands that arrival and orientation is only the beginning of a successful pastoral care programme. After the initial compulsory orientation programme, VI coordinates a variety of programmes to help students with their new life. Social events are held regularly (mountain biking, a ski trip, quiz nights etc.), students are encouraged to discuss local and international news in a structured setting and a friendship and buddy programme runs bringing domestic and international students together. Students also meet with course and university advisors to help them with faculty expectations and where to find social and academic support on campus.

Since the introduction of the new programme, which is constantly being developed, Victoria International staff have noted that new students have a more positive early study and New Zealand living experience.

"Victoria University of Wellington is committed to sustained excellence in pastoral care for international students. Victoria International has an objective to offer the highest quality student services to international student in New Zealand."

The Innovation in International Programme Award focuses on diversification (geographic markets and/or modes of supply) and innovation, and includes academic programmes and study courses that have developed new areas of tuition and/or opened up new market possibilities. Judges will be looking for programmes that are 'out of the ordinary' and have a long term viability. They may leverage from specific niche opportunities offered by the institution or region. Programmes may not necessarily be within New Zealand, and could encompass non traditional methods of delivery.

2007 WINNER: Kerikeri High School

Kerikeri High School has taken an innovative approach to sourcing new students by way of a sailing academy. The Sailing Academy has become Kerikeri's point of difference and is the only secondary school to offer such a programme.

The sailing academy programme at Kerikeri has NCEA credits, meaning that students considering a career in the industry get the same recognition as they would from core subjects such as English, Science and Maths.

Through promotion of the academy offshore, Kerikeri have doubled the number of students enrolled in the programme in just twelve months, as well as increased their overall international student numbers. As sailing remains a high profile sport globally, Kerikeri anticipate increased numbers of students to the academy.

The academy has attracted students from Itlay, Brazil, United Kingdom, Norway, Mexico, Indonesia, Germany and most excitingly – a student from the current home of sailing, Valencia!

"At Kerikeri High School we have developed a win/win situation. We have opened up new markets for New Zealand and Kerikeri itself, built on New Zealand's strengths – sailing and the beautiful Bay of Islands, diversified by developing a course that offers genuine career opportunities to students, as well as lots of fun, and made the course sustainable."