

destination analysis

NZ fighting back

Market conditions are not ideal in New Zealand and Chinese enrolments in particular are down, so institutions are therefore paying added attention to marketing.

Total international student enrolments have held firm for most tertiary education providers in New Zealand over the last 12 months, although those in charge of international recruitment report less than ideal business conditions. "Here at Otago Polytechnic we have had neither an increase or decrease [in international student numbers] – just holding our own," says Kathryn Keogh at the polytechnic, based in Dunedin. "[We have not had] the English language students in the numbers experienced in the past and this will impact on mainstreaming in the future. Our dollar has provided a barrier to students."

At the Eastern Institute of Technology in Hawke's Bay, a decrease in English language students – particularly from the Chinese market – has caused total overseas enrolments at the institute to drop and also brought fears that the slump may impact on mainstream enrolments in the future. "China is our biggest group but the numbers entering at the English language level have disappeared," says Chris Wright at the institute. "China is still our largest group in mainstream courses."

Wright puts the decrease in Chinese enrolments down to "adverse publicity regarding the closure of some large private language schools" although economic factors have also had an effect. "The strong New Zealand dollar has meant we have lost our price advantage to other countries like Australia and Canada," says Wright. Les Brighton from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch also reports a drop in Chinese student numbers, although, overall, international enrolments at the university were up by 10 per cent in 2005. "[We have noticed] a drop in first year undergraduate enrolments," says Brighton, "all of this due to a drop in numbers from China."

However, as Chinese enrolments have gone down other nationalities have increased, according to Brighton, who lists their most significant student markets as China, USA, Germany, Malaysia, Korea, Japan, France and

Thailand. "[We have noticed] steady and sometimes significant growth in all of the above except for China, where a hugely overheated market over the past three years is correcting itself."

While a continued slump in a key student market is undoubtedly a worry for many, some institutions have embarked on ambitious international marketing strategies to ensure a more varied stream of international students in the future. Michelle Buys at the University College of Learning (Ucol) in Palmerston North says that international enrolments have increased significantly over the last three years, largely due to their international business plan. "Ucol has realised that growth in offshore relationships for credit transfers, being more proactive with agents, expanding offshore networks and diversifying income stream with initiatives such as the Chandigarh nursing programme [a one-year Bachelor of Nursing qualification] would be the only way Ucol could maintain and grow its international forex [foreign exchange] earnings," she says.

When facing less than ideal market conditions, assessing the effectiveness of different marketing strategies becomes more important than ever and Ucol has developed an array of marketing tools to ensure that international enrolments continue to rise. "More effort has been put into extensive Ucol brand awareness in offshore markets," says Buys, "and we have found that regular attendance at education fairs [and] Ucol's presence and promotion of our capabilities with agents has helped us to maintain and increase student numbers."

At the University of Canterbury, too, international marketing strategies are under the spotlight. "Fairs are historically not very productive," says Brighton. "Agent partnerships – especially linked with seminars and events – have been very productive. We are putting more emphasis on the web than ever before. Good enquiry management and 'mining' our current enrolment, goodwill and alumni are also strategies that we are working on."

tertiary focus

Community colleges in Canada

The institutions profiled below represent a range of community colleges in Canada that accept international students on to their programmes.

| Location | Name of institution | Min. length of stay | Min. hours tuition per week | Separate EFL facilities? | Entry requirements | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | | | | | Min. Toefl score | Min. IELTS score | School reports |
| Calgary, AB | Mount Royal College | 14 wks | – | | 220 | | |
| Cranbrook, BC | College of the Rockies | 15 wks | 15 | ✓ | 213 | 6 | ✓ |
| Edmonton, AB | Grant MacEwan College | 1 yr | – | | 213 | 6 | ✓ |
| Fort St John, BC | Northern Lights College | 4 wks | 20 | ✓ | 173 | 5 | ✓ |
| Lethbridge, AB | Lethbridge Community College | 4 wks | – | | n | n | |
| Prince George, BC | College of New Caledonia | 4 wks 24 (ESL) | | | 213 | 6.5 | ✓ |
| Sudbury, ON | Cambrian College | 32 wks | 21 | ✓ | 560p | – | ✓ |
| Vancouver, BC | Capilano College | 12 wks | – | ✓ | 220 | 6.5 | ✓ |
| Vancouver, BC | Langara College | 16 wks | 9 | ✓ | 213 | 6.5 | ✓ |
| Vancouver, BC | Vancouver Community Col. | 4 wks (ESL) | 20 | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| various, BC | Sprott-Shaw Int. Language Col. | 4 wks | 6 | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| various, NB | New Brunswick Community Col. | n | 20 | ✓ | 550p | 6.5 | ✓ |
| various, ON | Collège Boréal | 1 yr | | | n | n | ✓ |
| Windsor, ON | St Clair College | 1 wk (ESL) | 18 | ✓ | 173 | 5.5 | ✓ |

p paper based test – information not supplied n none

