Access, use and usefulness: Services for international students at one Australian university

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This presentation reports on a study that investigated the international student experience with regard to the support services provided by one Australian university with a long history of recruiting large numbers of international students. University staff were aware that student participation in the wide range of support services that it offers was varied, but until the study was undertaken there had been no in-depth analysis of the value of the services provided in terms of students' perceptions of the services' availability, usefulness, accessibility and usage.

The project involved two major data collection strategies for obtaining students' views. The first was a series of focus groups, held across the different teaching faculties with a selection of international students. The data obtained from this stage of the study helped inform the construction of the main instrument, which was a survey submitted electronically to a large sample of international students at the institution. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students were invited to respond. Steps were taken to ensure the anonymity of both the recipients and the respondents.

The findings, which were obtained from an analysis of nearly 400 respondents, indicated that while students were on the whole satisfied with the range of services offered by the institution, there was a considerable level of variation in the extent to which students valued the different services in terms of their delivery. This presentation identifies the variation in the responses to a range of key services and discusses the reasons provided by students for their views.

Key Words

Student services, student support, international students

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