



Engaging Pasifika students

FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



COFFEE BREAK GUIDE

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THIS IS A QUICK GUIDE FOR TUTORS and support services at tertiary institutions regarding Pasifika students. It is a snapshot of some issues relevant to them – the regional distribution of Pasifika peoples, how they are performing and what students say about how you can help them.

Who are Pasifika students?

The term "Pasifika" does not refer to a single nationality or ethnicity, but is a collective term for a diverse range of people from the Pacific region.

Pasifika students in New Zealand tertiary institutions have connections to Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Tokelau, Fiji, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and other islands in the Pacific.

The 2006 Census identifies almost 266,000 people of Pasifika ethnicity in New Zealand, a 14.7% increase from the 2001 Census (232,000) or an increase from 6.5% of the population to 6.9% in 2006. Most of the 266,000 Pasifika population (59%) are New Zealand-born.

Pasifika peoples are concentrated within the regional areas of Auckland (66.9%), Wellington (13.1%), Waikato (4.4%) and Christchurch (4.1%).

Do you know how many Pasifika students there are at your institution or how many you are teaching?

And why do you need to know? Among other reasons, it is because this ethnic group is being monitored by the government in terms of success and retention rates.

Moreover, if you interact with these students and greet them in their own languages, you can make them feel more welcome at your place of learning, which helps in better engaging them. (Refer to the other side of this guide for greetings in some Pacific languages.)

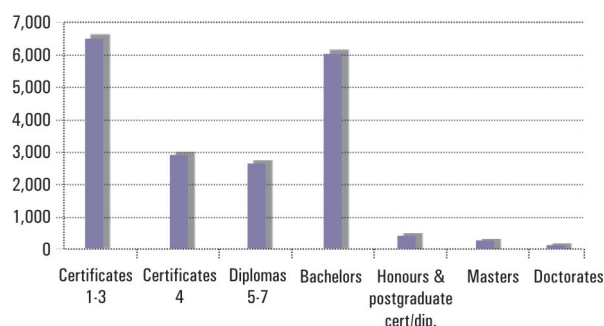
How can you find out about your Pasifika students?

See your Registry.



How are Pasifika students performing in the tertiary sector?

Pasifika student qualifications by level of study, 2007



Source: <http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz>

What Pasifika students say....

"Make sure that all assignments are in a language that is easy to understand. Some tutors use words that are not common and can cause confusion especially if you do not speak English fluently."

"Be more proactive with PI students. We do not necessarily conform nor identify with mainstream views..."

"Be more empathetic. PI students face a lot of pressure at home and this can disrupt our learning i.e. TAKE MORE NOTICE!!"



“Being greeted in my own language now and then means they know an important part of me.”

“Some of us are shy to approach teaching staff and learning support services for more help.”

“We need a centre specifically for Pasifika students to help us link up better with the various teaching and support services of the institution. Once we know and are confident in using the services, we should be OK. We will also meet other Pasifika students there.”

“Some mature students who have been away from formal learning for years should be advised to consider taking the certificate level first unless prior assessments indicate they could cope with higher levels. I struggled at the diploma level, whereas the certificate course could have given me the initial confidence I needed.”

Pasifika greetings

Talofa lava (Samoa)

Halo olgeta (Solomon Islands)

Kia orana (Cook Islands)

Taloha ni (Tokelauan)

Ni sa bula vinaka (Fijian)

Fakaalofa lahi atu (Niuean)

Talofa (Tuvaluan)

Malo e lelei (Tongan)

Some useful websites

In New Zealand:

- Ministry of Education: www.educationcounts.govt.nz
- Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs: www.mpia.govt.nz

In the Pacific:

- Government of the Cook Islands: www.cook-islands.gov.ck
- Fiji Government Online: www.fiji.gov.fj
- Government of Niue: www.gov.nu
- Samoa Government website: www.govt.ws
- Government of the Republic of Vanuatu: www.vanuatugovernment.gov.vu
- Government of Tonga: www.pmo.gov.to

References

Statistics NZ Census 2006 and National Populations estimates, June 2007 quarter, Statistics NZ, sourced from Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs website.

