

# New Zealand ITP Sector

The International Student Barometer  
2011

Executive Summary

## Background

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The International Graduate Insight Group (i-graduate) is an independent benchmarking and research service, delivering comparative insights for the education sector worldwide. **The International Student Barometer (ISB)** is the largest annual study of international students in the world. More than 700 universities and colleges in 22 countries have adopted the ISB, collecting and comparing feedback from over 1,000,000 students to date. All levels and years of study are covered, from first year to final year students.

The **ISB** enables New Zealand ITPs to examine the perceptions and experience of international students by tracking and benchmarking their experience alongside global measures.

The ISB covers comprehensive areas of the international student experience from decision-making to arrival, learning, living and support areas of their study and life experience at the institution. Comparison is provided against an ISB Poly benchmark group of 72 universities and colleges.

**This report summarises the key findings of the New Zealand ITP ISB 2011, highlighting areas of excellence and points for improvement, comparisons are also made with longitudinal data from 2008 and 2009.**

***The learning support and environment is great.  
People listen to the problems and try to resolve***

## Methodology

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The New Zealand ITP ISB 2011 is a study of international students studying in New Zealand, independently administered by i-graduate in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the Education New Zealand Trust, with comparative data from 2008 and 2009.

The globally comparable ISB question-bank contains a core of standard benchmarked elements which allows for global and national benchmarking and year-on-year analysis.

Consultation with the Ministry of Education and Education New Zealand Trust developed an ISB instrument which incorporated local New Zealand adaptations and terminology, and reflected the institutional structure of the 8 participating ITPs in New Zealand. The adapted online survey was run in March - May 2011 to capture opinions of the international student cohort. New Zealand ITP findings were aggregated, analysed and benchmarked against a targeted Global ISB Poly benchmark index of 72 newer universities in the UK, technology universities in Australia and comparable institutions in Canada, and reported back in August 2011.

Each ITP received a link to their standardised ISB survey, which was adapted to each institution. The international student population of all years and levels of study was contacted via email and invited to complete the online questionnaire. Responses were then centrally aggregated and analysed and benchmarked against the ISB Poly global and national indices.

The question-bank for the core elements remains consistent through the periodic 'waves' of the ISB to ensure year on year comparative data and the same method of data collection was used when ITPs implemented i-graduate surveys in 2008 and 2009.

## Response and Summary

There were 8 ITPs that took part in the International Student Barometer New Zealand 2011, out of a total of 20 ITPs in New Zealand. Over 12% of international students in New Zealand study in ITPs.

Results of the 8 participating ITPs were aggregated into a New Zealand ITP benchmark group and findings compared against the global ISB Poly aggregated data of 72 comparable institutions worldwide.

<b>New Zealand ITP response:</b> <b>Number of ITPs: 8</b> <b>Total responses: 1,143</b> (approx. 35% response rate) <b>By nationality:</b> 38% India, 23% China, and 5% Fiji <b>By level:</b> 44% Bachelor, 28% Graduate Diploma, 9% Other non-degree level studies, 6% Postgraduate Diploma, 2% Postgraduate Coursework	<b>ISB Poly Global response:</b> <b>Number of institutions: 72</b> <b>Total responses: 33,317</b> <b>By nationality:</b> 17% India, 16% China, <b>By level:</b> 52% Bachelor, 33% Masters, and 1% Non-degree level studies, 14% other
<b>New Zealand ITPs outperform against the Global ISB Poly Benchmark</b>	<b>New Zealand ITPs underperform against the Global ISB Poly Benchmark</b>
<b>Arrival</b>	<b>Arrival</b>
Accommodation condition Accommodation Office First night Orientation Welcome Bank account Host friends Home friends	<b>Internet access</b>
<b>Learning</b>	<b>Learning</b>
Performance feedback Marking criteria Topic selection Quality lectures Virtual learning Good teachers Assessment Careers advice Work experience Employability	

New Zealand ITPs outperform against the Global ISB Poly Benchmark	New Zealand ITPs underperform against the Global ISB Poly Benchmark
<b>Living</b>	<b>Living</b>
Host friends Host culture Earning money Sport facilities Social facilities Social activities Visa advice Accommodation cost Living cost	Transport links Internet access
<b>Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
Careers service Student advisory Finance office	Halls welfare

## Decision-making and Pre-arrival

### Other countries considered and applied to (vs. 2009)

- 49% of students who studied in New Zealand ITPs considered studying in Australia when selecting a study-destination (up 12% from 2009), 30% considered the USA (up 1%), 28% Canada (up 3%) and 24% considered the UK (up 3%)
- In terms of applications - 7% applied to Australia (up 2% from 2009), 6% Canada (up 3% since 2009), and 4% considered the UK (no change)

### In comparison to international students studying in other countries, international students studying at New Zealand ITPs-

- Were more likely to rate the visa process as being important to them (88% vs. 66% ISB Poly)
- Were more likely to rate long-term employment in this country as being an important factor in deciding to study here (88% vs. 71%). This has also increased by 2 percentage points since New Zealand ITP ISB 2009.
- Were more likely to say that a personal recommendation was important in their coming to study here (79% vs. 69%)

### When selecting an institution -

- Friends (45%), followed by agents (32%), the institution website (30%) and parents (28%) are high influencers on decision-making
- The 32% that cited that an agent helped them choose their institution compares to 23% in the ISB Poly index
- The 30% that cited the institution website helped them choose compared to 36% in the ISB Poly index.
- 8% say that the Education NZ website helped them to choose their institution.

More international students who come to New Zealand are considering competitor countries for their education, and the biggest challenger is Australia (+12% to 49%). The UK (+3% to 24%), the USA (+1% to 30%) and Canada (+1% to 28%) are also more likely to be considered as study destinations by students who come to New Zealand. In terms of stated applications, 7% of international students who came to New Zealand say they also applied to Australia as well (up 2% from 2009). Canada is rising as an alternative, with 6% who now study in New Zealand saying they also applied to Canada (up 3 percentage points since 2009). This shows a more competitive global marketplace for the sector vis-a-vis 2009.

Friends (+6% from 2009 to 46%) and institution websites (+3% from 2009 to 31%) are both having a greater impact on the decision making process. Agents continue to be a major influence on decision making (-2% from 2009 to 32%), and greater than ISB Poly benchmark (23%). Just 5% of students reported that a social networking site helped their decision, and 8% say that the Education New Zealand website helped them to choose their destination.

In terms of the pre-arrival advice and information students are receiving, there are high levels of satisfaction among international students in New Zealand's ITP sector. 84% were satisfied with the accuracy of pre-arrival advice and information from agents, 87% of international students were satisfied with advice from Immigration New Zealand, and 93% were satisfied with advice from their institution (+5% compared to the comparator index).

Long-term employment opportunities are increasingly playing a role in decision-making, and are cited by international students as being more important than in 2009 (+2% points to 88%). Likewise, institution scholarship/ bursaries are also increasingly important to students when deciding where to study (+9% points to 79%).

In terms of what are most important to international students in their decision-making, the highest in importance are the core factors of teaching quality, institution reputation, qualification reputation, personal safety and the reputation of the education system in New Zealand. When we compare against the global ISB index, overall these most important aspects are comparable with the benchmark, however personal safety is rated as more important to New Zealand international students than the benchmark group (93% vs. 87%). Another aspect to note is that the visa process is more important for international students in New Zealand (88% rated it as important or very important, compared to 66% in the ISB Poly global index). A very similar picture emerges with the international students at New Zealand universities.

## Arrival

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Overall, international students were 91% satisfied with the arrival experience at their ITP institution in New Zealand, compared with 86% in the ISB Poly index. The results indicate that students feel the New Zealand ITP sector provides exceptional arrival experience to international students.

### Areas of excellence

- ✓ **Accommodation condition – 85% satisfied (+7% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Accommodation Office – 91% satisfied (+10% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **First night – 90% satisfied (+9% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Institution orientation – 92% satisfied (+5% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Welcome – 85% satisfied (+9% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Bank account – 94% satisfied (+16% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Host friends – 81% satisfied (+7% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Home friends – 92% satisfied (+6% vs ISB Poly)**

International students in New Zealand ITPs are more satisfied than the comparative group of institutions with social integration aspects of the arrival experience, including being able to make friends with fellow students from their country of origin as well as making local friends from New Zealand. This is similar to the theme that emerges from international students studying at New Zealand universities. The results indicate that students feel that New Zealand institutions are providing a welcoming social experience for new arrivals in the country, and the experience stacks up favourably against other destination countries.

The accommodation services are achieving high levels of satisfaction, well above the global ISB Poly benchmark index. Additionally, the condition of the accommodation on arrival, when compared to the ISB Poly benchmark, is making a good impression on international students, reflected in high levels of satisfaction.

Setting up a bank account appears to work more smoothly in New Zealand than at other countries where it can often be a problem for international students when they first arrive. This is a similar finding that emerges in the results of the International Student Barometer for New Zealand universities.

Orientations are achieving high levels of satisfaction and institutions are helping international students settle in from the start. Welcomes and airport pick-ups appear to be working well for international students arriving in New Zealand.

#### Areas for improvement

- **Internet access – 76% satisfied (-3% vs. ISB)**

## Learning

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#### Areas of excellence

- ✓ **Performance feedback – 91% satisfied (+6% vs. ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Marking criteria – 90% satisfied (+6%)**
- ✓ **Topic selection – 93% satisfied (+6%)**
- ✓ **Quality lectures – 92% satisfied (+4%)**
- ✓ **Virtual learning – 92% satisfied (+4%)**
- ✓ **Good teachers – 90% satisfied (+3%)**
- ✓ **Assessment – 90% satisfied (+3%)**
- ✓ **Careers advice – 76% satisfied (+5%)**
- ✓ **Work experience – 71% satisfied (+4%)**
- ✓ **Employability – 84% satisfied (+6%)**

#### Areas for improvement

- **Technology – 85% satisfied (-3% vs. ISB)**

The New Zealand ITPs are achieving high levels of satisfaction against the benchmark for all elements of the learning experience, suggesting that the ITP sector is meeting or exceeding international student expectations across the spectrum of the learning experience. The year-on-year data for the ITPs also shows positive increase from 2008. Most improved over the years is the satisfaction with the multicultural learning experience and performance feedback, both up 7% since 2008. While the technology for learning infrastructure, PCs, networking etc compare unfavourably against the international benchmark, it is up 6% since 2008.

All areas of the learning experience have improved since 2008, with the exception of work experience, which is slightly below (-1%), but remains strong against the global ISB Poly benchmark.

## Living

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### Areas of excellence

- ✓ **Host friends – 84% satisfied (+10% vs. ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Host culture – 89% satisfied (+5%)**
- ✓ **Earning money – 62% satisfied (+7%)**
- ✓ **Sport facilities – 78% satisfied (+3%)**
- ✓ **Social facilities – 83% satisfied (+3%)**
- ✓ **Social activities – 81% (+3%)**
- ✓ **Visa advice – 86% satisfied (+7%)**
- ✓ **Accommodation cost – 69% satisfied (+10%)**
- ✓ **Living cost – 66% satisfied (+4%)**
- ✓ **Financial support – 71% satisfied (+9%)**

### Areas for improvement

- **Transport links – 73% satisfied (-11% vs. ISB)**
- **Internet access – 78% satisfied (-2%)**
- **Safety – 87% satisfied (-1%)**

Regarding transportation links to other places, arguably there is little that can be done by institutions to improve the situation. Transport links are -11% compared to the global ISB Poly benchmark and satisfaction has declined by 7% points since 2009.

Internet access at the accommodation is slightly below the global ISB Poly benchmark index, and is a weakness for New Zealand institutions overall.

For most areas of the living experience, international student satisfaction at New Zealand ITPs outperforms the global benchmark group. Key strengths of the New Zealand experience include the social integration aspects, such as making local friends and having sufficient opportunity to experience the local culture. Satisfaction with safety is 1 percentage point below the ISB Poly index. The least satisfied group with the safety are students from South Korea (67% satisfied). Indian and Chinese students were 88% and 84% satisfied respectively. This may prompt some further investigation into the reasons for the variation by nationality. South Koreans were also the least satisfied group for safety at participating New Zealand Universities.

International students were asked about the immigration and visa advice from the institution, and this performs well against the global benchmark, with some institutions scores as high as 92% satisfied. Students from China are most satisfied with 91% satisfied.

From an economic perspective the international students at New Zealand ITPs are comparatively satisfied with the living and accommodation costs, and with the financial support available to them. However, if we compare with 2009, we can see that students are becoming less satisfied with both accommodation cost (-10% to 69%) and living cost (-15% to 66%).

Earning money whilst studying (-12% to 62%) is also positive against the global comparator group, but shows a drop since 2009.

For financial support, Master's degree students were 15 percentage points more satisfied than Bachelor degree students. 62% are satisfied with the opportunity to earn money while studying, and this is a robust 7 percentage points above the global ISB Poly index.

## Support

**Overall, the support services in New Zealand ITPs achieve high satisfaction scores. Of the 14 support services measured in the study, 13 outperform the ISB global index.**

### Areas of excellence

- ✓ **Careers service - 91% satisfied (+9% vs ISB Poly)**
- ✓ **Student advisory – 96% satisfied (+5%)**
- ✓ **Finance office – 92% satisfied (+6%)**
- ✓ **Clubs/societies – 97% satisfied (+6%)**
- ✓ **International office – 95% satisfied (+5%)**
- ✓ **Faith provision – 97% satisfied (+7%)**
- ✓ **Counselling – 94% satisfied (+3%)**

### Areas for improvement

- **Halls welfare – 81% satisfied (-5%)**

The support services in New Zealand perform well across many functions, in particular the careers services, faith provision, finance office and clubs and societies. It appears that international students feel well supported across a range of services in New Zealand.

Since 2008, the majority of the support services appear to have improved, with satisfaction increasing for the International Office functions as well as the Catering and Careers Services by 3% each. Support services are being recognised by the international students who are using them.

## Recommendation and Summary

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International students are broadly as likely to recommend their experience as they were in 2009, with 80% saying they would either actively recommend the experience to others thinking of applying here or recommend it, if asked (+1% compared to international students at New Zealand universities). This is a 2% decrease in recommendation since 2009.

Recommendation is similar among New Zealand ITP Master's degree students as among undergraduates (both 79%), although it is worth noting high levels of recommendation amongst Graduate Diploma students (84%).

In summary –

International students at New Zealand ITPs are very satisfied across the vast majority of learning, living and support measures, compared to the global index.

Most areas of the learning experience are better satisfying international students than in previous years. Students are increasingly satisfied compared with 2008 with the multicultural dimension of the learning experience in New Zealand, the academic performance feedback, the technology (PC's, networking), the sense that the learning they are doing will help them to get a good job (+5%) and language support (+4%), assessment (+4%) and the physical learning environment (+4%).

While core economic areas of the living experience remain higher than the ISB Poly index, there is a marked drop in satisfaction since 2009.

Students are becoming less satisfied with both accommodation cost (-10% to 69%) and living cost (-15% to 66%) Earning money whilst studying (-12% to 62%) is also potentially a concern.

Students are feeling more positive about many of the social aspects of living in New Zealand, particularly making friends from other countries (90% satisfied, +4 vs. 2009, +8% vs. 2008) and experiencing local culture (89% satisfied, +4% vs. 2009, +8% vs. 2008). Satisfaction with making friends from New Zealand is also increasing: in 2011 international students are 84% satisfied, an increase of 7% since 2008.

ITP students' satisfaction with their arrival and settling in experiences compares very well against global comparators. 14 out of 17 measures in the arrival experience have improved since 2008. One shows a small decrease (registration - 1%), and a further two have decreased - the ease of understanding how the course of study would work has decreased 8% since 2009, and satisfaction with the internet access is also an area of concern (76% satisfied, 3 percentage points below the benchmark).

The majority of the support services outperform the comparator group, and the International Office, catering and careers services functions have shown improvements of 3%.

Overall, New Zealand ITPs are performing strongly against the benchmark and improving performance in 2011. This positive picture should be seen in the context of increasing student expectations and an increasingly competitive international education market. While alternative destinations are increasingly being considered, the experience in New Zealand ITPs is one that is being recommended, and the sector performs well across the learning, living and support services.