



## Benchmarking International Student Experience

The globalization of higher education has stimulated many changes in the sector such as students and staff being recruited from around the world and universities building alliances and networks with others on common interests and profiles (Debowski, 2012). These changes have had significant impacts on internationalisation agendas and investment in international student recruitment, student exchanges, research collaborations and joint academic programs. Internationalisation is defined as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight, 2003, p.2).

One approach universities can use to adapt to this constantly evolving global environment as well as act as a 'unifying mechanism' (Debowski, 2012, p.15) is through sharing and comparing knowledge on internationalisation and its core elements. An international benchmarking project with the universities of Canterbury (New Zealand); Tasmania (Australia) and the West of Scotland (United Kingdom) was undertaken (February-July, 2014) to understand three aspects of internationalisation at the global and institutional levels: 1) comparison of international student experience and essential components; 2) exploration and comparison of external relationships and partnerships and comparison of domestic students' international experience.

The benchmarking project was considered mutually beneficial for the following reasons: 1) the purpose and impacts of internationalisation agendas and understanding the student experience need to be investigated; 2) to gain a deeper understanding into international student mobility across different countries; 3) provide opportunities for universities to better prepare their graduates for the global era; and 4) build international, collaborative partnerships in internationalisation. Findings and outcomes from the cross-institutional, international peer review benchmarking exercise will be disseminated and discussed.