

Immigrant careers:  
Asian academics in New Zealand universities

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Careers need to be seen as evolving when individuals move through time, across organisational and geographical boundaries, and between cultures. Understanding the careers of immigrants is important because the scale of net migration to New Zealand means that they make up a substantial portion of the labour market, and are an important source of potential expertise for New Zealand employers. Asian academics are among the highly skilled immigrants who bring both skills and a different perspective (based on their ethnicity and different life experiences) which may be of particular value to New Zealand universities, one of the most ethnically diverse sectors in New Zealand. However, there is a dearth of research both internationally and locally on the characteristics of immigrants' careers. My research addresses the question: 'What are the career experiences of immigrants?' More specifically it seeks to explore the interplay between organisational diversity and career policies, as well as the impact of ethnicity and immigration status on Asian academics' careers. This research will be placed within the empirical context of New Zealand universities. Life history method involving in-depth interviews will be used to encourage Asian academics to talk about their career experiences. It is anticipated that their career stories will reveal insightful immigrant perspectives. The findings will make a contribution to understanding the barriers that skilled immigrants face in pursuing their careers in New Zealand, and the opportunities that should be utilised to improve workplace policies to facilitate their career efforts.