**Agent Issues Case Study**

A group of students has arrived to start their courses. They all participate in the orientation and they commence their courses and generally make a good start. It is apparent they have a good background in their field of study.

Over time you are finding there is a steady stream of these students coming to ask questions about their homestay arrangements. At first you think it just adjustment issues but in time it becomes apparent that the students had an expectation of high quality home stays who would provide them with assistance for homework, weekend entertainment and better and private internet access along with assistance in finding places of interest for a tourism experience. Additionally they seem to be of the view that they are paying too much for what they are receiving.

Reviewing their views of the school show that these students expected a lot more help in class and support in developing their English language. In addition, they have expectations of extra-curricular activities that differ markedly from reality and are not normally part of the schools curriculum.

You begin to wonder how and from where the students obtained their expectations and you discover that the briefing they received from their recruitment agents was very much full of information on the tourism aspects of New Zealand and very limited in relation to the reality of school, course of study and living experience.

It seems on closer examination that the agent provided false expectations around the programme of study and provided limited generic information on the homestay application form. The agent had painted a picture of how good the experience would be and overall there appeared a lack of pre-arrival information.

For this case or similar ones that you know of, how would you monitor and modify the agent’s handling of the student’s application to avoid it providing false expectations and impacting on the student’s expectation of having a positive student experience settling into the school? Come up with ideas on how to monitor agent performance and rectify the situation with the student. Maybe even look at the contract the school has with the students and/or the agent and explore modifications to that. Think too about providing pre-arrival information and alternative ways in which students can verify what is provided to them by agents. Whilst focus of your discussion is on avoiding such situations arising take some time also to think about what can be done with the group of students mentioned in the case study to ensure they come away with a sense of a worthwhile experience of living and studying in NZ.