

## **Chilean Government Announces Plans to Increase Internationalisation of Education Sector**

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The newly elected Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, has announced 36 measures that are to be implemented during the first 100 days of her government. These measures cover areas such as employment, social security, women's issues, health, entrepreneurship and competitiveness, the environment, regions, education and globalisation.

Interestingly, the three measures linked to globalisation are set to have a direct impact on the internationalisation of Chile's education sector. The three measures are as follows:

1. The Chilean government will expect all university students undertaking TESOL education to spend one semester of their university degree abroad, in an English-speaking country, with the financial support of the State.
2. The Chilean government will create an exchange program that will allow more TESOL professionals from English-speaking countries to visit Chile and teach English.
3. The Chilean government will implement a program whereby the top 1,000 graduates of each cohort will be able to undertake a doctoral degree in some of the world's leading universities.

In relation to point one, all students engaged in their fourth year (second last year) of an English pedagogy degree, who are enrolled in an accredited university and/or one that belongs to the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities, will receive funding from the Chilean government to undertake one semester of their degree abroad.

The Chilean government is committed to financing travel and accommodation expenses. Students are likely to travel to an English-speaking university that has an existing exchange agreement with the Chilean university where the student is enrolled. This agreement will have to include a tuition waiver.

Chilean students must sign an agreement before travelling, whereby they commit to return to Chile and work in the public sector for at least two years upon graduation. The government expects to start sending students abroad during the second semester of this year.

President Bachelet is expected to announce the details of this program during the first half of May. The Chilean Education Ministry is interested in sending these students to a variety of English-speaking countries.

Details concerning the second and third measures are not available at this stage. However, in relation to point three, AEI understands that there might be scope for Australian universities to sign individual agreements with the Chilean government. These agreements might include a reduction in tuition expenses in exchange for a constant flow of students who would benefit from the program.