
NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Investigator transit to give IMAS students a taste of science research at sea

*****News Editors: a media opportunity will be provided on RV Investigator at 11am tomorrow (Thursday) with A/Prof Chase and students before the ship leaves later tomorrow. Meet at the viewing platform behind the CSIRO Marine Laboratories, Castray Esplanade. Visitors to Investigator must wear sensible, enclosed footwear and long sleeves/pants are recommended*****

Twenty-five IMAS students will get a unique taste of scientific research when they sail from Hobart to Brisbane over the coming week on the Marine National Facility research vessel *Investigator*.

The students will study the physical, chemical and biological oceanography of the East Australian Current (EAC) as *Investigator* makes an eight day transit voyage to Brisbane to prepare for its next research voyage.

The voyage's Chief Scientist, IMAS Associate Professor Zanna Chase, said the students would collect and analyse water samples, phytoplankton and zooplankton during group research projects as part of their Marine and Antarctic Science degrees.

"One of IMAS's strengths as a teaching and research institute is our proximity to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, and the unique experiences that we can offer students and researchers as a result," Associate Professor Chase said.

"This voyage is a great example of the world-class education that we provide, which is a key attraction for both local and overseas students, and also illustrates the valuable resource the Marine National Facility offers for marine science training."

"During the transit the students will collect samples that will help them to understand the processes in the East Australian Current that drive the production and distribution of phytoplankton, which form the base of the ocean's food chain."

"The EAC is a major influence on the climate of eastern Australia and an important factor in the warming waters that we are experiencing in the Tasman Sea as a result of climate change, so the transit will also give the students a hands-on experience of a significant oceanographic feature."

Associate Professor Chase said a number of international students from China would join the transit as part of IMAS's innovative collaboration with the highly regarded Ocean University of China (OUC) in Qingdao, which includes a joint undergraduate degree that allows students to split their studies between the two universities.

"IMAS staff have been travelling to OUC since mid-2015 to help teach Chinese students enrolled in the Bachelor's degree course (with embedded Honours), who then have the option of completing their four-year course in Tasmania.

"OUC has more than 45 000 students and is a major centre for oceanography and fisheries science in China, having taught 70 per cent of the country's PhD graduates in those disciplines.

"Offering both local and OUC students an experience of the kind they will get over the next week can only strengthen the University of Tasmania's reputation and the State's role as a centre for teaching and research excellence," Associate Professor Chase said.

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