

**Title:**                   **Exploring cultural aspects of student mobility – what do we know about students’ perceptions of their own and host culture of learning.**

**Presenter:**           **Dr Monika Foster**  
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### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Draw on the findings from a cross-faculty (Business and Design) study with students involved in international mobility, specifically their evolving perceptions of their own and host culture of learning.
- Reflect on their own students’ perceptions of own culture of learning and how student mobility can enhance their students’ intercultural skills.
- Reflect on the implications of employing rich and innovative ways of documenting student experience in mobility, such as videography and multi-media, which help to humanise the experience and capture the complexity of the evolving perceptions.
- Consider the implications for staff development in developing students’ intercultural capability.

### **Session Outline**

In an increasingly globalised education, with universities aiming to develop student mobility through exchange and study abroad programmes (Sweeney 2012), this study used the experiences of UK students in China and Chinese students in the UK to explore students’ evolving perceptions of own and host learning cultures. A qualitative exploration of verbal and visual data generated by different methodologies to engage the participants will be followed by the participants being asked to reflect on their students’ perceptions of culture of learning and how student mobility can enhance their own students’ intercultural skills.

The emerging results seem to point to the importance of study abroad as a key experience for the students’ evolving awareness of their own culture of learning and the hosts’, hence developing an intercultural dimension to the overall study experience. We will examine ways to ensure that international exchanges meet the educational demands of students and contribute to the evolving intercultural understanding, a key global graduate attributes (HEA,

2014), as well as the challenges involved in student mobility such as preparing students to be able to engage with and benefit fully from the new culture of learning.

This research informs HE institutions on how to prepare and develop exchange programmes which lead to improvement in the quality of student learning experiences for exchange students abroad and at home. The aim is to try to humanise and make accessible what in the first instance could be a daunting opportunity, particularly for any student who may be leaving home for the first time. The implications for staff development, especially for developing students' intercultural capability will be discussed.

### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

Briefly introduce the study and the findings from a cross-faculty (Business and Design) study with students involved in international mobility, specifically their evolving perceptions of their own and host culture of learning. (6 mins)

Discussion led by the following questions: (8 mins)

In what ways students' perceptions of culture of learning may benefit from study abroad experience or be challenged by the study abroad experience?

How can student mobility enhance their own students' intercultural skills, if at all?

Is it an important aspect that should be explored with the students / programme leaders / tutors while considering study abroad/mobility?

Presenter and participants reflect on the implications on innovative ways of documenting student experience in mobility, such as videography and multi-media, which help to humanise the experience and capture the complexity of the evolving perceptions. (6 mins)

Discussion led by the following questions: (10 mins)

What is your experience of cross-subject collaboration in student mobility or enquiry into student mobility?

How do you feel about using innovative / non-standard ways of documenting student mobility experiences – what may be the challenges and benefits?

Consider the implications for the design of international exchanges/ student mobility which take account of the intercultural dimension and its contribution to the development of key graduate attributes. (7 mins)

Discussion on the proposed implications led by the following questions: (8 mins)

What are the implications of the study on the design of student mobility programmes? Your experience?

How can institutions ensure that student mobility explores and enhances students' intercultural skills/ awareness?

## References

Higher Education Academy (2014) Internationalising higher education: Framework for Action. *Unpublished at the time of preparing the proposal.*

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Sweeney, S. (2012) Going Mobile: Internationalisation, mobility and the European Higher Education Area. [Accessed 25/03/14]  
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