



Shaping a Global BU: Internationally-informed Internationalisation

Dr Sonal Minocha



In partnership with:

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This Higher Education Academy (HEA)-funded project is designed to support, promote and facilitate the development of a global academic community at Bournemouth University (BU) by sharing and valuing the diverse knowledge and experience of our international academic staff in the shaping of a Global BU. It seeks to evaluate how greater diversity might lead to more culturally inclusive curriculum design, development and delivery.

The overarching aims are:

1. Undertake an in-depth study and evaluation into the internationalising of UK Higher Education (HE) as practised by our international staff.
2. Surface the epistemological and ontological differences to the internationalisation of HE from the perspective and practices of our international academic staff.
3. Facilitate a BU-wide global academic community through a nuanced understanding of approaches and methodologies adopted by international academic staff.

Methodology

In order to address the project objectives, our approach involved four phases of data collection: a literature review of current themes with regards to international academic staff in UK HE; focus groups with international academic staff; one-to-one discussions with international academic staff; and a focus group with current undergraduate students. As such, the approach draws on a multitude of resources both empirical and from existing documents.

Key Findings

A brief summary of the key findings from international academic staff were:

Perspectives on the concept of internationalisation: Internationalisation was seen as a process that has to be experienced for it to be embedded and was not something that could simply be acquired.

Designing and delivering an international curriculum: International academic staff had not felt part of the curriculum design process during their time in UK HE, but believed that their role in this process may well support institutional efforts towards internationalisation.

Current policy and practice surrounding international staff inductions:

International academic staff regularly spoke about current institutional policies and practices concerning international staff inductions in UK HE and felt that there could be much better support to help international staff adjust to teaching in the UK.

The experience of international academic staff of the UK HE context:

Institutional practices, including programme assessment, content, delivery and structure all contributed to drawing a nuanced picture of the UK HE as seen through the perspective of international academic staff.

The relationship between educator and learner: International academic staff believed students had more of a consumer attitude in the UK and, as such, their expectations and sense of power to appeal against assessments of their work seemed greater. It was suggested that the requirement for lecturers to provide frequent feedback to students in the UK was a contributory factor in exacerbating this sense of consumerism, as were the higher tuition fees.

The Post Graduate Certificate (PG Cert) in Academic Practice: The PG Cert in its present form was seen as too conventional and was underpinned by a very traditional, UK-centric perspective. Whilst many recognised that the PG Cert course was a useful mechanism for helping international academic staff prepare for teaching in the UK, it was felt that the course focused more on homogenising staff rather than embracing diverse pedagogic practices.

Innovative pedagogic practice across borders: International academic staff suggested that the use of project-based teaching could build upon problem-based teaching, where the latter is commonly adopted across the UK HE sector. Project-based learning was seen as a means for promoting collaborative learning and created opportunities to introduce international dimensions, both of which are seen as key to embedding internationalisation within the classroom. International academic staff also cited examples of good practice from Singapore and China where international case studies were utilised in lectures across all disciplines to ensure the delivery of both relevant content and a context-driven curriculum.

Enablers for embedding greater diversity, internationalisation and a culturally-inclusive curriculum: Activities, such as two-way mobility of staff and students, guest lectures by academic staff from overseas universities, along with breaking down existing barriers between home and international students, were all seen by international academic staff as key enablers of greater institutional cultural diversity and internationalisation.

A brief summary of the key findings from undergraduate students were:

Student views on diverse teaching and learning approaches: Whilst

acknowledging that there were some difficulties around language, students recognised the added value that international academic staff could bring to their learning and felt that more could be done to help international staff members adapt to UK HE.

Breaking down existing barriers between home and international students:

Breaking down the existing barriers between home and international students was seen as a means of enabling and promoting greater internationalisation and diversity on campus, whilst also encouraging better integration through a mutual exchange of knowledge and understanding that recognised and embraced cultural diversity.

Boosting mobility opportunities and confidence: Whilst there were mixed views on how best to promote opportunities for students, there was a general feeling that these opportunities needed to be promoted much earlier on in a student's time in HE.

Integrating global and employability: Students identified employability as an important element of their degree and that any scheme aimed at helping them to evidence participation in activities that improved their global employability should be mindful of existing workloads.

Conclusions

The outcomes from this short evaluative study form the first step towards further promoting and facilitating the development of a global academic community at BU. The report draws together a set of implications for BU. It also raises a number of considerations for the sector to reflect upon with regard to existing approaches to engagement with international academic staff.

1. Introduction

This project was designed to support, promote and facilitate the development of a global academic community at BU by putting mechanisms in place to share the diverse knowledge and experience of our international staff in the shaping of a Global BU.

The HEA (2014) calls for a stronger recognition of the diverse range of knowledge, experience, cultures, languages, beliefs, values, attitudes and meanings within the academic community, for academic enhancement and success. In line with this, the overarching aims of this project were to:

1. Undertake an in-depth study and evaluation into the internationalising of UK HE as practiced by our international staff (this included a comparison that sought to identify curricular and pedagogic innovations, with potential applicability to the wider UK HE context).
2. Surface the epistemological and ontological differences to the internationalisation of HE from the perspectives and practices of our international academic staff.
3. Facilitate a BU-wide global academic community through a nuanced understanding of approaches and methodologies adopted by international academic staff.

We undertook the project between February 2015 and July 2015, as part of an overarching Global Talent Programme, which aims to fuse international and employability agendas under the umbrella term 'global talent'.

This report summarises our findings and conclusions to date although this work continues to be developed as we seek to embed Global BU into the core policies and practices of the institution.

The report begins by providing background to the project, before presenting the current state of the literature on international academics in HE, and in the UK in particular. It goes on to elaborate the methodology adopted to undertake the research, provides a summary of the report findings, and concludes with implications and considerations of these initial findings for BU, the HEA and the sector.

2. Background to the project

This project seeks to enhance our understanding of the diverse pedagogic approaches adopted by international academic staff in the practice of internationalisation in its broadest sense. In so doing, the project seeks to evaluate how greater diversity might lead to more culturally inclusive curriculum design, development and delivery. The project places international academic staff at the heart of its research to initiate the shaping of a Global BU informed by an international perspective. It also seeks to prompt reflections on future policy and practice for both Bournemouth University and the wider UK HE sector.

Work on the project commenced in February 2015, following our successful bid with HEA in December 2014. Data analysis, refinement (through focus groups) and write up over June 2015 served as the basis of this final report. The project team comprised of:

1. The institutional core – the HEA Project Group (see Appendix 1 for project group members), the Employability Task and Finish Group, Deputy Deans (Education), Heads of Department, Framework Leads, Faculty Executives, and Careers and Employability Team.
2. Wider representation from across the institution – University Leadership Team, University Executive Team, Marketing and Communications Team, and PRIME (Planning, Risk Intel, Management Information and Enhancement).
3. External engagement with HEA in providing intelligence and further resources to the project.

3. Methodology

Overview

In order to address the project objectives, our approach involved four phases of data collection drawing on a multitude of resources both empirical and from existing documents. A diversity of methodological approaches enabled us to gain insights into the academic experiences of international academic staff. The aim throughout was to recognise the richness of expertise and diversity of pedagogic approaches that international staff bring to BU and the potential impact of their expertise across the wider UK HE sector.

Methodological approaches, sample and data sources

Our methodological approach was underpinned by a literature review of current issues associated with international academic staff in UK HE, which sets the scene for our 'themed' focus groups and one-to-one discussions with international academic staff and students.

Project data was collected over a period of four months – March to June 2015 – and featured a sample of 41 international academic staff and students (see Table 1).

Table 1 Study Sample	Invited	Attended
Focus Group 1 (international academic staff)	215	15
Focus Group 2 (international academic staff)	-	9
Focus Group 3 (undergraduate home and international students)	57	7
One-to-one discussions (international academic staff)	-	10
Total	282	41

Phase I: Review of literature

We undertook a background review of recent academic contributions investigating the experience, role and contribution of international academic staff to the UK HE sector. The outcomes of this review contributed to our understanding of the current state of research into international academic staff in the UK HE sector by pointing out some prominent themes deserving further attention by academia. This background review provided direction in shaping the methods employed and discussion themes adopted as part of the wider international staff focus groups and one-to-one discussions.

Phase II: Focus groups with international staff

A total of three focus groups took place; two with international academic staff and one with students. This was then supplemented by ten one-to-one discussions with international academic staff.

All academic staff who identified themselves as being 'international' (i.e. those with a non-UK country of origin, which totalled 215 based on HR records) were invited to attend one of two focus groups. Focus groups were seen as an opportunity for international academic staff to air their opinions on the prominent themes identified by the background review of the literature. The data collected was entirely qualitative and all comments captured were treated as anonymous. The focus group discussions were structured to capture four key themes:

- > the views of international academic staff on internationalisation of HE;
- > the experience of international academic staff of the UK HE context;
- > the extent to which international academic staff pedagogies had changed as a result of their overseas-UK HE academic transition;
- > the diversity of pedagogic practices and approaches adopted internationally by BU's international academic staff as well as cross-border approaches that might work better in the UK HE or serve as enablers of a more culturally-inclusive and diverse curriculum.

Phase III: One-to-one discussions with international staff

In addition to the two focus groups, the in-depth one-to-one discussions with international academic staff who had not attended one of the focus groups were undertaken. The purpose of this activity was two-fold: to facilitate deeper and more personalised engagement with individuals representing our international academic body; and to unpack the themes and issues that emerged from the focus group sessions. Building upon focus group outputs, the direction of the discussions in the one-to-ones was underpinned by three key purposes:

- > international academic staff perceptions of the UK HE context with a particular focus on the experience of undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PG Cert) and of UK HE policy and practice;
- > detail about the diverse practices, techniques and approaches to delivering pedagogy and shaping curriculum adopted by international academic staff as part of their international academic experience and identifying pedagogies that may be effective in a UK HE context;

- enablers and resources that might be deployed in the UK HE context in order to encourage greater cultural diversity and/or internationalisation in relation to curriculum and pedagogy.

Phase IV: A focus group with undergraduate students

As part of this project, we also engaged with seven undergraduates, both UK-born and international. Similar to the sessions with international academic staff, the intention was to use these engagements as a means of gaining insight into their views on international issues relating to the curriculum, extra and co-curriculum. To better understand their views on engaging (or not) with the internationalisation and employability agendas, the direction of the discussion was underpinned by three key themes:

- student perspectives on internationalisation and employability in the current curricular and extra-curricular offers;
- student views on diverse teaching and learning approaches adopted by both home and international academic staff and how they are received;
- student views of the current employability and global/international offering, what's missing and what they want to see as part of a Global BU.

Limitations of the research

Whilst the staff focus groups were open to all international academic staff across all four faculties, the sample of 24 represented 11% of the total number of BU's international academic body (n=215) on campus. Although representative of the four faculties, the sample was unable to capture the whole of the University's international academic community on campus.

A significant number of staff from our international academic community have only taught in the UK HE context, which is a limitation, particularly with identifying innovative pedagogic practice used globally. Consequently, we have not fully captured sufficient international academic staff who are new to the UK HE context and who are more likely to provide a richer and more lived account of HE policy and practice beyond the UK HE context.

The undergraduate student sample drew on both home and international students. A limitation was that not all faculties were represented, with Tourism and Marketing students from the Faculty of Management dominating the sample. However, as these tend to be the more globally informed disciplines, this still allowed for a detailed discussion on the key themes of this project.

4. Findings and discussion

Internationalisation and international academic staff: UK HE context

The rationale behind this project is grounded in our aspirations to recognise the wider role that international academic staff have to play in helping UK HE become truly internationalised. The current research into the experiences of international staff in the UK and beyond is limited and this project seeks to provide a summary of the existing research and utilise this in framing the discussions with our own international staff and students. The key findings from both exercises are presented below.

A snapshot of the literature on international academic staff in UK HE

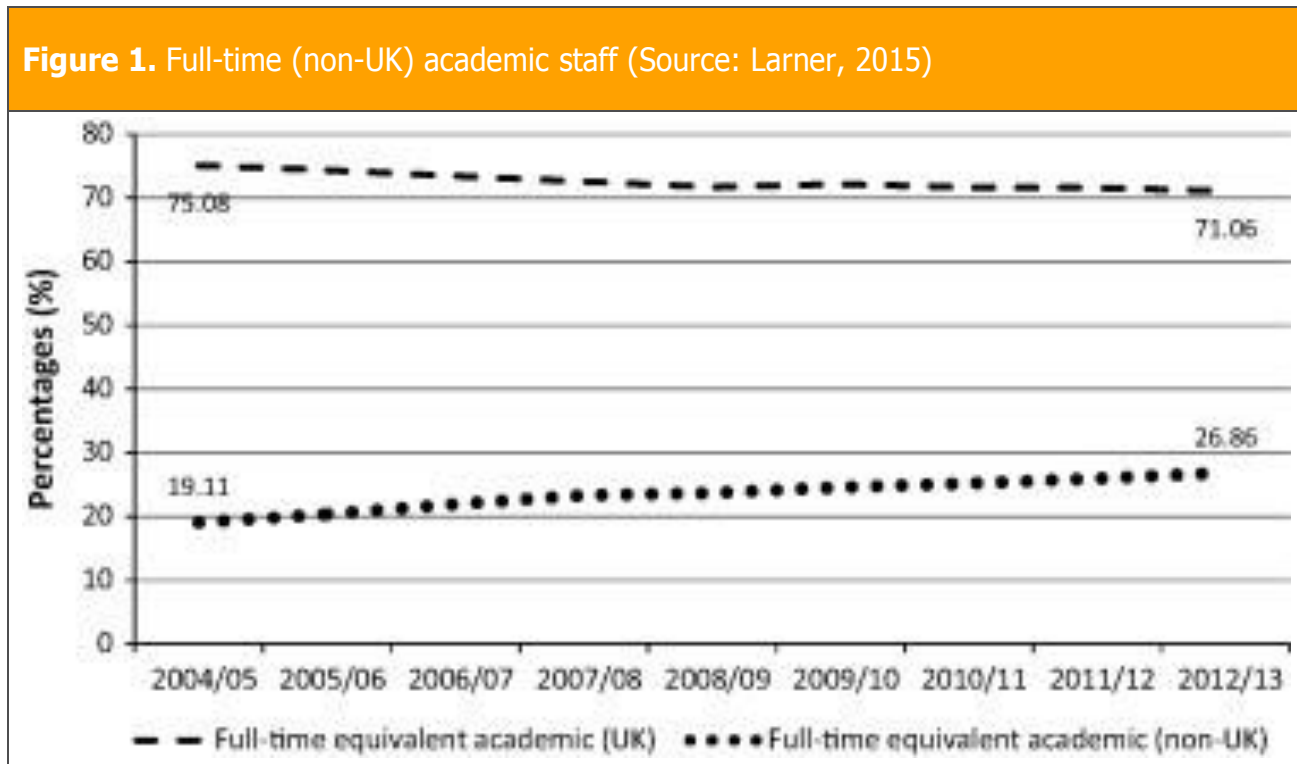
Research to date on international academic staff in UK HEIs has been largely focused on the experiences of this academic community within the UK HE context. This includes: research into the challenges that international staff face in adapting to the UK HE context (Luxon and Peelo, 2009); the process of acculturation into UK academic practice (Maunder *et al.*, 2009); barriers to mobility and migration of international staff (Mavroudi and Warren, 2013); the lack of understanding of international staff in UK HEIs (Hsieh, 2012); and, cultural adaptation of international staff (Pherali, 2012). However, this extant literature doesn't delve in detail into the role of international academic staff in fully internationalising UK HE beyond the obvious. The latter takes into consideration traditional internationalisation activities, such as student and staff mobility, in addition to academic and research partnerships across borders.

It may well be argued that institutional efforts towards addressing the above issues set the scene for a wider agenda where UK HE has huge, as yet, under-utilised opportunities, from the rich cultural and educational resources that international academic staff bring to the academic community (Hsieh, 2012). The potential role and functions of international staff in shaping a more global, context-driven and internationalised curriculum appears to be a rather under-researched topic (Larner, 2015; Willis and Hammond, 2014). As far as this background review of literature suggests, the current evidence is sparse. In a recent contribution, Willis and Hammond (2014) investigate the contribution of international academic staff into internationalising the academic community on-campus and shaping a more internationally-informed curriculum, which is seen as central to improving the student learning experience. However, as the authors highlight, their investigation is very much a work in progress as it often takes time for the resultant outputs to be realised and for the outcomes to be measured. Luxon and Peelo (2009) call for further enquiry, which is grounded in a wider understanding of diverse, culturally-fused pedagogic frameworks and how these shape teaching practices adopted by non-UK academic staff.

The role of international academic staff within UK HE

International academic staff in UK HE institutions are a rich source of cultural, pedagogic and academic experience; a topic that deserves further attention, but that has not attracted much empirical research to date (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). International academic staff

represents a significant proportion of the academic body in UK HEIs; the total currently stands at 27% (Larner, 2015) of the overall number of UK full-time academic staff and is growing (see Figure 1). Consequently this group are inevitably increasing in size, input, and influence; the distinctive qualities of such need better articulation in order to contribute to HEI's future strategic plans.



International staff entering the academic 'supply chain' in the UK do so in areas deemed to be of strategic importance to the economy, environment and society; in particular in subject areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) (Larner, 2015; Universities UK, 2007). However, the sector seems to be paying little attention to the unique characteristics and opportunities they may be bringing to the UK HE sector (Clifford and Henderson, 2011).

The HEA calls for recognition of the opportunities that international and global perspectives bring to the UK HE sector in enriching the curriculum; a strong call, echoed in HEA's recent Internationalisation Framework (HEA, 2014) and their data bank featuring resources and approaches towards internationalising the curriculum (HEA, 2015). This project provides an ideal opportunity to capitalise on international academic staff members' academic and industry experience, as enablers of on-campus internationalisation and cross-institutional global talent development.

Key themes from the literature deserving further exploration

Based on our background review of the literature above, some of the themes that emerged on international staff in UK HE were:

- lack of understanding of the concept of internationalisation through the perspective of international academic staff;
- lack of a deeper understanding into the UK HE context through the perspective of international academic staff;
- lack of recognition of specific experience and expertise of international academic staff across borders, which as the literature suggests, can be seen as a valuable resource of on-campus internationalisation;
- lack of understanding into the enablers and resources international academic staff possess that can assist and encourage greater cultural diversity, a more inclusive academic and student body, and internationalisation of curriculum and pedagogy;
- lack of research into pedagogic innovations adopted by international staff across borders, which may have been abandoned as part of their transition into the UK HE.

This is not based on a systematic literature review but a qualitative review of key literature. These themes have nevertheless informed some of our research into the experiences of international staff at Bournemouth University, summarised in the following section.

Internationalisation and international staff: Bournemouth University perspectives

The number of international academic staff at BU currently stands at 215 and consequently represents a significant proportion of the overall academic body, just under a third of all academic staff on campus. These figures suggest that there is a significant opportunity in recognising the increasing role and prospective contribution of international staff on both an institutional and individual level.

Before expanding on the key themes of the background review of literature on international academics within the UK HE context, we explore the concept of internationalisation as seen through the perspective of our international academic body.

The internationalisation concept through the perspective of international staff

At both an institutional and a personal level, internationalisation was seen as a process that has to be experienced for it to be embedded and was not something that could simply be acquired. Importantly, it was viewed as being able to take, adapt and innovate new practices and approaches. As one international academic pointed out as a response to defining the concept of internationalisation: "It's a mindset. Just because you have travelled, doesn't mean you are, by default, open to diverse practices and views." Building upon the latter, others have seen the concept as something that is meaningful and inclusive and as such, is shaped by diverse contexts across borders:

"Internationalisation is about sharing experience and expertise across borders. Internationalisation means inclusiveness and to be able to see different viewpoints."

(Focus group participant)

Others believed that internationalisation should not simply be seen as a mindset, but rather to acknowledge that this mindset is shaped or constructed through crossing barriers, both physical and cultural:

"Internationalisation is a way of thinking. It's a mindset you shape through crossing barriers. It implies thinking out of the box, being accommodative and also being accessible."

(Focus group participant)

The reality, however, as seen by other international academic staff, was that, "internationalisation of UK HE at present is an import-export process of both students and academic staff". This narrow conceptualisation of internationalisation is arguably a common trend across the sector, where the opportunities presented by international academic staff in UK HE have not been sufficiently explored beyond the point of import-export and this was demonstrated in our background review of the literature within this research domain. International academic staff felt that internationalisation should be, "less about trading and more about innovating through adopting and adapting". This was in line with our background review of current literature suggesting that there is very little that draws from international staff to help influence the internationalisation agenda.

International academic staff also touched upon the role of curriculum in defining, recognising and adopting internationalisation. Staff felt that delivering a curriculum that was international in its outlook was part of an international academic member of staff's duty to help make students more culturally and politically aware. There was a general recognition that the extent to which this agenda was promoted was down to the experience of the lecturer and/or those responsible for the design of the curriculum. International academic staff also emphasised the importance of institutional policy and practice in leading on this agenda.

The UK HE context through the perspective of international staff

This section is underpinned by both the challenges and opportunities international academic staff are presented with upon their arrival in the UK. The focus of the discussions revealed a multitude of perspectives related to both obvious and hidden meanings behind the UK HE context for the international academic community.

Current policy and practice surrounding international staff inductions

Among the most consistently voiced and therefore arguably the most important discussion topics touched upon current institutional policies and practices concerning international academic staff inductions in UK HE and the related challenges linked to their transition into a new context. Whilst there was a consensus that staff had good working relationships with their colleagues, participants felt that there could be much better support to help international academic staff adjust to teaching in the UK. They pointed to the perceived challenges in finding support at the early stages of their career within the UK HE:

"It's difficult. You have to learn to be independent. I had a supportive colleague, who mentored me ... social life and work life in the UK are separate from each other. It's often the case that international staff are not often invited to opportunities to socialise."

(Focus group participant)

Additional support, as put forward by one participant, could be in the form of an enhanced induction, more networking opportunities and better support for staff around key issues such as feedback from students and adapting to contrasting HE contexts:

"I feel that there is generally a lack of welcoming for international staff. The inductions are not particularly internationally-focused inductions ... I can see that this is changing, but at slow pace."

(Focus group participant)

As a good practice in bridging the gap between UK HE expectations and the ability of international academics to become established within a new HE context, participants highlighted the example of Singapore where, "as a new staff member, you would normally work alongside expert lecturers in the first few terms". International academic staff suggested that they relied heavily on their networks of academics within the institution as a source of on-going support. They felt that one-off induction events may not always be able to sufficiently address the multitude of challenges that they often faced as part of their relocation and proposed that an on-going and more consistent approach to international academic staff support was more likely to help with their transition:

"There is a lot of expectation placed on international staff in the first couple of weeks. There needs to be better integration. The institution needs to put more time and care into integrating international staff."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

International academic staff also emphasised the importance of available support on matters beyond their academic life. One participant suggested that "even simple things, such as settling in, shopping and opening a bank account may prove problematic", and that staff would like to have more support with this. International academic staff also felt that any support put in place should extend beyond the confines of academia:

"It would be useful if international staff had a more comprehensive induction package and better support in getting set up in the UK ... it would be good if you have someone to signpost you. Good support from other staff at BU is important in this sense."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

The experience of international academic staff of the UK HE processes and practices

The second discussion topic concerned international staff perceptions of UK HE processes and practices. International academic staff emphasised the multitude of differences in relation to their experience within UK HE when compared to their previous experience overseas.

When discussing programme structure, participants commented that generally, students in the UK tend to specialise early on in their programmes, whereas in countries such as India, Singapore and France, courses had a broader, more generic content at the beginning, which was aimed at equipping graduates with a degree that would enable them to find employment in their chosen field of study. International staff felt that most degree programmes in the above three countries are generic, but students had the opportunity to take a number of electives and as such, specialise within a preferred discipline, whilst also receiving a broader, more cross-disciplinary education.

International academic staff also pointed out a number of differences in the way curriculum was shaped and delivered in other countries. For example, curriculum in India was designed centrally to create a national standard and ensure a consistent quality throughout the sector. However, participants pointed out that “there is a certain degree of flexibility when assessing it [the curriculum]”. In such cases, they felt academic staff had little control over the design of the curriculum, but did have flexibility over its delivery and therefore a degree of freedom to decide on practiced pedagogies.

When drawing on their experience of assessment within HE, a participant commented that “the way we assess and teach in the UK is very closed off culturally, for example, we often ask UK-centric questions of our students in assessments. The UK HE context needs to take account of global considerations and this provision should be consistent across all institutional programmes”. Others felt that within the UK HE context: “there is no human touch but rather a tick-box approach”, which may well be a result of the more independent approach to learning that is a key characteristic of UK HE.

International academic staff also felt that that they had not been particularly involved in processes such as shaping curriculum content and structure during their time in UK HE, but believed that their role in this process may well support institutional efforts towards internationalisation:

“There are opportunities to innovate and input into the curriculum and I think that international staff can and should be involved in this. This is an opportunity to innovate our programmes.”

(One-to-one discussion participant)

International academic staff also believed that: “Things are much more bureaucratic in the UK; it ‘beats’ the educating out of education,” in contrast to their previous experience overseas. As one participant shared “the constant upgrade of curriculum, validation and revalidation, and involvement in work related to conformance to BCS, QAA and other accreditation agencies, distracts staff from designing and delivering a solid course”.

The relationship between educator and learner

Another discussion topic that emerged was the relationship between educator and learner. In general, the role between student and lecturer in the UK was described as being different to other countries. In the UK, international academic staff believed students had more of a consumer attitude and as such, their expectations and sense of power to appeal against assessments of their work seemed greater:

"International staff need to understand that the high fees have raised and changed the expectations of students ... the high fees reinforce the consumerist views of students in the UK."

(Focus group participant)

It was suggested that the requirement for lecturers to provide frequent feedback to students in the UK was a contributory factor in exacerbating this sense of consumerism, as were the higher tuition fees. Some participants expressed the opinion that UK HE pedagogies place an emphasis on more independent learning, which has not been the case in most of their home countries. With the relationship between student and educator in mind, international academic staff commented on the learning process in UK HE as being "very much self-taught, whilst it provides some guidance from academics". One may argue that a demanding student culture and an independent learning culture could present contradictory perceptions from an international perspective.

Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice: perspectives and experiences of international staff

The first discussion topic within this broader theme of the PG Cert had its focus on international academic staff perceptions of the existing content and structure of the PG Cert as practised at BU. Across both focus groups and one-to-one discussions, International academic staff felt that the PG Cert, in its present form, was too conventional and was underpinned by a very traditional, UK-centric perspective. This opinion was shared on a number of occasions:

"Why doesn't the PG Cert focus on sharing practice rather than promoting a prescriptive doctrine? It feels like a demotion when you have previously lectured. The course can demotivate staff and as such, the PG Cert at present is not quite how we encourage our students to learn."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

This view was shared by another participant, where they drew a parallel with their experience across borders in order to compare and contrast it with the current UK HE PG Cert policy and practice:

"General feedback from me and my fellow staff is that it [the PG Cert] isn't of much use. It is too generic ... It should be flexible to accommodate and adjust to a multitude of disciplines."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

Instead, international academic staff felt that alternative approaches adopted overseas may well be considered as a means of improving current policy and practice around the PG Cert: "peer observation is a good practice from Singapore". In addition, staff believed that, "the PG Cert should be transformed into an internal teaching and learning conference to capture and disseminate good practice".

Questioning the extent to which the PG Cert – as practised in UK HE – embraces and supports diverse pedagogic approaches, was another discussion topic that emerged.

International academic staff questioned the extent to which the UK HE context embraces and recognises international practice in ways such as shaping curriculum and encouraging innovative approaches to pedagogy. Whilst a number of international academic staff members thought that the PG Cert course was a useful mechanism for helping international staff prepare for teaching in the UK, it was felt that the course focused more on homogenising staff rather than embracing diverse pedagogic practices. They believed that “in its present format, the PG Cert does not embrace or support different pedagogic approaches”.

In support of this statement, one participant commented that the PG Cert in its current form was not open to the recognition of diverse pedagogies, but instead followed a prescriptive approach:

"The PG Cert at present is too prescriptive and not inclusive of international staff expertise. There should be a mechanism in place to actively engage with international staff and for international staff to have the opportunity to contribute to GlobalBU ... there needs to be better fusing of processes by making better use of personal, human engagement."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

Participants also expressed the opinion that the PG Cert should be about sharing good practice and as such, there was a need for a platform where international academic staff could share their personal experience and equally, learn about the diverse cultural practices of others.

Innovative pedagogic practice across borders

The growing international academic body presents considerable opportunities in transforming the content and delivery of programmes within UK HE. International academic staff can, therefore, be considered to be a source of informed global practice. Triggering a discussion on pedagogic practice beyond the UK HE context may therefore enable pedagogic innovation by challenging tacit assumptions about ‘western’ approaches to pedagogy. However, as our background review of the literature suggested, such opportunities have not been explored sufficiently. Consequently, the focus of this discussion theme invited the sharing of good practice beyond the UK HE context and provided insight into a range of distinct approaches to delivering pedagogy and shaping curriculum content.

It should be acknowledged that very few specific examples were identified of where international academic staff had used alternative approaches towards teaching. This may be partly related to current policy and practice surrounding the PG Cert as reflected above. However, others questioned the extent to which cross-border pedagogic practice can be translated into the UK HE context, due to existing processes of homogenising academic practice, again something that emerged in the discussion on the PG Cert. As a general comment, some staff had noticed that in the UK, colleagues – either UK or other international colleagues – seemed more reluctant to introduce controversial or topical issues into their lectures, which they put down to fear of redress.

Some international academic staff spoke of how they believed that internationalisation prompts innovation. They felt that it pushed institutions to think of shaping and embedding innovative approaches to delivering their programmes. This inevitably opens up

opportunities for recognising and capitalising on the experience of international academic staff in UK HE.

Innovative pedagogic practice across borders was subject to investigation in one-to-one discussions with international academic staff who felt that whatever the innovation element considered and embedded in existing pedagogies, that element should in its broadest sense “allow international academic staff to grow organically” and also “provide students with opportunities to explore further afield”.

Problem-based teaching was identified to be among the strengths of UK HE, where the introduction of problem-based examples and case studies to support lectures and seminars seemed to promote better levels of interaction and engagement amongst students. International academic staff suggested that the use of project-based teaching can build upon the commonly adopted problem-based teaching, and could add an international dimension to the classroom.

One participant expanded on the benefits of project-based learning, which was what they believed to be deemed good practice in innovating traditional pedagogic approaches:

"Project-based teaching is something, which is more engaging and allows students to get something tangible at the end of their learning. You have the opportunity to draw on global perspectives across various disciplines ... I will give you an example, where I adopted a multimedia publishing platform for Journalism students giving them the space for fusing theory and practice, in addition to opportunities for feedback provision and interaction with fellow students and readers beyond the University and also internationally."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

This finding was echoed in the focus group discussions where participants felt that project-based learning, which also promoted collaborative learning (as in the case of Journalism students), was key to embedding internationalisation.

Other innovative approaches to delivering relevant and engaging curriculum aligned with practices from Germany and the US, where video and films were utilised as a medium between educators and learners:

"Using films and videos in the classroom breaks down barriers across cultures ... it enhances understanding and stimulates emotional attachment, not only intellectual, as it is the case with adopting traditional teaching materials."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

Another participant touched upon Singapore and China both as examples of good practice in ensuring the delivery of both relevant content and context-driven curriculum and suggested that staff should: “Pull in international case studies into the lectures across all disciplines. Give them [students] an international flavour.” Others built upon this by introducing Australia as another good example where international texts were largely shaping the curriculum content, regardless of the subject field:

"International texts immediately give an international feeling to the curriculum ... international staff should use case examples from their previous roles in universities outside the UK."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

Recognising good practice is closely associated with exploring the wider enablers of embedding greater diversity of academic policy and practice and shaping a culturally inclusive curriculum.

Exploring the enablers of embedding greater diversity, internationalisation and culturally-inclusive curriculum

This theme is underpinned by the importance of recognising and embedding the enablers or resources that might be applied in the UK HE context and where international academic staff feel they could assist, and encourage greater cultural diversity and/or internationalisation.

Among the key discussion topics within this theme, were the opportunities linked to enabling greater staff and student mobility across borders on a larger scale. Focus group participants felt that staff mobility can benefit institutional internationalisation efforts and strongly supported the statement that, “we should take students and staff abroad as an opportunity to internationalise”. Other participants also believed that wider mobility opportunities could contribute to greater on-campus internationalisation:

"We need to create opportunities to expose more staff to international experiences. By this, I mean both teaching and learning experiences. This needs to be done carefully and with purpose. It needs to be culturally sensitive."

(One-to-one discussion participant)

Some respondents emphasised the importance of enabling two-way opportunities for mobility as a good approach to enabling deeper internationalisation: “We should also bring in overseas lecturers from diverse institutions to infuse international expertise in the curriculum”.

Others suggested that actions aimed at breaking down the existing barriers between home and international students was a fundamental step towards enabling internationalisation and promoting greater diversity on campus:

"We need to make sure that we are very clear about the balance between international and home students. We should recognise the fact that international recruitment needs to improve to attract more students to typically international courses, to ensure the balance."

(Focus group participant)

The above discussion suggested that important activities, such as two-way mobility of staff and students, guest lectures by academic staff from overseas universities, along with breaking down existing barriers between home and international students, are all seen by

our international academic community as key enablers for greater cultural diversity and internationalisation.

Key findings and discussions from student interactions

As part of our investigation, we also engaged with a group comprising of both home and international undergraduate-level students. Below is a brief summary of the key themes emerging from this engagement with the student body.

Student views on diverse teaching and learning approaches

Whilst acknowledging that there were some difficulties around language in some cases, students recognised the added value that international teaching staff could bring to their learning. They felt that international students perhaps found it easier to understand international academic staff and it was suggested that this was because they were able to identify with the same challenges that those staff members were facing and, as a result, were more patient, tolerant and, perhaps more willing to make the effort to understand them. They also felt that more could be done to help international academic staff members adapt to UK HE.

Students also spoke about the idea that, despite having international modules on their courses, it would be good to have global perspectives embedded into every module they study and that it should be made compulsory. Students also wanted to have access to a wider pool of internationalisation resources:

"There should be more support for students who want to globalise. For example, we can have workshops about how things work in different countries."

(Student discussion participant)

Breaking down existing barriers between home and international students

Similar to those international academic staff members who participated in the focus group, those students who took part believed that breaking down the existing barriers between home and international students would contribute to enabling internationalisation and promoting greater diversity on campus.

Students expressed support for the introduction of a buddy scheme to help overseas students and UK students integrate better with each other, though it was felt that this should be offered as a 'group' scheme rather than 'a one-on-one' scheme. It was suggested that UK students could help international students settle in to the UK setting whilst international students could perhaps help to teach them a foreign language. This was in line with what international academic staff believed to be a significant gap in failing to recognise that international students' international experience is very different to the one of home students and as such, home students could help in this process.

Boosting mobility opportunities and confidence to engage in internationalisation

Whilst there were mixed views on how best to promote opportunities for students, the general feeling was that they needed to be promoted much earlier on in a student's time at BU. Ensuring that the experiences of others were captured and shared amongst students was seen as key tool for promoting participation. Statistics were identified as a good way of capturing the attention of students, especially overseas students as they would help to highlight the benefits of the scheme. However, these must be clear and easy to understand.

Helping students to feel confident about engaging in overseas study or work placements was also an area that was discussed. Creating opportunities for shorter, more flexible placements was seen as a way of helping to address this, as was group participation so that individuals did not feel isolated.

Delivering an offering which integrates global and employability

Students felt that employability was an important element of their degree and any new scheme that is introduced to help evidence participation in activities that improve a student's global employability, should be mindful of existing workloads. Currently, deadlines for the Student Development Award (SDA) often clashed with assignment deadlines, so any new scheme would need to consider these deadlines and time pressures when it is designed. In addition, it was felt that participation and accreditation should be made easy and not involve time consuming, additional work such as reflective writing. The idea of being able to collect 'credit' stamps as a way of evidencing participation was suggested as one way of doing this. Having employer endorsement for a scheme like this was also seen as a key tool for encouraging participation. However, students felt that having appropriate schemes in place was not enough on its own and that the University needed to ensure that information about these types of initiatives was clearly disseminated across the student body:

"The information is there but you have to seek it out ... there needs to be more awareness about the fact that a degree isn't perhaps necessarily enough on its own."

(Student discussion participant)

5. Summary

The outcomes of this short evaluative study form the first step towards promoting and facilitating the development of a global academic community at BU. By bringing to the fore and valuing the knowledge and experience of our international academic staff, this project intended to enhance our understanding of the diversity of approaches adopted across the globe. It was also intended that the findings would, in the longer term, encourage more culturally inclusive curriculum design, development and delivery at BU.

The literature review demonstrated that current empirical evidence on the approach to internationalisation adopted by international academic staff, their experience of engagement with the PG Certificate in Academic Practice, and the UK HE experience, is very limited. In addition, little evidence exists in terms of recognition of the diversity of approaches that international academic staff adopt as part of their academic experience across borders. Despite the proportion of full-time international academic staff in the UK HE sector currently standing at 27% (Larner, 2015), this cohort is largely an unexplored resource. It presents a potentially untapped opportunity to shape a curriculum that is globally relevant in partnership with international academic staff (as a source of cross-border pedagogies).

It is important to recognise that the life of this project extends beyond this report and is an on-going process aimed at continuously shaping future practice. Further one-to-one discussions are being carried out at the time of writing this report in order to extend and build upon our understanding of the themes identified above. This will, in turn, help us build appropriate resources for our international academic community.

In taking the outcomes of this study forward, we shall not only be enhancing the culture and curriculum at BU, but will be in a stronger position to prepare graduates so that they are better able to respond to the challenges and opportunities within a global society (as per HEA's Internationalisation Framework).

Based on the work undertaken to date, we aim not only to draw together a set of implications for us as an institution, but also highlight potential considerations for the wider sector regarding approaches to engagement with international academic staff. This is summarised in the remaining sections of this report.

6. Implications

Implications for current BU policy and practice

The rich insights identified above collectively point to the opportunity for an enhanced recognition of the current and prospective role of our international academic community at Bournemouth University. The recommendations and implications shaped by these insights are summarised below and help to form the basis of our vision for a Global BU.

Support resources for international staff

As suggested by the discussion above, international academic staff identified the need for introduction of support resources, which would help with their transition into the UK HE and also assist with their life in the UK beyond the classroom. Staff emphasised however that narrow approaches and one-off events, such as staff induction, although necessary, might not always be able to provide the level of support required by international academic staff, who are new to the UK HE. They felt that they would benefit from additional continuous support, such as a buddy scheme, and supported the development of platforms to encourage on-going dialogue with the wider academic community.

This presents an opportunity for BU to explore this further and build upon the current portfolio of resources available to international academic staff, by going beyond induction as one-off events. A more inclusive, adaptive and mindful institutional policy and practice might therefore support further institutional efforts in this direction, particularly in times when the competition for academic talent is so fierce.

A more inclusive PG Cert policy and practice

Reflecting upon existing institutional policies and practices surrounding the PG Cert may prove beneficial, particularly in times when international academic staff form a considerable part of the wider academic body and where institutions are under pressure to reshape their offering so that it is responsive, timely and relevant to the wider economic, political and societal context which graduates will be expected to contribute to.

The discussions suggested that the PG Cert at present might be labelled as being too prescriptive and arguably not fully inclusive of international staff expertise. International academic staff pointed to the need for establishing a mechanism and place to actively engage with other international staff, where they have the opportunity to contribute to Global BU by drawing on their diverse academic experience across borders.

Again, this is an opportunity for us as an institution to capitalise and actively engage international academic staff in co-shaping a truly global PG Cert. One option could be a refreshed PG Cert that cascades engagement and actively encourages the sharing of good practice across the academic community at BU. Consequently, as the data suggested, any refreshed PG Cert provision could usefully consider international academic staff engagement, which goes beyond the widely adopted, prescriptive 'tick box' approaches.

Recognising and adopting diverse methodologies as the basis of innovation

It may also be worth revisiting current policy and practice surrounding the current PG Cert offering. This might act as a facilitator to recognising and subsequently capitalising on the diverse pedagogic practice adopted by international academic staff outside of the UK. As already outlined, this study drew on 16% of the international academic community at BU, which suggests that there is more good practice to be uncovered. Our on-going one-to-one discussions with international academic staff it is hoped will yield further good practice adopted across borders.

Facilitating a discussion on pedagogic practice beyond the UK HE context, which starts as part of PG Cert and continues through the academic career, may in turn enable pedagogic innovation by challenging tacit assumptions about UK HE approaches to pedagogy. Again, this is an opportunity to recognise the role of international academic staff in internationalising BU and capitalise on this rich resource of global knowledge and experience. It will therefore be important to establish a platform for international academic staff to share this good practice.

Towards an internationally-informed internationalisation

It has already been emphasised that this project and the resultant report should be seen as a living one. Despite the fact that it provides some potentially important recommendations, the success of it – as we envisage it – is embedded in the continuous nature of our engagement with the international academic community at BU.

Building expertise, capacity and resources around this strategic agenda are likely to serve as enablers of a more culturally-inclusive curriculum and globally-informed pedagogic approaches that will in turn support a truly Global BU. Continuous engagement with international academic staff would help us build resources for international staff at BU that provide on-going support (beyond the initial transition into UK HE), as well as a mechanism for capturing their cross-border experiences.

All of the above provide potential pathways to further concentrate our efforts towards shaping a global academic community and attempts to contribute to our overall Global BU mission to provide “global opportunities, global futures, for all”.

Together this provides the opportunity for us to continue with, and make every effort to support, the refinement of existing policy and practice surrounding this strategic agenda, not only for BU, but also, potentially, for the wider sector.

Considerations for UK HE policy and practice

Drawing on the findings from this study, the final section of this report raises a number of considerations for the wider UK HE sector regarding current policy and practice surrounding the international academic staff agenda. We also attempt to identify avenues for further research into the role of international academic staff within the UK HE. We conclude with a brief discussion on how this work could build upon HEA’s Internationalisation Framework.

UK HE and institutional leadership

There is, arguably, an opportunity for greater recognition of international academic staff and the role they play in key, strategically important, on-campus internationalisation processes. We believe that senior institutional leadership plays a key role in introducing and providing continuous support to university-wide efforts in this direction.

Specifically, international staff are an invaluable resource in assisting the internationalisation of universities. Top teams can explicitly realise this potential though working in partnership with their international staff. It would be a pre-requisite to mobilise resources to enable this partnership.

At its heart lies the intent to facilitate a deeper integration of international academic staff within the wider academic community (in part through mobilising resources to provide on-going support opportunities for collaboration and interaction).

Further research

The background review of recent academic contributions investigating the experience, role and contribution of international academic staff to the UK HE sector indicated that current evidence within this research domain is limited. Based on our research, further enquiry would likely therefore benefit both academia and practice, in the following areas in particular:

- > identifying approaches to facilitating the transition of and the provision of on-going support for international academic staff into the UK HE context;
- > exploring alternative(s) to PG Cert approaches to introducing international academic staff to teaching and learning practices in UK HE;
- > recognising further good practice of international academic staff across borders and identifying ways of adopting it within the UK HE;
- > conducting an in-depth investigation into the enablers of a more culturally-inclusive curriculum which is shaped in partnership with international academic staff.

PG Cert policy and practice across the sector

Whilst based on a very small sample, our initial research suggested that current policy and practice surrounding the PG Cert offering in UK HE may not be fully inclusive of diverse pedagogic practice and consequently not entirely open to innovation and opportunities for embedding a global perspective in teaching and learning in UK HE.

The PG Cert has the potential to bring pedagogic innovation to the fore. This may well be seen as a strategically important consideration in times when internationalisation is at the very core of HEIs' policy and practice and delivering a globally-informed programme offering is considered a competitive advantage.

The evidence suggested that practicing an 'open door' policy in the PG Cert is likely to nurture innovation in teaching and learning by both embracing and capitalising on the diversity of pedagogic practices adopted by international academic staff as part of their experience across borders.

These insights therefore offer an opportunity for other HEIs to also reflect upon existing PG Cert policies and practices and, as such, allow for further cross-border, context-driven pedagogies to penetrate and shape the context and content of UK HE.

HEA's Internationalisation Framework

This report attempts to build upon HEA's Internationalisation Framework and the 'People' section in particular, where the Framework calls for harnessing the breadth of insights and experience within the organisation.

International academic staff within UK HE currently represent 27% of the full-time academic workforce in UK HE (Larner, 2015) and as such, they are likely an invaluable resource for our institutions, which, as the research reviewed here suggests, has been somewhat underexploited to date.

We therefore believe that this report might usefully trigger further discussions on the current and prospective role of international academic staff within UK HE. This study has attempted to unfold the current and prospective role of international academic staff across key, important on-campus processes and practices related to internationalisation, but also emphasised opportunities for considering their involvement in other UK HE sector strategic agendas, such as curricular and pedagogic innovation, employability and shaping global talent.

The HEA's Internationalisation Framework recognises that the individual-level (the 'People' element of the Framework) takes into account the attitudes, knowledge, values and practices of individuals. We have attempted to build upon these strategic individual-level internationalisation enablers by incorporating the perspective of international academic staff within UK HE.

When reflecting upon the attitudes, knowledge, values and practices of individuals, alongside the outputs of this report and our ongoing work with international academic staff, suggestions for opportunities to further capitalise on these strategic internationalisation enablers are:

- To inspire a change in attitude by introducing the benefits of - and facilitating - a more culturally-inclusive curriculum and recognising that having a diverse academic community is a strength for both Bournemouth University and also potentially across the wider UK HE sector.
- To encourage dissemination of **knowledge** of international academic staff's personal and academic experience and expertise across borders with the wider academic community on campus.
- To embrace and accommodate the **values** developed by our staff across borders and cultures, which may help us to enrich curriculum content and pedagogic practice and thus shape future global societies and citizens.
- To recognise the opportunities presented by **practice**, which is inclusive of the international developments and contexts of learning that international academic staff have experienced. International academic staff are likely to have an important role to play in advancing and shaping future-ready global talent that will bring about positive change to our economies, environments and societies. Such recognition may therefore contribute towards strengthening the global dimension of current curricular and pedagogic practice.

In conclusion, these initial outputs from the (currently on-going) engagement with international academic staff at BU provides support for a collective call, which is in line with HEA's Internationalisation Framework, to continue the journey towards enhancing the contribution and impact of individuals in internationalising HE.

At the heart of this research is our passion to shape a Global BU and to do so through a celebration and integration of the experiences of our international staff. This work is the commencement of our journey to this end and we recognise the challenges and opportunities this places on the institutional academic leadership.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

HEA Project Group Members

- Dr Sonal Minocha, PVC (Global Engagement)
- Prof Chris Shiel, Professor, Faculty of Science and Technology
- Prof Gail Thomas, Dean of Health and Social Sciences and Head of the Centre for Excellence in Learning (CEL)
- Dr Richard Scullion, Associate Dean, Faculty of Media and Communications
- Dr Gelareh Roushan, Interim Deputy Dean, Faculty of Management
- Kelly Goodwin, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Management
- Jacky Mack, Head of Academic Services
- Linda Ladle, Careers and Employability Manager
- Dr Samantha Leahy-Harland Head of Operations - Global Engagement
- Finn Morgan, Projects and Business Support Manager - Global Engagement
- Dean Hristov, Researcher

Contact us

+44 (0)1904 717500 enquiries@heacademy.ac.uk
Innovation Way, York Science Park, Heslington, York, YO10 5BR
Twitter: @HEAcademy www.heacademy.ac.uk

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