

Internationalising the curriculum: A toolkit

Liverpool John Moores University



Welcome to **Internationalising the curriculum: A toolkit**



Internationalisation continues to be increasingly central on the Higher Education (HE) agenda. Internationalisation in the context of HE is broad in scope and ranges from creating an inclusive and proper environment for international student cohorts to ensuring that the education of both HEFCE and international students promotes global perspectives and opportunities for learning in a global context. This toolkit focuses specifically on Internationalisation of the curriculum. We see internationalisation of the curriculum as one of the key steps in encouraging global perspectives, knowledge and understandings that enhances employability in a global economy, promotes inclusivity, equality and a diverse and enriched learning experience for all.

The toolkit is not designed to dictate what path to take when moving forward and developing internationalisation of the curriculum – far from it. We recognise difference between different HE institutions, faculties, departments and disciplines. Because we recognise this diversity we understand there is no one ‘correct’ course of action that can be applied across the board. Instead, this toolkit is designed to facilitate discussion and progression at a pace and in a direction that is appropriate to your needs.

In recognition of the diverse needs of various HE spaces the toolkit opens with an activity to explore what internationalisation means for you and your institution. Overall the toolkit provides a strategic and practical framework to support a systematic exploration of

internationalisation in the context of your institution and subject area. By the end of the course you will have devised your own action plan on how to proceed as a team to develop an internationalised curriculum that works for you and your students.

The toolkit is flexible and can be used by specific departments, schools, faculties or it can be used in workshops which include a variety of different areas across the university. Whether you are a practitioner, researcher, lecturer or senior management this toolkit will enable you to collaborate and develop a tailor-made strategic plan to support the internationalisation of your curriculum in a way that will benefit both HEFCE and international students alike. It will also support staff in sharing good practice and working together at a time when job pressures are as extensive as they are many.

We encourage you to explore our web resources after you have undertaken the toolkit course. We also welcome any feedback and would very much like to hear how the toolkit has benefitted you and your institution and also of any areas for improvement. Our contact details can be found at the end of the toolkit.

We hope that you enjoy the course.

The Toolkit Team

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Part 1

What is Internationalisation?

Aims of the Session

- Develop understandings the complexities of defining Internationalisation
- Setting Internationalisation in the context of your institution or department

It is most likely that you already have a number of international elements in your curriculum. Some disciplines may have more international elements than others for a variety of reasons, both practical and conceptual. Often it may be the case that international elements are not recognised and this can be related to the fact that understandings of Internationalisation in the context of higher education can differ greatly. It means different things to different people and has different impacts on their areas of work. The first step in this toolkit is to begin to explore these various understandings and meanings.



Activity 1

What you will need:

- 2 copies of activity sheet A and B
- Pens, paper and scissors

Activity sheet A lists a series of statements that might 'define' internationalisation. There are also a number of blank statement slips where you can insert your own definitions of internationalisation (these may be things you have heard and agree or disagree with). Activity sheet B shows a scale of 0 – 10 (where 0 indicates not at all Internationalisation and 10 indicates completely Internationalisation).

In groups of no more than 6:

Discuss these statements and place them on the scale as you think appropriate in relation to your own thoughts on Internationalisation and what internationalisation means to the group.

N.B. Please do not clear away the activity sheets. You should keep the formation of the activity as you will need this for the next activity and to use for reflection throughout the course.

Reflection discussion

- To what extent did you agree as a group regarding where to place the statements?





Activity Sheet A

1. "Internationalisation... could give proper meaning to student centred learning."	7. "Internationalisation...is Higher Education characterised by market and competition."
2. "Internationalisation...means embedding a global dimension into teaching."	8. "Internationalisation...is about non HEFCE students."
3. "Internationalisation... provides opportunities for students to interact outside the classroom at an international level."	9. "Internationalisation...is about HEFCE students."
4. "Internationalisation ...is about cross cultural exchange."	10. "Internationalisation...is academic mobility for staff."
5. "Internationalisation...prepares students to be global citizens."	11. "Internationalisation... has positive consequences."
6. "Internationalisation...is about inclusivity."	12. "Internationalisation...has negative consequences"





Activity Sheet B

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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Staff Profile

Dr. Lucinda Thompson

Discusses the many possible meanings of Internationalisation ...

“When I think of internationalisation I initially think of international students attending UK universities, but it may be more accurate not to think about internationalisation in terms of whatever is external to the UK. We have a lot of embedded global links which we are so used to that we don’t often reflect on them, yet they contribute to the diversity of our university students. We have students born in the UK whose parents speak English as a second language, we have students who love to travel, staff and students who work with others around the world, often contacting them on a daily basis without a second thought. In this context, I think of internationalisation in terms of building capacity for the university to work with a diversity of backgrounds (not solely focusing on categories of nationality and passport status), and vice versa: for the university to build capacity in the global environment by equipping its graduates to work in an increasingly interconnected world.

Is the key to internationalisation simply about engaging with difference? If that is the case, then strategies promoting internationalisation of the curriculum could be broader (yet perhaps simpler) than implementing global case studies or international field work modules. This more general approach would embed internationalisation by teaching students how to respond to and engage with any sort of difference, not only national or ethnic difference, but also new learning styles, seeking diverse and even conflicting opinions, working in groups and learning to listen to others. It would be about recognising the contribution that different student backgrounds can bring to the learning environment.”

“I think of Internationalisation in terms of building capacity for the university to work with a diversity of backgrounds.”

Further reading and resources



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Part 2

How international is your curriculum?

Aims of the Session

- To share good practice and strategies for internationalising the curriculum
- To promote self awareness

Within Higher Education we often: a) take the creative and well thought out work that we do for granted and b) we often are not aware the work of our colleagues are doing even when we work very closely together. This section is designed to address both these issues and ensure that you are able to identify the work that you do that contributes to internationalisation of the curriculum and are also able to share this good work with colleagues both within your immediate work circle and beyond.



Activity 2

What you will need:

- Pens and paper
- Activity sheet C

- a. On your own take a pen and paper and write a list of as many examples of work that you do that is linked to internationalisation of the curriculum
- b. Within your group take the top 7-10 statements (either those distributed or ones which you devised yourself) and place them in column A on activity sheet C. In column B add in items from your list that relate to or fulfil that definition.

N.B. Although this section is titled, “How international is your curriculum?” we are discussing curriculum in broad terms and include the support that feeds into curriculum from non-teaching staff.

Reflection Discussion:

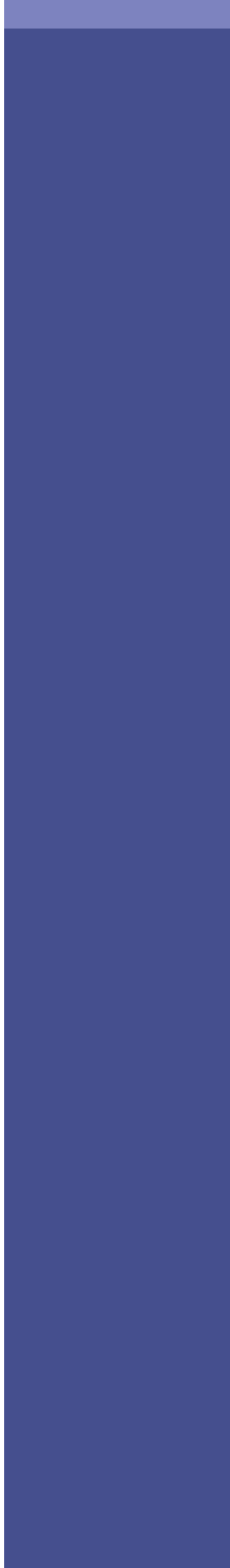
- Are there any gaps? Can you think of further examples of work that you do that fulfil your understandings of internationalisation?



Activity sheet C



A	B





Staff Profile

Dr. Helen Churchill

Tells us how her own department has developed its Internationally relevant content ...

“In Sociology we have always included issues that relate to internationalisation, in both definitions of the term: being inclusive and ‘international’ in the classroom, and including international issues in the syllabus. The nature of the subject material of Sociology – focussing on the study of human societies, how they interact, and the impact of social contexts on individuals and groups – means that the study and understanding of issues of diversity, inequality and discrimination are core in our discipline. What this means is that the two approaches to internationalisation co-operate. First, we ensure our modules are inclusive and provide a safe and supportive environment for all students from all backgrounds and all sections of society. Secondly, we deliver modules which specifically focus on issues of race and ethnicity, religion and faith, world development and globalisation. Our aim is to engender a critical awareness in our students and foster the development of graduates who are truly international in their outlook, valuable employees in the twenty-first century global community.”

“Our aim is to engender a *critical awareness* in our students and foster the development of graduates who are truly international in their outlook, valuable employees in the twenty-first century *global community*”

Further reading and resources



Bourn, D., McKenzie, A. & Shiel, C. (2006) *The global university: the role of the curriculum*. London: Development Education Association

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Part 3

Identifying areas for development

Aims of the Session

- To identify challenges and opportunities in your institution for Internationalisation



Activity

What you will need:

- Activity sheet D
- Pens

In your already established groups of no more than 6 and reflecting on the previous 2 activities devise a SWOT analysis outlining any Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to developing internationalisation of the curriculum. For this SWOT analysis you are encouraged to use a variety of formats such as including pictures and drawings.

Reflection Discussion:

- Each group nominate a representative to share the group's ideas with the other groups and promote discussion.

Activity sheet D



Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats



Staff Profile 3

Dr. Giles Barrett

Tells us about the benefits of embedding International Fieldwork into the curriculum...

“International fieldwork and fieldwork skills have broad appeal within the social sciences and offer students the opportunity to experience and be actively involved in real world research and gain firsthand experience of issues and problems related to their discipline. The emphasis on fieldwork does not preclude but enhances the use of more traditional approaches to teaching and learning such as lectures, seminars, use of television programmes, key text readings and slide-shows. In short, the act of doing fieldwork reinforces and enriches both learning and teaching and encourages knowledge exchange. Through international fieldwork students enhance their interpersonal skills, analytical skills, observational skills and applied research skills through conducting research in unfamiliar socio-cultural environments. During international fieldwork students are encouraged to think critically about what they experience, observe and hear whilst on fieldwork and how this relates to what they have found in print. Students are encouraged to draw upon evidence kept in a ‘field diary’ (field notes, voice recorder etc.) that they keep for the duration of the field visit. Such experiences are particularly important in times of increased globalisation and international interconnectedness.”

“The act of doing fieldwork reinforces and enriches both learning and teaching and encourages knowledge exchange.”

Further reading and resources



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Part 4

Developing your action plan

Aims of the Session

- To reflect on all previous sessions and devise an action plan that promotes internationalisation of the curriculum in a way that works for you

This is the final stage which encourages you to bring together all the elements of the previous 3 activities and think about taking this forward through a series of actions. We encourage you to continue the theme of group work and communication and devise an action plan in appropriate teams (you may wish to mix or change groups for this). Most importantly, we hope that these activities and this toolkit has got you talking and supported you in your endeavours to internationalise your curriculum in a way that works for you.



Activity

What you will need:

- Activity sheet E



Reflecting on the previous activity discuss how you can take action at various levels to support your ideas for an international curriculum. You should link your actions to all previous sections and set dates for this action to be taken and decide who will assume this role.

Reflection: Using a second copy of activity sheet E bring together all the separate groups' ideas for actions at the various institutional levels. What are the similarities? What are the differences?

Reflection discussion:

- To what extent did you agree as a group about the course of action to take? Did it help to have differing opinions?



Activity sheet E

Issue	Action to be taken	Person to take action	When action is to be taken



Staff Profile

Dr. Sara Parker

Tells us about using international research to support Internationalisation of the curriculum...

"Given that my area of expertise is development and action research there is a strong link between my teaching and an internationalised curriculum. Not only is the subject that I teach global in coverage but also I draw heavily on my own research in Nepal in my module content. It is important in today's globalised world that students are not only exposed to topics and global issues but also that they are exposed to alternative ways of thinking and theorising about the societies in which we live. In my teaching I employ the use of examples from all over the world and encourage students to develop their own interests and carry out research into a range of international issues. I feel that one of the best ways to really expose students to different points of view is via field trips, at the local, national and international level. Providing students with opportunities to undertake field work in locations such as Beijing, Vancouver and Nepal over my teaching career has been a rewarding one and today I remain in contact with many students who tell me how life changing these opportunities can be."

"It is important that students are exposed to alternative ways of thinking and theorising about the societies in which we live."

Further reading and resources



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