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THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

DEVELOPING GLOBAL GRADUATES

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Context

As businesses increasingly cross national borders, recent surveys of employers (e.g. CBI/Pearson 2017) show that they want to recruit graduates with 'global skills'. At the same time, they report a lack of such skills in job applicants and new recruits. Universities all over the world have identified internationalisation as a key goal, including producing the 'global graduates' that employers are looking for. However, there is currently little understanding of what makes a 'global graduate', or how higher education institutions (HEIs) can help foster the associated qualities.

HEIs currently rely on structural indicators to measure internationalisation, such as the numbers of international students and staff. Yet a diverse campus is not synonymous with an internationalised university and does not automatically create global graduates; it is a valuable pre-requisite but needs to be accompanied by integration and personal development opportunities.

About this briefing

This briefing paper summarises findings and implications from a survey that assessed the aspirations of students for a global education and their experiences in reality. The survey was conducted using the Global Educational Profiler (GE-P), a diagnostic and needs analysis tool developed by researchers at the Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick. The GE-P measures attitudes towards, and experiences of, global education in relation to five aspects:

Policy implications

- In strategic planning for internationalisation, HEIs need to move beyond structural measures, such as numbers of international students and numbers studying abroad.
 - HEIs need to put more focus on the nurturing of 'global graduate' skills – both to meet student expectations and employers' requirements.
 - The social and academic integration of domestic and international students provides opportunities to develop global graduate skills and achieve more meaningful internationalisation.
 - Greater support needs to be given to academic staff so that they can foster integration among students from diverse backgrounds more effectively.
 - Students' (especially domestic students') varying levels of commitment to integration needs to be taken into account in planning.
 - Universities need to monitor their progress in providing students with a 'global education' environment that nurtures their growth. The Global Education Profiler (GE-P) is currently the only tool that moves beyond structural benchmarking and provides a nuanced measure of global skills growth.
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- social integration;
 - academic integration;
 - communication skills;
 - foreign language learning skills; and
 - global skills and support.

It addresses the previous lack of tools available to help HEIs measure meaningful levels of internationalisation, enabling them to move beyond structural and numeric measures.

Key findings

More than 2,360 students from six universities in the UK, Ireland, Belgium and Germany completed the Global Educational Profiler (GE-P) survey. Their responses revealed that:

- The majority of students (around 75%) regard all five aspects of internationalisation measured by the GE-P as important or very important.
- However, around 50% of students report that they are not experiencing, or developing in, these areas.
- The aspects of internationalisation that are most important to students are global skills and support, social integration, and academic integration. Lack of experience in these three areas is particularly high.
- Despite this, there is a noticeable minority of students (around 25%) who regard the various aspects of internationalisation to be of little or very little importance to them.
- Domestic students attach significantly lower levels of importance to internationalisation than non-domestic students. They also report the least experience of internationalisation at university.
- Asian students (compared with domestic and non-domestic European Economic Area students) attach the greatest importance to internationalisation and show the largest gap between the global education they aspire to and what they actually experience.

In association with these findings, the researchers have developed a conceptual framework, the Global People Growth Model, which identifies four key facets of intercultural competence, including relationship management and personal qualities. In addition, they have identified contexts and tools needed for growth in intercultural competence, such as experiences of difference and observation/reflection.

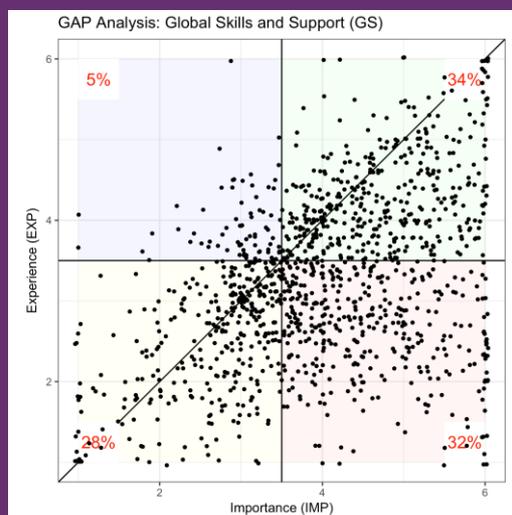
As the intercultural research field is comparatively new, especially in relation to the developmental process, this conceptual foundational work is crucial.

Developing global skills

Developing the global skills that employers want in students requires strategic planning and intervention by HEIs. The GE-P provides a tool to support with this planning by helping HEIs to identify and measure progress towards internationalisation.

Further information

Find out more about the Global Education Profiler: www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/ge-p/



Explore the GoGlobal intercultural training resources for students and professionals: www.globalpad.net

The views contained in this briefing do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Warwick.

The researchers have developed two versions of the GE-P: one for students and one for staff (academic/teaching and administrative/management). The latter probes aspects of internationalisation that apply to all staff (e.g. global skills support), as well as more work-specific aspects, such as (for teaching staff) global curriculum and student engagement in class. Both tools are now licensed to the survey company, i-graduate.

The researchers and their colleagues have also developed a range of workshops and online courses to provide intercultural training for students that helps develop their intercultural competence or 'global graduate' qualities, enabling HEIs to address gaps identified by the profiler tools.

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