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**UK GRAD South East Hub
& LASS and MHLS Graduate Schools, University of
Southampton, Thursday, April 17, 2008**

**Supervising International Postgraduate Research Students:
Challenges and Opportunities**

**“Internationalisation and International
Research Students: the basic issues”**

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Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

Symptoms of internationalisation:

- International rankings
- International orientation in curriculum
- International research projects
- Career trajectories across countries
- International competition for students & academics...

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

...so, relevance for how we might be
treating international research
students but...

= recruitment of more international
research students?

.... No!

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

Internationalisation –

- questions tradition of the university based on national system, then made open to international students...
- ...where teachers are not really challenged
- (NB: risk of internationalisation agenda becoming anglo-western standardisation agenda, into other countries too)

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

... or does it mean that?

- International/global concerns can be part of provision in UK institutions
- but dealt with in a British way, our stance on universal questions of e.g. value
- Still a challenge to curriculum and delivery (especially if “value-free” !)

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

Avoids:

- Syndrome of internationalisation by default, becoming international simply through recruitment
- Consequent loss of international student experience of British approach

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

Adopting Internationalisation strategy:

- really a separate question from making student population more international
- leaves untouched questions how to manage RDPs and supervision of research students?
- (is there a curriculum? – recommended research focuses, skills agenda?)
- Anyway not a matter concerning supervision of ***international*** research students, more about home students

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

Supervising International Research Students

- authored by Eunice Okorochoa
- series 2 no.4 of the SRHE Guides, *Issues in Postgraduate Education: Management, Teaching and Supervision:*
- Society for Research into Higher Education (2nd Ed.) July 2007

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

**Improving the experience of
international research students:
Recommendations for supervisors
and tutors for building good
supervisory relationships**

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Orientate yourself to acquire information about other cultures. This can simply be a matter of keeping your eyes and ears open, which does not necessarily involve a great outlay of time. Or, should you so wish, it can involve reading books and attending social events run by or for international students.
- Be aware of cultural issues and of how they can lead to misunderstandings between supervisors and international students.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Examine your implicit assumptions about international students; try to make them explicit; and then question their validity.
- Initiate exploration with your international students to clarify the meanings behind any verbal or non-verbal communication which make you uncomfortable.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Show an interest in the welfare of your international students, but find out about appropriate support services so that you can make referrals to them should that become necessary.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- At the outset of each student's research programme, devote specific attention to negotiating the respective roles of supervisor and student and your mutual expectations of one another.
- Explain the professional etiquette for seeking help from other academics.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Pay particular attention to helping international research students to work within their time schedules and keep to their deadlines.
- Monitor the progress of your research students and give them regular feedback.
- Act before potential problems escalate and get out of hand.
- Where appropriate, lobby management to improve the provision for international research students

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

**Improving the experience of
international research students:
Recommendations for institutional
management**

what it should provide...

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- A member of academic or administrative staff with special responsibility for international students.
- The circulation of relevant codes of practice.
- Institutional facilities available during vacations, since research students, particularly international research students, work through vacations.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Full and regularly updated publicity on services and facilities in simple and clear English.
- A channel whereby international research students can give feedback to supervisors, departments and institutions without fear of repercussions.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- A face-to-face pre-admission interview or some other means by which all parties can check that the student, the department and supervisor are suitably matched.
- Realistic pre-admission information, including information on such services and facilities as the student union, computing, printing, counselling, banking, services to help with language problems, chaplaincies; accommodation; nurseries; careers; shops; eating places, etc. Pre-admission information should also include details about the host department and the academic interests of potential supervisors.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Cultural orientation on arrival.
- Institutional and departmental induction including guidance on access to facilities.
- Some form of repeat induction to accommodate research students who arrive at non-standard times in the academic year.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- A protected and adequate workspace.
- Departmental facilities available during vacations.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

- Encouragement, and where possible also modest funds, to facilitate involvement in international and national student societies, as well as to operate the local postgraduate student association.
- Ways to increase awareness among staff and students generally of the experiences and potential difficulties of international students, e.g. talks organised by the international/national student societies.

Internationalisation and International Research Students: the basic issues

NB: research emerging out of Centre for
Excellence in Preparing for Academic
Practice

- Importance of individual relationship with supervisor
- Reason to apply as well as focus of desired experience

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

What is the international research student
anyway?

What are their needs?

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

***Research Supervisors and the Skills
Agenda: Learning Needs Analysis and
Personal Development Profiling***

- authored by Martin Gough & Pam Denicolo
- series 2 no.1 of the SRHE Guides, *Issues in Postgraduate Education: Management, Teaching and Supervision:*
- Society for Research into Higher Education, July 2007

Internationalisation and International Research Students:
the basic issues

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