

THE PRIME
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FOR INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

Linking outward and inward mobility:
How raising the international horizons of UK
students enhances the international student
experience on the UK campus

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Case Study Report:
University of Manchester

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SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

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A. Introduction- Background information

The University of Manchester sits in a large, multicultural city in the north of England. It is the largest single site university in the country, and boasts the UK's biggest student union. The university offers over 500 different degree courses, and there are over 35,000 students registered at the university. It is also one of the largest employers in Greater Manchester. The university is structured around a number of schools which sit within four main faculties.

Students at The University of Manchester can study abroad through a number of programmes; these include the Erasmus programme within which the university has over 150 European partners and the Worldwide Exchange Programme which includes more than 50 partnerships with Universities around the world. Worldwide partners include a significant number of institutions in China, Japan and the USA. These partnerships particularly support degree programmes in Chinese studies, Japanese studies and American studies respectively.

The University attracts students from 180 countries. There are two ways that non degree seeking international students can join the University of Manchester: on a fee paying year/semester abroad or through an exchange programme. Both programmes enable students to take advantage of a number of initiatives during their study in Manchester. These include:

- A mentoring scheme - an incoming student will be matched with a Manchester student who has studied abroad
- Orientation program
- International Society membership
- Service learning - for students who wish to undertake a period of voluntary work

International students can also study at Manchester through summer programmes available in particular disciplines.

B. Promoting outward and inward mobility at university level

Institutional strategic plan of promoting outward and inward mobility

There is a clear agenda to promote outward mobility. A recent undergraduate education review undertaken by the University has identified the importance of enabling students to develop a global perspective and increasing students' cultural awareness. The university currently has around 500 undergraduate students studying abroad each year and a further 200 students working abroad as part of their degree. Students are able to go to '*a huge range of different countries.*' A number of programmes at the university consist of a compulsory year abroad, for example all

language students undertake a compulsory year abroad as part of their degree. Almost all degree programmes include an optional period abroad.

Most outward mobility programmes are managed by the centrally located Study Abroad Unit in collaboration with school based exchange coordinators. The Unit also supports non degree seeking international students choosing to study at The University of Manchester as part of their course.

2008/2009 is the first year The University of Manchester has sent students to study in China as part of a new Chinese Studies degree. 20 students are currently studying in China. In 2009/10 the university will also see the first students going to Japan with the new Japanese Studies course. The USA is the main destination for many students studying sciences:

'There are a lot of physicists who opt to do the year in North America as part of their degree.'

The model which the university employs is one of a credit bearing year abroad which counts towards their degree:

'Almost all of our degree programmes, the semester or year that students go abroad, is a very integrated part of that degree... our science, our physics and chemistry students [who] will do a four year programme with a year abroad, aren't coming out with a Bachelors degree. They're coming out with a Masters degree, so they're doing a four year Masters programme and that third year is an integrated part of their degree, the courses that they take count, the marks that they get count in an integrated way towards their degree.'

This enables students to get the most out of their time abroad academically; however it has made it difficult to encourage students from certain disciplines to go abroad:

'In hard sciences and engineering it's much, much tougher because both programmes are professionally accredited, so you've got to meet professional accreditation requirements and those programmes have very, very linear sequential degree structures with core material that links from one module to the next.'

This also affects where students can study abroad, as students need to be taught in English, limiting places in countries such as China, Korea and Japan where these courses are harder to find.

The university also offers a summer option in Korea and currently manages the national DIUS China programme. These programmes have proved to be *'very, very popular'* as students do not need to pay fees:

'There's huge take up for things like that, less so for things where there are high levels of fees that need to be paid. So yeah, students are much more interested in that.'

The DIUS China programme utilises heavily the social networking site facebook in their recruitment of students, dissemination of information and gaining feedback. This has been a highly useful mechanism for communicating with students.

Institutional support services for outward mobility students

Within the Schools there are Exchange Advisers and academic advisers who play an integral role:

'There is a strong, strong correlation between the commitment of the... academic co-ordinator for exchanges and where you have very, very engaged co-ordinators, you have massive participation... the engagement of the academic department is absolutely fundamental'.

Students deciding to go abroad firstly take part in arranged information and application meetings. They then attend '*academic country advisory sessions*'. These are based around specific academic issues in the country of study. Historically the university has also offered country specific pre-departure briefings. This year however there will be a pre-departure conference for everyone going abroad, incorporating country specific sessions. A course called 'Going Global: Inter-Cultural awareness for International Experience' (ICIE) is currently under development. This would be a non mandatory, but credit bearing course to help students reflect on inter-cultural awareness. Initially this would be an optional course for students studying/working abroad.

Outward mobility programme models

There seem to be a number of advantages and challenges to different lengths of study abroad programmes. A full year allows students to become '*fully integrated,*' however it can also appear slightly daunting to prospective students. A semester aboard seems more '*do-able*' however students have '*just got settled in and then they're coming back again*'.

Promotional activities

In order to attract students the University has profiled study abroad opportunities in their prospectus and on their website. The Study Abroad Adviser has also done a series of talks with Career Advisors from local schools and colleges to encourage participation in study abroad opportunities:

'We actually get some of our students who've been abroad to go and do a talk in the local school to explain their experience. So that's sort of how we're engaging before students actually come to university.'

Students are given a talk on arrival at the university about the possibilities they have to study abroad. There is also an annual study abroad fair where students from partner institutions will operate stalls promoting their country and Institution:

'So that's a big fair where all of the distant universities that we work with are profiled and students from those universities and students who've been there will talk about their experience.'

Linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

Students who have been abroad are utilised in promoting the study abroad experience to prospective study abroad students:

'We get our students who are abroad to do like foreign correspondent letters from abroad... these go into Student Direct, [our] university newspaper, so that profiles experiences that they've had.'

These students are *'happy to engage'*:

'They will always be involved in the academic advisory sessions they come to so they can give students insight into studying at another institution.'

For students who have decided to take part in study abroad:

'we then do a big social event in April which brings together all the students who are from the universities abroad, students who've been abroad previously and the students who are going out, and that's kind of a networking session, so they can meet each other and understand each others experience and they can ask questions and get to know the other students and get their e-mail addresses and they can say, find out what they did about accommodation or what problems they had getting their visas or local transport where they are going to, all of those types of things.'

C. Promoting mobility at programme level

This section explores two different mobility programmes in place at the University for students. The programme leaders were interviewed about their programme, looking specifically at promotion, student support, and the student experience.

Programme A

Overview of mobility programme

'Study China' is a relatively new programme which commenced in 2007 and is sponsored by DIUS. The University of Manchester currently manages the programme on behalf of DIUS. Students from all over the country are eligible to participate in this programme. Tuition fees and accommodation in China are fully covered by DIUS funding. Students only have to pay for their flights to China:

'We do all the rest, well we organise languages classes for them, social events, lectures and visits to local points of interest.'

The programme allows students to go to China for a period of three weeks outside of term time, either in the Easter or summer university breaks. Since the start of the programme around twelve hundred students have been to China. Students visit different places in China including; Beijing. The University of Manchester has partner institutions in China with which they collaborate to host the programme providing accommodation and lectures for the students. Whilst students are away they have a schedule including around forty hours of Chinese language learning, and lectures on general aspects of Chinese culture including the economy. Activities and events are also organised in order for students to see more of China and learn some of the culture. Chinese students are recruited as volunteers to help mentor the students when they arrive in the country. This also enables the students to make friends with their Chinese counterparts.

In order to select students to go on the programme, the university invests a lot of time and man power in wording the questions on the application to fit with the selection criteria which the government has laid out. The University then has to go through each application carefully in order to find students who they believe will get the most out of their time abroad. Some students applications' mention having changed university modules or courses to include some Chinese related study.

This programme model seems to attract a large number of students for a variety of important reasons. Firstly this is a short period of time abroad, and therefore students get the chance to visit and live in another country but do not have to commit themselves to long time periods. Students do not need to learn another language to go, as courses are taught in English. Also the courses taken do not affect their credits/grades back home. These are very important factors as they have been mentioned by many students as prime considerations for taking time abroad. The cost of study abroad has also been highlighted as a discouraging factor by students, so owing to the fact that this programme is mostly funded, students are more likely to be able to go. Lastly China seems to be an appealing place to students as it is away from the 'norm' of going to a European country:

'One of the big appeals to our students when they apply for our programme [is] because China is so unknown, some exotic far away location. It's that much more challenging and that much more interesting than going to Spain where every one already speaks a lot of English'.

Support services and support activities

The University of Manchester focuses on the practicalities of going to China in their pre-departure preparation. A pre-departure briefing is held where students are told about flights, visas, travel insurance etc. There is also information on the website,

including a list of things they must do before going. The pre-departure briefing is also useful as it gives students the opportunity to meet the other students who are going:

'It makes the whole programme a little bit less daunting, intimidating. A lot of these students they are quite young. They've never travelled abroad before especially not been outside Europe. [It] can be quite intimidating for them. Therefore it's a good opportunity to meet the other students so they can share the same flights so they arrive at the same time.'

However only around 50% of students actually make it to the pre-departure briefing and this is partly due to the late notice students receive:

'It's not always convenient, every time we've run the programme the government sponsors have given us notice very late so we've had to do everything at really short notice.'

Linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

From a long term perspective, this programme seems to be very productive in developing extended business and social links with China:

'We even had a couple of romances that have broken out on the programme and have gone back to China to be with their partner.'

'A lot of our students have formed, already formed longer term relationships with China and a lot of our students have written to us to say they've taken jobs in China or switched their courses at university so that they are studying more Chinese related subjects'.

'We get a lot of emails or messages on facebook from students just telling us about what they've done since they went on the programme. Sometimes they'll ask us advice about doing the post graduate courses in China or they tell us about business enterprise in Shanghai or stuff like that'.

The programme has had very positive feedback from participating students from the online survey sent out;

'Positive feedback about the trip when the students get back from China, in all cases they say they've have a great time and they've really enjoyed what they saw in China... A lot of the feed back has been extremely positive they absolutely love it'.

'They enjoyed the programme so much I get personal letters of thanks after the programme'.

Programme B

Overview of mobility programme

Programme B was set up in 1990 in the Manchester Business School (MBS), there are currently two programmes for students studying both International Management and International Management with American Business Studies. The courses are four years long and students have a compulsory year abroad which is taken during their third year of study. Between both programmes there are around 100 students. The Business School has 49 exchange partners across a range of countries in four continents; some examples are; Canada, Mexico, Spain, Italy, Singapore and Australia however they all teach in English. Students going on exchange are encouraged to learn a language in addition to undertaking their requirements for business/management studies.

Support services and support activities

Manchester Business School, from which the programme is run, has its own international office to support the exchange programmes.

'We just thought the students' experience would be better if there was a dedicated international office to look after them.'

Students are informed and supported from the first year of starting the course:

'We work with them from year one, to make sure they're prepared for their year abroad when they go.'

The first meeting takes place in May of the first year telling students which the partner universities are. In year two there are three meetings, these are predominantly about the application process and allocation of places which take into account student grades from year one. They also have an opportunity to meet with final year students who have returned from their time abroad. Students find this particularly helpful in answering the specific country related questions that they have. There is a pre-departure meeting which covers practicalities and preparation for going as well as issues relating to the teaching practices and how they can differ abroad:

'The students say that they do feel well prepared for their year abroad by the time we've finished and we've had four meetings with them.'

Whilst students are away there is also support from the university. They are given an emergency telephone number that they may call if they have extreme difficulties whilst abroad. Also:

'We are in touch with them throughout the year...Up until the current year we've visited every student that has gone on the year abroad.'

The programme has now grown and this has become more difficult however MBS now aims to visit every institution within a 3 year time frame, paying particular attention to the institutions where exchange students will be coming from to '*maintain the balance*'. The member of staff going out will arrange to meet the students taking them to dinner to find out how everything is going and to talk about any problems that may have arisen. Students are also asked to complete a feedback survey with questions relating to the partner institution including any difficulties they might have had:

'For instance if there are issues with the partner that are consistently raised that are major then we would cancel that partnership... We are constantly monitoring the students experience and the provision that the partner university gives to the students.'

Even after students return they are supported by the university in helping them to get back into their final year of the course, students attend a meeting to let them know if there have been any changes to the student system whilst they have been away. The university arranges for a member of staff from the careers service to come and speak to students about ways that they can utilise their year abroad in their future career choices.

Linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

In October of the second year there is an international fair which all students on the course are able to go to that also has incoming exchange students attending. This is run by students and they represent and promote their own partner institutions. Final year students who have been abroad are also invited to come to this fair to answer questions about the institutions they have visited.

Final year students also run a meeting for students who are on the second year of this course. This starts with a general question and answer session, students are then partnered up with final year students who visited the country they are planning to visit to find out more specific information about the country and university they will be going to:

'They will recount their experience of their year abroad to future students to help future students who are on the programme'

Final year students who have been on the year abroad along with some second year students due to go the next year are involved in the Manchester Business School international society. Students run social events for exchange students, beginning when the international students arrive on induction day with a short campus tour. Social events include meals out, trips to the theatre, bowling etc. There is also a mentoring event where students are paired up with an exchange student about 6

weeks before the student arrives in the UK for students to be in touch over e-mail upon arrival students then meet:

'Very often our students will go out to the airport and meet them and help them with shopping when they first arrive.'

Exchange students are given a 'full induction programme' which 'helps the students to integrate and the exchange students think it is fantastic'.

In addition to MBS exchange students, any international student is welcome to attend events organised by the MBS International Society

D. Outward mobility student voice

Context: Introduction to outward mobility participants

Focus groups were attended by two students who had studied abroad for one year, one in the USA and one student on an Erasmus exchange in Italy, and two students who had been on the Korean study abroad programme for three weeks in the summer holidays. One student on the Korean programme had also been on the DIUS China programme which enabled him to visit China in the University Easter holidays. There were three females, and one male student. It should be kept in mind that this was a very small number of participants and therefore any conclusions drawn are based on this small sample and would not necessarily reflect the views of the wider outward mobility student population.

Students were studying differing subjects; politics, geography, and international management. Three of the students had opted to study abroad on a non mandatory programme of study. Students had given their reasons for wanting to take up study abroad opportunities as; their enjoyment of travelling, interest in the culture/country and the chance to learn their subject area in a different country context:

'I always wanted to go and study abroad because I always felt you cannot really be a complete student... unless you go abroad.'

One student mentioned her motivations for coming to this university was based on the travel abroad experience offered:

'Part of the reason for coming to Manchester was that I knew it was something they were pushing.'

Students on the year abroad programmes stated that they had chosen the study abroad countries because they were countries of interest to them and they had chosen the universities based on the right courses being offered.

One student specifically wanted to go to Europe to learn a new language describing herself as a 'language freak'.

The two students on the shorter exchange programmes felt they could have easily missed the opportunity to go as they heard about it very last minute over e-mail only a short time before applications were due in:

'I noticed the e-mail like four days before the deadline for application'

Experience of pre-departure and international promotion activities

From the very small number of home student interviews, opinions appear somewhat polarised as to the quality of the pre departure activities. This seems to be partly based on the type of programme embarked on. Students following the year abroad route were given ample preparation with a set structure of meetings and sessions to answer any possible questions starting the year before departure. There was high praise for the organisation of this:

'Great credit to Manchester Business School... well prepared for information; also we could at any time visit the international office coordinators and ask them anything.'

For the student taking the Erasmus exchange this started with a fair at the business school with stalls from other institutions abroad as well as students who had been abroad the previous year, this offered leaflets and information about partner institutions. There were a series of meetings held for outgoing students with *'more in depth information about the universities.'* One of these meetings was particularly helpful as it involved previous students telling of their experiences abroad and was quite candid providing both positive and negatives about the areas and universities. For example one student mentioned;

'Italy, it's impossible to get accommodation... so [they] told of challenges also'

For the final meeting students were split into groups depending on the universities they were visiting, and each had two students who had visited these previously to go through a question and answer session for an hour:

'You can ask anything you want to know, one of the best meetings.'

This is an example of inward mobility helping to promote outward mobility within the university. The pre-departure activities were also to a satisfactory level in the geography department, with plenty of meetings and sessions to ask questions, as well as an opportunity to meet someone from the Partner University as well as previous outward mobility students.

The two students on the shorter summer programmes to Korea and China found that at the time they were going this type of support was more limited.

'They organise one generic talk to tell you what's going to happen when you actually get there and the stuff you need to organise before you get there, so the logistics of the whole thing, but other than that....'

'Non existent, simply told you are going, buy a ticket.'

'Only told a week before the end of the year and then 3 weeks later the summer school programme started, they didn't have the time to do anything.'

However, this was due to late confirmation from hosting/sponsoring organisations leaving limited time for pre-departure support to be put in place as in both cases the programmes were running for the first time.

'They have actually advertised it this year so might have more time to prepare stuff'

Experience abroad - positives and challenges

Students reported having had a very positive experience abroad:

'I had such an amazing time in Italy' and was so grateful for it, I was treated like a princess... everyone new my name, the organisation was amazing'

'I loved being in the USA'

'I liked the trip a lot, first time I went out of Europe. I liked almost every aspect of the trip.'

A number of factors contributed to the individual student experiences, for example the different programme models. Students taking the short period abroad to Korea in university holiday time found that a heavy workload created a challenge for them:

'It was 8 hours a day, it was impossible and each class had a lot of homework... very intense, everyone dropped out and took just 2 classes out of 6.'

'They were trying to squeeze an entire semesters worth of work into three weeks'

The work that was completed there was not credit bearing which reduced pressure on students however they knew that *'no matter how well we did there, Manchester would not accept any of the credits'*. Students were given Fridays off with organised trips out to see more of the city.

Students who were studying away for a year found their workloads varied but both were very different to the style of working they were used to in the UK. For example the workload in the USA was said to be *'more constant'* but *'easier'*. Another student on an Erasmus exchange found the lecturers to be more approachable and enjoyed this.

All students seemed to integrate well at their partner institution in one way or another:

'Very welcoming, more than the UK, they enjoy life, family and friends, a tasteful life... not afraid of foreigners if we make effort and speak the language. Loved the cultural aspects, galleries, music, literature, theatre, drama....'

'I joined a number of societies; I now have a lot of friends from abroad.'

This student however mentioned that she *'found it difficult to integrate with US students'* and *'tended to stick with Europeans.'* She felt that this may have been down to cultural differences but also felt that the American students were *'not interested in becoming close friends with us'*.

The opposite experience was encountered by a student on the short term exchange:

'You loose contact with the vast majority of people... all split up into different groups so talked to people in my class.'

This student reported that he had the chance to meet Chinese students who were helping out on his course and found this to be useful and interesting:

'Very helpful, If you asked them any question about any aspect of China or the city they would go in my opinion far above and beyond what I would expect them to do. They would try and solve any problem, very helpful people.'

Students felt well supported by the university whilst on their time abroad, particularly for students who were away for a year:

'I think they did a really good job.'

'Response on same day.... this is good about Manchester University. But I never really had a problem.'

Outcomes: Benefits of experience

Students felt that their time abroad had benefited them in giving the opportunity to make friends and meet new people:

'It was very nice to meet people from all over the world'

And also in helping them to develop their skills and future career prospects:

'I am going to keep trying to learn (the language), so I am going to have an extra skill that I would not have thought about getting beforehand, so that is going to help no end...I would like to go and teach English for a bit''.

All students commented positively on their experience:

'I think you can only benefit from study abroad'

For one student in particular the experience seemed to increase his awareness of international students:

'When I was here last year I did not notice a single Korean person, but now they are everywhere ... I possibly pay more attention to who they are now.'

He felt that for anyone going abroad would be *'an incredibly worthwhile experience'*:

'People who have had an international experience, they are open to more people. If you force yourself to go out of it, you can maybe understand more than you would by just being here.'

Improving the outward mobility experience

One student after receiving a high quality of support from the university in pre-departure activities is now involved in helping prepare the next cohort of students going out:

'This year I am the one who will be on the other side and on the stalls and I will be talking to two or three selected students who know they are going.'

Linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

Having been abroad, students were able to help both with the promotion of outward mobility and with the integration of international students. Students all spoke of promoting the study abroad programme that they had taken part in at an annual study abroad fair.

Students also acted as mentors for international students coming here, this turned into a close friendship for one of the students as she was paired with someone with a similar hobby:

'She knows all my friends now; she is part of the group if we do anything she is there.'

Another student feels that many mentors are only taking part *'for their CV'* and so decided to help *'informally'* with some of the international students from the university she had visited:

'I would sit with them in my lectures and make sure they were OK.'

This particular student is very conscious that she wants others to have as good a time in Manchester as she had whilst abroad and therefore feels compelled *'to do something to make it up'*.

'I don't want them to be disappointed but they will never have as good a time as I had in Italy.'

On return from study abroad some students were more eager to be involved with international integration activities than others. This potentially could be correlated with the length of time spent abroad. One student who was abroad for a year felt very keen to offer support to international students:

'I went away, I want to be able to give something back. I know how it feels when I was away so I want them to have a positive time.'

However one of the students having spent a shorter time abroad did take part in activities but seemed less compelled to become quite as involved:

'We meet them (mentees) once forcefully as it were, and after that it is up to you what you do with them; every so often I may go and talk to him if I see him.'

E. Inward mobility student voice

Context: Introduction to inward mobility participants

The focus group ran with a large number of international students from a wide and diverse range of countries including India, Mexico, Zimbabwe and a number of European countries. Subject areas also varied throughout the group, including accounting, zoology, economics and business management. All students were relatively young, whether studying at undergraduate or postgraduate level. Most students were studying their whole degree or MA at The University of Manchester.

Students had chosen to study abroad for a number of reasons, the enjoyment of travelling was mentioned and one student mentioned having family ties in the UK. The main reasons for choosing Manchester and indeed the UK were that there was more choice of courses here. For the Europeans the fact that the UK is comparatively close to home for them was also important. Students mentioned that they wanted to learn English here, with one student saying she feels this is *'essential'*. Students felt that the UK offered one of the *'best education systems'*. One student commented that he *'wanted a degree recognized in the rest of the world... to study with people from all over the world.'* He had also *'heard Manchester was multicultural.'*

HE experience and integration on UK campus

The student service centre offers help and information to any student, and therefore international students are welcome to use this service. The university also has an international advice team located in the student services which offers help and advice to any international students studying with them.

Students had mixed views about life on campus in the UK. They each had different experiences but also were looking for different things out of their time at Manchester. The positives came from being able to live an *'independent life'* and the convenience of living in the city. A number of students mentioned enjoying the social life that came with being a student and living in a large city:

'It's near... and the clubs and parties are damn good.'

'It's great, Friday and Saturday in the city centre people are drinking all the time. I join in sometimes.'

However some viewed this in a slightly less attractive light:

'I live in student central. Things that happen there are just mad, beer all over the place, vodka, crazy music, crazy people, naked people, in the morning there is stuff everywhere all over the floor, the walls.'

These views were dependant on the types of accommodation students had opted for. Students also talked about some challenges with cultural differences and language barriers:

'Not just the accent, the grammar as well, having to know a new culture and background.'

Students felt that the support within the university was high-quality, and helped them to feel more integrated:

'I have found the orientation programme,... at the beginning when I came, it was so organised so many things happening and it didn't make me feel homesick. There is a lot of support, but that is just about Manchester universities other universities are not so much... I think this international society is really nice as compared to others.'

Facilities and resources were also praised:

'I was amazed about the great number of facilities such as computers in the university, so we can go to any building and use any computers and free internet connections so in these terms I think this university is one of the best. And the library is really good compared to my country, and there is a great variety of books and you can easily pick up a book.'

When asked about integration with UK students, there was a mix of views, some students spoke of difficulties with this due to cultural differences and being able to engage with UK students:

'Sometimes it is difficult to communicate with the British people.'

'Sometimes it's impossible.'

'They are cold, depends on which people, some can communicate well, but in general people are very closed in on themselves... Most countries are open like Spain, France, Italy the European countries are friendlier than the UK.'

Other students felt that there were differences but that these could be overcome with understanding and communication:

'You just have to learn the ways of communication. There are some things that you cannot say, some things we cannot expect that they accept and some things they can not accept.'

One student believed that there was only so much that the university could do to facilitate integration and it was predominantly down to students to find common interests:

'I live in halls with 5 other British students and I don't have any problems. If you just talk football with guys. It does not matter where you are from, you are automatically on the same plane, you are fine. You just have to find that common ground ... I can't think of any activities to make people integrate.'

Despite these possibilities the majority of students said that most of their friends were other international students:

'It is easier for us to mix with international students because we are international and we know how it is to be in England and maybe that is why. In general, in my experience I find it harder to go over to a British student and make bonds with them. I find it easier with international students, and maybe this comes from us somehow as well but this is how it is.'

Outcomes: Benefits of experience

One of the main benefits discussed by students is the multicultural environment they can live and study in;

'It's a cultural cocktail here. Look around this table. We have the world.'

One student spoke of the benefits of this in terms of enabling her to develop important skills to take forward in her future career:

'You have to learn how to discuss things with people from all over the world; it's different with people from different countries... We all have cultural values that we bring with us and to try to understand and communicate with each other is a challenge. My most rewarding experience is to say I have worked in that multicultural environment and especially Manchester University is working very hard on competencies, so in my MA every week we have to do a presentation. These are competencies that are very good in the workplace.'

Students also felt it was useful to study in the UK as they were able to gain a qualification from a *'world recognised university'*.

Improving the inward mobility experience

Suggestions were put forward of various ways that may help to improve the experience for international students. For example in accommodation:

'They could make the halls of residence more diverse, mix up the international and British students.'

Also students felt that lecturers may be able to help facilitate integration with UK students:

'Last semester I got assigned to a group with four British students, and went through the process of meetings and discussion and I got to know more about British people. The lecturer has to assign groups otherwise they just stick together.'

One student mentioned that the student experience would be improved and integration could be made easier if students were able to make use of sporting facilities without paying high costs for these:

'One thing I don't understand in the British system is why we have to pay for sports, we pay very, very high tuition fees and sports are not included...all the societies charge, why can't we use these facilities that are there for us?'

As mentioned previously university support was flagged as being highly useful and appreciated by students, however one university activity students said could be improved was the mentoring/buddy system. Students had found that their mentors were meeting them once and no further contact was being made:

'I have not seen them since the beginning of the year'

This would have been a service that students would have liked to have been able to have utilised more:

'When I lived in the hall I wanted just to e-mail him or her but I didn't even have his email. It was really strangely organised, he was supposed to be there if we want but he didn't leave any contact. But I remember when I arrived I had questions about academic things, how to pay fees and everyone was really helpful in terms of the university.'

Linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

Many students had spoken of difficulties in communicating and making friends with UK students, however this problem seems to greatly decrease if the UK students have been abroad to study themselves as they may be able to relate much better:

'The experience with English people who went abroad, like us, they think in a different way. It is easier to communicate with them because you have more in common because you can talk about Europe and you have had more or less the same problems with language difficulties or cultural differences. [It's] easier to get in touch with them than English people who never left the country or have just gone to Spain.'

Likewise International students talked of taking their experience of studying abroad and using this to help to integrate foreign students studying at their home institution:

'When I was in my home country I would not talk to exchange students, but after this experience I will talk to them....I will make more effort to talk to exchange students when I get back.'

F. Conclusion

Strengths of case study context

The University of Manchester appears to have embraced the initiatives highlighted in PMI2 to increase both outward and inward mobility and make the university more internationally aware in general:

'I think a recognition that the PMI2 about outward mobility is really very, very useful. It adds to the element obviously of not just recruiting in fee paying international students. I think it's timely because of the employability agenda and that sort of you know the importance of that for our students.'

There is evidence from staff and a small number of students at this university that outward mobility may help to enhance the student experience of international students. Going abroad appears to increase student's awareness of international student's experiences on the university campus, and seems to make them want to actively get involved in improving this. Students having been abroad are keen to pass on a welcome similar to that of the one they received in the partner institution:

'My impression is that our students who've been abroad are much keener to engage with the international student body having been abroad than they were previously, essentially because they have been an international student. So it suddenly becomes, ooh they're the same as I am because I was an international student somewhere else, and suddenly it becomes somebody who's much more similar to you rather than somebody who's very distant from you.'

The University has mechanisms in place to help with facilitating integration as well as successful initiatives for connecting three groups of students; international students, UK students who have been away and students planning to do study abroad:

'So the students from I don't know University of California are asked to come and stand on the stand and we also ask those students who have just come back from California to come and stand on the stand and talk to the prospective students... We also utilise them in terms of that preparation, we do like a big get together of students going and students from places so we kind of use them in terms of support for the outgoing students, so the cohorts kind of overlap and inter mix. So last years lot are looking after this incoming group, the incoming group help the out going group as do the ones that have just returned so there's a little sort of...washing machine.'

However there are difficulties in actually being able to evaluate the effectiveness of outward mobility influencing the experience of international students in a tangible way:

'I think those small steps that we've take which although they are relatively simple when you times it by five hundred students is an awful big undertaking... I think that does make a big difference.'

There are plans to extend initiatives in this area to make them more systematic within the university; for example it is hoped that the inter-cultural communication course (discussed previously) will be developed more broadly.

This University has a very lively international society which students appreciate and find effective in making friends with other international students and becoming involved in social events and activities.

'Cultural events and trips organised and gatherings and parties and language classes, this is the place.' (International student voice)

'It is hard to meet people here because the British people go to clubs and stuff and it is hard to really talk to them so here you can come and really talk to people'.
(International student voice)

Feasibility of linking outward and inward mobility on the UK campus

The small number of outward mobility students who took part in the focus group, all appeared to be keen to be involved in activities to help integrate international students. However these students are usually in their final year and find work pressures may create difficulties in investing time in these initiatives:

'I would love to be able to help out but have no time.' (Home Student voice).

'I went away I want to be able to give something back. I know how it feels when I was away so I want them to have a positive time but I don't have the time to help as much as I would want.' (Home student voice)

It became evident from focus groups with both UK and international students that there was a potential difficulty in encouraging UK students to become interested and to see the benefits of being involved:

'When I was abroad I felt it ...why make a connection to someone who is going to leave anyway? Why invest in the relationship when it has no future?' (Home student voice)

'I don't think it would appeal (to them). The fact that you have been abroad means you are that type of person in the first place. If not why would you be interested.'
(Home student voice)

One of the ways in which the student participants who had studied abroad found that they became more integrated was through their lectures. This was particularly the case of students on the shorter period abroad programmes. They found this to be an easy way to make friends due to the intimate nature of the lectures, having small numbers of students put together:

'The experience I had in China and Korea the best way I met people was that we were forced to spend a lot of time a day every day with them so that is very easy to get to know each other.' (Home Student voice)

This however provides a challenge for this university:

'It's very difficult to integrate international students with home students at the university, you are in a lecture with a few hundred people here and you cannot talk and then everyone leaves.' (Home Student voice)

'But the problem is with this university: it is too huge. So in the lecture theatres there are far too many people and then they run away after - instantly.' (Home Student voice)

International students also found that on many of their courses there were large numbers of international students from the same country in lectures which provided a barrier to getting to know UK students:

'I have seen in a lecture theatre, there is a row of 20 people and the whole row is Chinese people, not even one person from any other place' (International student voice)

This is particularly the case for many international students who are studying at a postgraduate level:

'In my class there are no British students, they are all international students so it is very difficult for us to get to know British people. So if we want to know British people we have to look for other options'. (International student voice)

One suggestion put forward for this is to reduce the numbers of students in lectures or seminars:

'I have one seminar with only five people there and we are very close.' (Home student voice)

However this may not be feasible in an institution of this size. Students also felt that the lecturers may be able to aid integration in class:

'If there is a group project, then the tutor - force them to make it diverse then it is better for international students and home students to integrate.' (Home student voice)

This would help to integrate students who wanted to mix, however some students felt that this would be dependant on individual differences:

'It strongly depends on the individual themselves; some people because they are coming to a new country actively try to meet people from that country themselves, but I have come across people at this university who couldn't care less, they are just here for educational purposes and then stick with their own nationality.' (Home student voice)

On a social level there can be difficulties with integration due to cultural differences between nationalities;

'Mostly the drinking thing... it is kind of hard to talk to someone after they have had five beers... they keep on drinking beers.' (International student voice)

The university has organised events in order to help people to meet however these events are not always ideal for international students:

'Last year when I was in halls, the things that the hall organised for people to meet each other involved stupid amounts of alcohol and the international students who lived there either didn't want to drink or for religious reasons could not so that separated them for everyone else'. (Home student voice)

'A lot of the stuff the university organises helps international students to integrate with each other but not with the home students'. (Home student voice)

One way to potentially overcome this problem and for students to integrate is through having things in common and joining societies and sporting groups in order to meet likeminded people:

'Sports, I have a friend who is Korean and he joined this football team and he has got a lot of home student friends.' (Home student voice)

'It is a good idea if you can get people to do it; sports are team based so you have to get to know other people in your team.' (Home student voice)

'I think the university offers a broad range of activities that international students can take part in but it is getting involved if you want to it is not necessarily for international students, but all the societies at the beginning of term offers different socials where you can get... involved. I have met a lot of people through the societies.' (International student voice)

Overall it appears that there are a number of ways that integration can be promoted within the university, utilising outward students experience on their return seems to be a good way to do this but also promotion of more university wide clubs and societies could help students to find a common ground as a basis for integration.