

To Formulating Good Internationalisation Practices

A Guide for Teachers

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Obstacles to integration	2
3. Intercultural goals	2
4. Internationalisation activities	3
5. Intended learning outcomes	4
6. Assessment and evaluation	5
7. Timeline of key activities	5
8. Key stakeholders	5
9. Dissemination and sharing of outcomes	6
10. Recap of key points	6
11. Appendices	7
Appendix A: Specific Internationalisation Issues	7
Appendix B: List of Internationalisation Activities	8
Appendix C: Learning Outcomes on Internationalisation	10
Appendix D: Pre-assignment Survey Form	11
Appendix D: Post-assignment Survey Form	12
Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Form (with Students)	13
Appendix F: A Sample of Gantt Chart Template	14
12. References	15

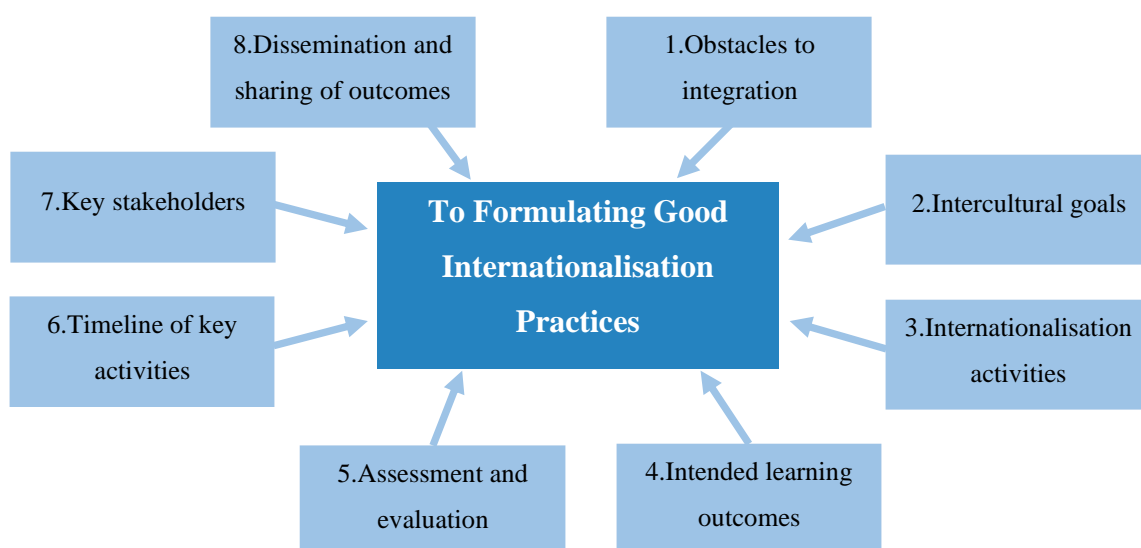
1. Introduction

The globalized economy can provide individuals and organizations with many opportunities, but also numerous challenges. Linguistic and cultural diversity is now the norm even in local communities and workplaces. Increasingly, employers seek employees who have the ability to solve problems in cross-cultural teams, who are flexible, adaptable, and open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. As graduates, today's students will need to be interculturally skilled and internationally informed and globally aware if they are to be successful professionals and responsible citizens in an interconnected, constantly changing world.

Universities have a responsibility to develop students' understanding of the need for international knowledge and intercultural learning and their ability to use resources available to develop their skills and knowledge in these areas through both the formal curriculum and the co-curriculum. A large body of international research over more than a decade has consistently demonstrated that students are not always interested in developing these capabilities and staff report that students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds often find it difficult to work together productively in class and do not mix socially on campus (Pechak et al., 2014; Leask, 2009). Low levels of interaction between Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland students in Hong Kong universities have been identified as a specific example of this broader issue.

Research into the student experience, teaching, and learning tells us that what is required to address this issue is strategic and purposeful intervention in both the curriculum and co-curriculum. Using the cultural diversity in the classroom, on the campus, and in the community to develop the intercultural competencies of both Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland students within broader institutional internationalisation plans provides a useful way forward. Teachers and institutional managers who plan and sequence teaching, learning, and assessment activities in the formal curriculum, and staff and student groups who coordinate and deliver support services in the co-curriculum have a central role to play in planning, implementing, and evaluating such strategic interventions.

The purpose of this document is to provide teachers and institutional managers with guiding information on formulating an action plan for good internationalisation practice. When developing an action plan, this guide recommends consideration of the following:



2. Obstacles to integration

A number of common obstacles to the integration of students from different cultures are identified in the research literature. These include language barriers (Kerklaan et al., 2008; Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999), students' lack of intercultural awareness and understanding (Kourova et al., 2013), negative attitudes and absence of motivation to interact interculturally (Hsieh, 2008), as well as different learning styles (Healey et al., 2005), etc. These issues may hinder the internationalisation of student learning and campus culture, thus, it is important to address them. As you are going to develop your action plan, it is necessary to think about the issues specifically raised by staff members and students at Hong Kong Universities concerning the following items:

- Design of subjects, programmes, and activities
- Approach of teaching
- Students' awareness and motivation
- Students' skill development

The details identified by staff members and students on these issues are given in Appendix A and they have been used to inform the following guidelines for those developing action plans.

3. Intercultural goals

When thinking about the specific issues you would like to address, it is important to define what you want to achieve by the end of the intervention (Leask, 2001a). Goals may include: (1) Raising students' awareness of the importance of developing cross-cultural competence for their future employment prospects and/or (2) Developing staff members understanding of the needs of non-local students'. When setting goals, consider whether your goals are SMART: "Specific", "Measurable", "Achievable", "Relevant" and "Time-Bound" (Eby, 2019). The SMART goals framework creates criteria to help improve the chances of succeeding in accomplishing a goal (Doran, 1981; Eby, 2019). When measuring your goals against the SMART framework, you may ask yourself the following questions:

- Which specific area does it target for improvement?
- How will you know you have been successful? Identify at least two measurable indicators of success.
- Is the goal reasonably realistic in terms of time, resource allocation, and operational support?
- What is the risk that the goal will not be achieved? (e.g. Small, Medium, High)
- In what ways are your goal(s) significant in terms of this project (i.e. integration of local and non-local students)?
- When do you anticipate the goal to be achieved?

- Will the ongoing effort be required to maintain the achievement of the goal?

4. Internationalisation activities

After setting intercultural goals, teachers and/or institutional management may need to plan and develop internationalisation activities to achieve the goals within a pre-defined timeline using the available resources. Students who enter universities may not all have developed the same academic, interpersonal, and intercultural skills in their pre-university education. Thus, services and resources to develop the readiness of local and non-local students to integrate are critical, including:

- Academic advising and counselling services
- Academic and social language learning support
- Overseas exchange and international summer programme information
- Financial assistance and scholarship support
- Non-local student services including accommodation

Cooperation with colleagues across departments and institutional offices who may already have existing resources and support can be explored while structuring programmes. Curricular and co-curricular programmes that assist students in developing capacity and skills can be introduced across the programme.

Curricular activities refer to the academic subjects/courses of study prescribed by the school. They are characterized by (1) being graded; (2) allowing students to earn academic credits; (3) taking place inside the classroom, the laboratory, the workshop, or in the library; and (4) being operated by the educational institution. **Co-curricular activities** are activities, programmes, and learning experiences that supplement and complement, to some extent, what students learn in school, aiming to develop students' personality and strengthen classroom learning. They are neither graded nor allow students to earn academic credits, can happen outside of school or after regular school hours, and can be held by outside organisations. The followings are some examples of curricular and co-curricular activities, and, for more information, you may refer to Appendix B.



Curricular activities

- Partnership programmes with other institutions
- Project competition
- Global ambassador or leadership scheme/course
- Community service opportunities
- Adaptable class management strategies
- Internationalizing design and content of subjects etc.

Co-curricular activities

- Pre-departure package preparatory scheme/model
- Cross-cultural mentoring
- International Living-Learning Communities & residential support
- Excursions for local and non-local students
- Community service opportunities
- Language exchange/conversation partners
- Designing and implementing teaching and learning activities
- Develop collaborative international online learning
- Develop online resource platforms, etc.

5. Intended learning outcomes

When planning and developing internationalisation activities, you should think about what staff members and students are going to learn from the activities. Some examples are listed below, and you may refer to Appendix C for more information.

- Improved intercultural awareness
- Improved intercultural knowledge
- Global outlook/global citizenship
- Intercultural sensitivity
- Able to work effectively with diversity
- Language competency, etc.

6. Assessment and evaluation

An important consideration in designing the formal curriculum as well as the co-curriculum is when and how to measure the impact of the activities at the programme/subject level in the formal curriculum and at campus level in the co-curriculum. There are many ways to assess student learning in the formal and co-curriculum, but it is always important to evaluate progress towards the achievement of learning outcomes regularly throughout the programme, not only at the end. Intended intercultural outcomes can be embedded into existing programme learning outcomes or included as additional learning outcomes in both the formal curriculum and co-curriculum (Leask, 2001b). Assessment and evaluation approaches may include:

- Pre- and post-surveys, to collect preliminary data from students on their levels of interaction with cultural others within the curricular and/or co-curricular activities (see Appendix D for examples).
- Sharing sessions or focus-group interviews, to collect in-depth data for explaining certain patterns observed in the pre- and post-surveys (see Appendix E for examples).
- Experiential assessment tasks in the formal curriculum require students to apply intercultural skills in professional contexts.

Awards should be considered for the leadership of co-curricular programmes/activities that facilitate interaction between different cultural groups.


7. Timeline of key activities

Good planning of activities with a detailed timeline is important for you to implement the programme efficiently. It may be helpful to design an appropriate Gantt Chart (a sample was written in Appendix F) with the consideration of the following questions:

- When do you anticipate your actions will be taken to achieve your goal(s) and the expected outcome(s)?
- When will all of the actions you proposed be completed?

8. Key stakeholders

It is important to involve key stakeholders with different cultural backgrounds and experiences in your programme. Through interacting with different stakeholders, students develop their intercultural competencies regarding ethical,



social, and national responsibility, intercultural communication, cultural diversity, etc. Thus, when planning your programme, you may think the following questions:

- Are there any other key stakeholders likely to have an interest in this project? For example, other project leaders, institution management, academic and non-academic colleagues, students, employers, community groups, parents, etc.
- What is their specific interest?
- How will you engage them in the project? How can you contribute to their current work/projects if any?

9. Dissemination and sharing of outcomes

Dissemination and sharing of outcomes can contribute to the transfer of knowledge across students and staff members within or beyond the programmes, and can in turn further facilitate the international education of students. When preparing the programme, you may think about how to disseminate/share the outcomes of your project. The dissemination and sharing approaches may be:

- Lectures, seminars and/or workshops
- An open-access online resource platform
- Channels to engage with diverse communities, etc.

10. Recap of key points

There are six steps for planning an appropriate programme to facilitate the international education of students as follows:

- Determining barriers/obstacles to integration/student internationalisation
- Setting goals for intercultural learning
- Designing internationalisation activities
- Defining intended learning outcomes
- Devising assessment and evaluation approaches that measure and reward students' progress towards the achievement of specific goals, including those related to intercultural engagement, and the programme's overall effectiveness.

11. Appendices

Appendix A: Specific Internationalisation Issues

Please find below a list of key issues on internationalisation as identified in the interviews conducted with staff members and students.

✚ Design of subjects, programmes, and activities

- Inter-cultural learning outcomes may be written well in the programmes, but they may not be reflected in practice and embedded in a number of subjects;
- Programmes and subjects have general learning outcome statements relating to internationalisation and global citizenship, but these have not been articulated in a way that enables students to see their importance; &
- International and Chinese Mainland students feel excluded from activities in the halls of residence, because most of the hall programmes are held in Cantonese.

✚ Approach of teaching

- Current programme-level provisions, such as exchanges and service learning, only cater to a small number of students or for groups of students who may be visiting another country but are still mixing predominantly with their peers from their own cultural group; &
- For student interaction in class, when the majority of students in a class are from one language background (e.g., Cantonese or Putonghua), they tend to use their first language and this tends to set up a language barrier that hinders interaction.

✚ Students' awareness and motivation

- Students do not seem to be interested in the issue of integration and are not aware of its long-term importance;
- Students are reluctant to engage in international programmes/activities due to a number of blockers including socio-economic backgrounds, workload, stereotypes of students from other cultures or issues related to getting good academic results;
- Students should participate in mixed groups, however, they tend to form their own cultural groups in class; &
- International and Chinese Mainland students report feelings of exclusion from hall programmes and therefore tend not to be involved.

✚ Students' skill development

- Students do not have good linguistic and communication competency in English/Cantonese, and they are not confident to speak out using their second language;
- Local and non-local (particular Chinese Mainland) students do not understand each other's cultural backgrounds; &

- Non-local students can experience cultural shock due to different teaching and learning styles, living conditions, and daily activities.

Appendix B: List of Internationalisation Activities

Curriculum

- + **Partnership programmes with other institutions:** To devise strategies to motivate students to participate in programmes or projects in order to enhance quality of relationships and/or communication between Hong Kong, Chinese Mainland and international students.
- + **Partnership programmes with other institutions:** To develop new partnership programmes with Chinese Mainland or overseas institutions that will enhance students' multicultural understanding.
- + **International project competitions:** To devise strategies to enhance students' global competency through engaging in international competitions.
- + **Global ambassador or leadership scheme/course:** To develop delegating strategies to assign students as global ambassadors or leaders to work towards assignments or tasks for formal curriculum programmes which promote multicultural harmony.
- + **Community Service Opportunities:** To develop strategies to enhance students' generic competencies of problem solving, communication and team work with others from different cultural backgrounds.
- + **Adaptable class management strategies:** To design and manage group work to facilitate meaningful interactions and engagement among students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- + **Internationalising design and content of subjects:** To internationalise the student learning experience.
- + To incorporate specific intercultural/international learning outcomes and assessment tasks into your subject/course and programme of study, and the learning activities as well as assessment tasks should be aligned with the intended learning outcomes.
- + To design and implement teaching and learning activities that successfully engage students from different cultural backgrounds together in the formal curriculum.
- + To develop collaborative international online learning to embed the concept of internationalisation in the formal curriculum programmes.
- + To develop online resource platform to support integration of local and non-local students.

Co-curriculum

- + **Pre-departure package preparatory scheme/model:** To develop support programmes to promote early intercultural encounters between in-bound and out-bound students and provide opportunities for structured critical reflection allowing students to deepen and consolidate what they have learnt while abroad.

- ✦ **Cross cultural mentoring** where Hong Kong, Chinese Mainland and international students work together as mentors and mentees on academic and/or non-academic projects.
- ✦ **International Living-Learning Communities & residential support:** To implement an internationally/interculturally-focused residence hall programme to bring students of different backgrounds together as roommates, housemates or hall-mates.
- ✦ **Excursions for local and non-local students:** Develop strategies to delegate students to take active role in designing and organising off campus excursions to assist other students to learn about HK and Chinese society, and organised in ways which encourage engagement in areas of common interest with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- ✦ **Community Service Opportunities** for local and non-local students: To provide students with community service opportunities in order to nurture their sense of global awareness, responsibility and engagement.
- ✦ To develop and test the impact of **language exchange / conversation partners** to facilitate interaction between local and non-local students, including Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland students, matching students by their shared interest in learning each other's language.
- ✦ To design and implement teaching and learning activities that successfully engage students from different cultural backgrounds together in the informal curriculum.
- ✦ To develop collaborative international online learning to embed the concept of internationalisation in the informal curriculum programmes.
- ✦ To develop online resource platform to support integration of local and non-local students.

Appendix C: Learning Outcomes on Internationalisation

Please find below examples of internationalisation learning outcomes (ability to):

- ✚ To be aware of one's own personal values, beliefs, and cultural identity.
- ✚ To enhance understanding through knowledge acquisition and meaningful contact with others from another culture.
- ✚ To show a serious interest in another country and cultures, as demonstrated by gaining knowledge of important aspects of geography, history, religions, race and culture. Scientists should conceive of themselves as artisans working for the public good, whose efforts are directed toward an ideal of well-ordered science.
- ✚ To learn to value diversity and to appreciate the achievements and contributions of other cultures and how they benefit society socio-culturally.
- ✚ To understand others from different cultures and appreciate interdependence, in a spirit of respect for values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace; promote social cohesion through the development of global citizenship, especially how your profession could contribute to global prosperity.
- ✚ To develop the knowledge of other cultures, with focus on the factors of global issues benefit or that affect multicultural/multinational business cooperation, especially in emerging markets or new international initiatives (e.g. The Belt and Road).
- ✚ To acquire positive attitudes towards ideas, issues, and people outside one's culture, including openness and a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, especially preparing to be a professional service/research provider in your discipline/subject.
- ✚ To be capable of comparing and contrasting differences and similarities among cultures and identifying strengths and positive features among them; and be accepting of other cultures, faiths and languages, and their right to express these freely.
- ✚ To develop relationships with others that reflect empathy, trust, acceptance, and respect for the culture.
- ✚ To acquire skills and dispositions to effectively integrate awareness, knowledge, and sensitivity to work with others in various professional and personal contexts.
- ✚ To work with people who define problems differently and use different communication approaches to solve those problem that will take place in different countries or multinational contexts, which may reflect different cultural preferences.
- ✚ To show willingness to engage in active reflection and work with others from different cultures by sharing ideas, thought and academic exchange.
- ✚ To develop communication skills including the mix of verbal, interpersonal and physical strategies needed to interact confidently and effectively with a range of audiences. A skillful communicator draws on a number of different means (e.g., graphical, visual, statistical, audio-visual and technological) to get the point across, acquire language skills, articulate differences in verbal / non-verbal communication and adjust one's speech to accommodate people from other cultures.

Appendix D: Pre-assignment Survey Form

A. Background Information

1. What is your ethnicity?
2. What is your most spoken language at the university?
3. What other languages do you speak at a simple or advanced conversational level?
4. Where did you complete most of your pre-university education (city)?

B. Survey Statements

Please indicate your response with a **circle** “O” along the scales in each statement.

1. I have **past experience** of interacting with people from other national or linguistic cultures than my own.

1	2	3	4	5
Not Much	Little	Somewhat	Much	A Great Deal

2. I am **aware** of possible **cultural differences** while interacting with people from other national or linguistic cultures.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I have **some understanding** of the customs of people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I **am able to communicate** with people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

5. If I am given a choice, I am **willing to work with** people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own in any **academic activities**.

1	2	3	4	5
Note at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

6. If I am given a choice, I am **willing to socialize (or have social conversations)** with people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

Appendix D: Post-assignment Survey Form

A. Background Information

1. What is your ethnicity?
2. What is your most spoken language at the university?
3. What other languages do you speak at a simple or advanced conversational level?
4. Where did you complete most of your pre-university education (city)?

B. Survey Statements

Please indicate your response with a **circle** “O” along the scales in each statement.

1. As a result of my experience(s) in this programme, I am **more aware** of possible **cultural or linguistic differences** while interacting with people from other cultures.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. As a result of my experience(s) in this programme, I have developed **more understanding** of the customs of people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. As a result of my experience(s) in this programme, I am **more able to communicate effectively** with people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

4. As a result of my experience(s) in this programme, I am **more willing to work with** people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own in any future **academic activities**.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

5. As a result of my experience(s) in this programme, I am **more willing to socialize (or have social conversations)** with people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds than my own.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	All the time

6. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of this programme in **improving** my **ability to interact** with others from different national or linguistic cultures.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied

7. **Good aspect(s)** of my experience in this programme is/are:

8. My experience could have been **improved** if this programme had the following features:
-

Appendix E: Focus Group Interview Form (with Students)

A. Introduction

[Your project]

B. Focus Questions

Expectations

1. What were your expectations with respect to interacting with people from other cultures and learning about other cultures when you started university?
2. To what extent were these expectations met/not met?

Experiences

Opportunities for inter-cultural interactions

1. How often did you interact with students from other cultures [Example] (a) in class and (b) out of class [Please provide specific examples of activities and what you gained from the experience.].

In what ways did you interact?

2. How satisfactory was this amount and type of interaction for you? And why?
3. What further opportunities to interact interculturally would you like (a) in class and (b) out of class? If nil, any reasons why you don't want to participate and what it might require to make you interested to do so.

Inclusion/ exclusion

4. Has there been a time when you have felt particularly included or excluded (by teachers or other students) for cultural reasons (a) in class and (b) out of class activities [In cases of exclusion, e.g. because of language – How have you dealt with this? How satisfactory was this solution? What would be your ideal solution?].

C. Ending Question

1. What, if any, provisions would you like the university to make to enhance interculturalism, in ways that would encourage you to participate:
 - provisions made by teachers or fellow students in class
 - out-of-class provisions made by student associations, halls of residence, university administrators, etc.

Appendix F: A Sample of Gantt Chart Template

Task	Description(s)	Stakeholders involved	Start Date	End Date	% Done	Work days	Month											
							1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Development of methodology																	
1.1	Desktop search on assessment approaches																	
1.2	Draft of methodology																	
1.3	Evaluation of methodology																	
2	Application of ethics approval (if needed)																	
3	Conducting pre-assessment																	
3.1	Data input and analysis																	
3.2	Draft of pre-assessment results																	
4	Implementation of action (by phases)																	
4.1	Phase 1																	
4.2	Phase 2																	
4.3	Phase 3																	
5	Conducting post-assessment																	
5.1	Data input and analysis																	
5.2	Draft of post-assessment results																	
6	Impact evaluation of action																	
7	Draft of report																	

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