

**Title:** "Virtual internationalisation" and the undergraduate curriculum in UK and overseas universities

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### Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Review internationalisation practice in their own institution, with a specific focus on innovative curriculum design
- Have a deeper understanding of EU Higher Education Policy and how it impacts on the UK system
- Understand the challenges and benefits of “virtual internationalisation” and “internationalisation at home”
- Have a better awareness of Web 2.0 based cost-effective, inclusive learning activities that can be open to all students, whatever their financial or social background
- Understand the possibilities for virtual co-validated modules run with international collaborative partners

### Session Outline

The challenge of offering an international university experience is proving to be an expensive and time-consuming business for many institutions of higher education. Some staff and students are simply unable to commit to travelling abroad for reasons such as inadequate finance, family commitments or health/disability issues (Crowther, Joris, Otten, Nilsson, Teekens & Wächter, 2000). The adoption of practices such as “internationalisation at home” or “virtual internationalisation” (Middlemas, 2014) can therefore offer institutions a viable alternative to expensive and lengthy overseas visits (European Commission, 2014).

This workshop will explore some alternative ways of ensuring that a university is able to work with international partners, in order to offer all its staff and students the possibility of an international experience at the home institution. Through the setting up of Web 2.0 based virtual, co-run and co-validated modules on its taught programmes, students can gain an excellent understanding of their discipline from an international perspective (Nichol, Hunter, & Yaseen, 2012).

These modules can be run with students studying in a range of related or unrelated subject areas, and students will gain an awareness of the challenges of working internationally (PICASA, 2014). As well as the core curriculum, additional topics related to employability and future professional practice can also be covered, such as:

- language and communication skills
- using different IT systems
- understanding local customs and ways of working
- working across different time zones
- planning and collaborating teamwork skills

For the staff involved, the modules offer an opportunity to work with international academic and research colleagues, which gives them an enhanced and up to date understanding of disciplinary developments in other countries (Austin & Soetanto, 2012; European Commission, 2014). Previous research at Roehampton has indicated that it is not enough to just raise awareness of these issues with colleagues. Academic staff need workable strategies to make changes to existing practice (Fullan, 1993).

The benefits and challenges of "virtual internationalisation" will be explored with a selection of recent case studies from UK and European universities who co-validate modules with universities in other countries. Implications for joint planning, quality assurance and institutional learning / teaching policies will be addressed (Middlemas & Shaw, 2009; Morris, 2014). Staff development resources from Roehampton's EU Tempus funded PICASA Project will also be made available to participants.

### Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

0-10	<b>Introduction</b> and welcome
10-25	<b>Presentation</b> - "Virtual internationalisation" and the undergraduate curriculum in UK and overseas universities. Three case studies of virtual internationalisation.
25-45	<b>Group activity:</b> Stakeholders, strategies and the status quo. What's the picture in your own institution?
45-60	<b>Feedback from groups</b> Who is responsible for "internationalisation"? Who can you work with as a staff developer?
60-75	<b>Presentation</b> – Implications for curriculum planning How can you offer internationalisation opportunities to students who are not able to travel abroad? How does "internationalisation" fit with other current themes such as e-learning or employability?
75-90	<b>Plenary with Q and A</b> – What can you recommend at your own institution? What are the staff training implications? What are the technical and organisational challenges?

### References

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