

Internationalisation of curriculum: Analysis of subjects within the Faculty of Arts and Education at a regional Australian university

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ABSTRACT

A regional university in Australia is dedicated to developing 21st-century graduates as global citizens. The curriculum is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in a globalised world. Assessing whether students are truly becoming ‘global citizens’ involves evaluating not just academic performance, but also intercultural competencies, global awareness, and adaptability. Immediate, tangible outcomes like job placements can take precedence over long-term goals like global readiness. There are many factors that hinder a comprehensive review of whether the curriculum is effectively preparing students to become global citizens. There has not been any systematic understanding of the research status of the internationalization of the curriculum (IoC). This paper reports on the experiences of academics and students regarding the internationalisation of the curriculum within the Faculty of Arts and Education (FoAE). A mixed-method approach was adopted over two years, involving surveys and one-on-one interviews with academics and students. Thematic analysis of the responses revealed both strengths and areas for improvement for integrating IoC in higher education institutions. While academics and students value an internationalised curriculum, it is inconsistently implemented across the curriculum and there is a need for universities to establish a clear framework or benchmark for evaluating the internationalisation of their curriculum to assess progress systematically. The study's findings offer valuable insights for enhancing the internationalisation of the curriculum and improving the effectiveness of academic staff in delivering globally relevant content. This could lead to a stronger institutional reputation, attract a more diverse and international student cohort, and has capability to positively impact the university's financial sustainability by aligning the curriculum with global education trends.

Keywords : Internationalisation of curriculum, curriculum design, intercultural competency, graduate attributes, global citizens

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the internationalisation of curriculum (IoC) in higher education has been around for decades, however over time, the focus has shifted just from recruiting international students, opening overseas campuses (Tight, 2022), outward mobility programs (Robson, 2015), to incorporating it as a central part of a university's mission (Clarke & Kirby, 2022). One of the outcomes of it has been the incorporation of graduate attributes by many universities that commit to developing 'global citizens'. Universities are committed to ensuring that their graduates not only possess the technical knowledge required for their disciplines but also have a broader understanding of global issues, diverse cultures, and ethical responsibilities. By embedding internationalisation into the curriculum, universities aim to prepare students for the challenges of working in global environments, engaging with international markets, and collaborating with diverse teams. This shift also reflects the growing importance placed on producing graduates who can navigate the complexities of globalisation, contribute to solving transnational problems, and take on leadership roles in multicultural settings. Internationalisation is increasingly becoming a hallmark of a quality education, enhancing the employability of graduates and aligning university programs with global expectations in higher education.

Developing students' skills to live and work effectively in a globalised world is now no more a question of a choice, but rather a necessity for the 21st century graduates (Fragouli, 2020). IoC, as a subset of the internationalisation concept is seen as a way to develop students' global mindsets and knowledge to become true global citizens (Robson, 2015). Previously, the internationalised student experience was largely associated with outward mobility programs, such as student exchange and study abroad opportunities. While these programs offer valuable exposure to different cultures and learning environments, their uptake has been limited, even when subsidised, due to financial constraints faced by many students and inability to move (Wu et al., 2021).

Arkoudis et al. (2012) propose a definition of internationalisation outcomes as "graduates who are globally aware, globally competent and able to work with culturally and linguistically diverse people either locally or anywhere in the world" (p. 10). The curriculum should therefore prepare students to effectively work in a globalised workforce (Talley, 2017). Appropriately designed curriculum, complemented with suitable teaching and learning methods, and assessments, will assist in achieving the learning outcomes and/or graduate attributes of international and intercultural competence (Robson, 2015). Thus, the curriculum design is central to support students becoming global citizens as it embeds the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for navigating and contributing to an increasingly interconnected world. It also helps students develop a sense of social responsibility and ethical awareness, preparing them to address complex global challenges such as sustainability, inequality, and human rights (Markwick, 2014). Moreover, a curriculum that promotes collaboration across cultures and disciplines enables students to build the communication and teamwork skills required in global contexts to address global justice and sustainability issues (O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2017).

Traditionally, the focus of internationalised curriculum has been on international students, however, Elkin et al. (2008) challenge it by proposing that an internationalised curriculum should be equally relevant to both, domestic and international students regardless of their physical location. This aligns with the concept of Internationalisation at Home (IaH) as a subset of IoC that aims to provide an

international experience to domestic students who don't go overseas to expand their horizons (Beelen & Jones, 2015). However, it is very vital for students to know how to navigate the different identities present within culturally diverse environments (Jaidev, 2014). By embedding global perspectives, intercultural competencies, and diverse learning opportunities within the curriculum, IoC ensures that domestic students also develop the necessary skills to engage with global issues and work in multicultural environments, even if they remain in their home country (Cai & Marangell, 2022). This approach not only benefits domestic students by expanding their worldviews but also enriches the learning environment for international students, creating a more inclusive and globally aware campus community (Pascarella et al., 2014).

The higher education institutions should be able to “identify, monitor, and evaluate internationalisation activities” (Arkoudis et al., 2012, p. 6). By evaluating how academics and students experience IoC, this research seeks to determine whether the curriculum adequately prepares students to engage with the globalised workforce and cultural diversity, aligning with broader national goals of fostering skills through IoC. The focus of this research paper is mainly on the academic rationale to improve the quality of education delivered and reports on the level of IoC experiences of academics and students within the Faculty of Arts and Education (FoAE) at a regional higher education institution in Australia. To fulfil the objectives of this research, the research questions (RQ) investigated are:

- RQ1 - What are the experiences of staff in relation to the internationalised curriculum, and how do they facilitate engagement within an internationalised classroom?
- RQ2 - What are the students' experience in relation to the internationalised curriculum, and how do they experience engagement with their diverse peers?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over 1.4 million local and international students choose to study in Australia's universities each year (Universities Australia, 2017). In the year-to-date May 2024, there were 810,960 international student enrolments in Australia. With the recent proposed cap on international student numbers imposed by the federal government of Australia, higher education institutions face restrictions on their intake. However, regional universities have benefitted from this policy shift, gaining opportunities to attract and support international students in a less competitive environment (ABC News, 2024). By focusing on internationalisation, these institutions can capitalise on the opportunity to attract and support international students as most of the students go back to their country (Universities Australia, 2023).

Zou et al. (2020) have identified that many academics struggle to understand IoC relevance to teaching practice and provided a comprehensive analysis of IoC conceptions, identifying five hierarchical categories and their associated attributes. It expands the current understanding of IoC by emphasising the critical role of self-exploration and identity development, particularly within the complex political landscape of Hong Kong. The research contributes to the literature by demonstrating how teachers' differing conceptions of IoC impact their teaching practices, such as the actual integration of IoC into the curriculum and the extent to which students are actively involved.

Recognising the educational value of internationalisation in higher education for both international and domestic students is crucial, yet its impact on teaching and learning environments is often inadequately explored. Ryan (2020) investigates the gap between theory and practice in the implementation of IoC from educators' perspectives and identifies a lack of engagement with IoC concepts. It proposes a Continuous Professional Learning model to enhance lecturer engagement to improve IoC implementation. Van den Hende et al. (2023) identified that existing IoC literature lacks a comprehensive, contextual approach to staff engagement and curriculum internationalisation within universities. The focus has primarily been on educational theories, neglecting organisational dynamics essential for transformative change. A broader understanding of influencing factors and mechanisms is necessary for successful implementation. The review, spanning 20 years, demonstrates the value of Pettigrew's framework (1990) and recent insights in examining curriculum internationalisation as an organisational change process. This paper contributes to both academic research and policy by outlining key considerations and offering a framework to guide future implementation efforts, aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

3. METHODS

This research employed a mixed methods approach, utilising the research questions and survey instruments developed by researchers at the University of Melbourne (see acknowledgement below), to provide a comprehensive understanding of the IoC within the FoAE at a regional university in Australia. The methodology integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to capture both broad trends and detailed personal insights. In 2022, ethics approval was granted (H22245) for implementing the project.

Initially, a structured survey was administered to both academics and students. There were two surveys conducted: one for the academics and another for students. The surveys were designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on various aspects of the internationalised curriculum, including perceptions, experiences, and engagement levels. The surveys included a range of closed-ended and open-ended questions and Likert scale items to quantify responses and identify patterns or trends in the data. Participation in the surveys was voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw at any point before submission. The academic survey included 30 questions, and the student survey included 9 questions. Both the surveys were administered through Qualtrics with appropriate skip logic established to guide respondents through the questions. The surveys were promoted through internal email alerts inviting academics to participate in the research project and requesting them to promote it to their students from September 2022 to July 2023. The researcher also reached out to individual academics within FoAE through personal connections and to the faculty leadership and administration team to promote the research project with the academics through the faculty communication channels. It was a combination of convenience and snowball sampling (Emerson, 2015). The quantitative data from the surveys were analysed using statistical methods to identify trends and correlations. The qualitative data analysed using Excel. All collected data was consolidated into a single Excel document for analysis.

3.1 Data collection and analysis

The data collected for this study is considered reliable due to several reasons. First, the survey was distributed to a well-defined and representative sample of respondents across multiple schools and academic levels within the faculty, ensuring diverse and comprehensive input. Second, incomplete responses were systematically excluded from the analysis, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the final dataset. Third, the survey questions were designed to capture relevant information clearly and consistently, reducing the likelihood of response bias. Finally, the data collection process followed established protocols, ensuring that responses were recorded accurately and without discrepancies. Together, these measures ensured that the data collected provides a reliable foundation for further analysis and insight into the IoC.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Academic staff responses

The academic staff survey received a total of 40 responses and on closer inspection it was observed that only 23 were deemed complete. Therefore, only the complete responses were used in the final analysis and the rest of the responses were discarded. The data collected via the survey was grouped into four categories: background information, teaching, research, and engagement. The background information captured from the respondents included identifying the school within the faculty the academics were teaching, academic levels, proficiency in languages other than English, whether they received any of their qualifications overseas, and whether the academics held a teaching or research position at an overseas institution. This information is presented below.

4.1.1 Diversity of schools and disciplines within FoAE

The staff were spread in a range of schools within FoAE with the highest responses from the School of Education (n=10), followed by the School of Social Work (n=5), School of Communication and Information Studies and the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (n=3 each), and the School of Theology and Other (Division of Learning and Teaching) (n= 1 each) as shown in Figure 1. The distribution of staff across a range of schools within the FoAE reflects the varied disciplinary backgrounds of academics. With the majority of respondents from the School of Education, this diversity indicate that the internationalisation of the curriculum may be approached differently across fields such as Education, Social Work, Communication, and Theology. This suggests that different disciplines may have varying degrees of exposure to global perspectives, which could affect how they integrate international content into their teaching and facilitate engagement with international students.

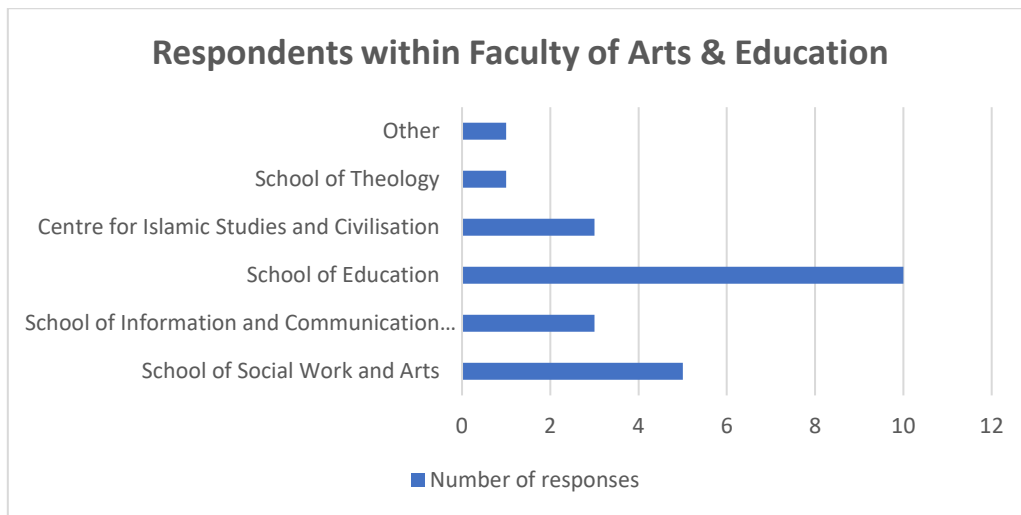


Figure 1. Diversity of schools and disciplines within FoAE

4.1.2 Academic levels and expertise

Next the academic levels, with n=8 academics teaching at lecturer level (level B), n=6 at senior lecturer level (Level C), n=4 each at associate lecturer level (Levels A) and associate professor level (level D), and n=1 at professor level (Level E) as shown in Figure 2. The distribution of staff across academic levels (from associate lecturers to professors) indicates a diverse range of teaching and research experience. Academics at different levels may contribute to the internationalised curriculum in distinct ways, with senior lecturers and professors potentially having more opportunities to influence curriculum design and policy. Their level of experience may also affect their ability to engage with international students, bringing in different perspectives and teaching strategies that foster global awareness.

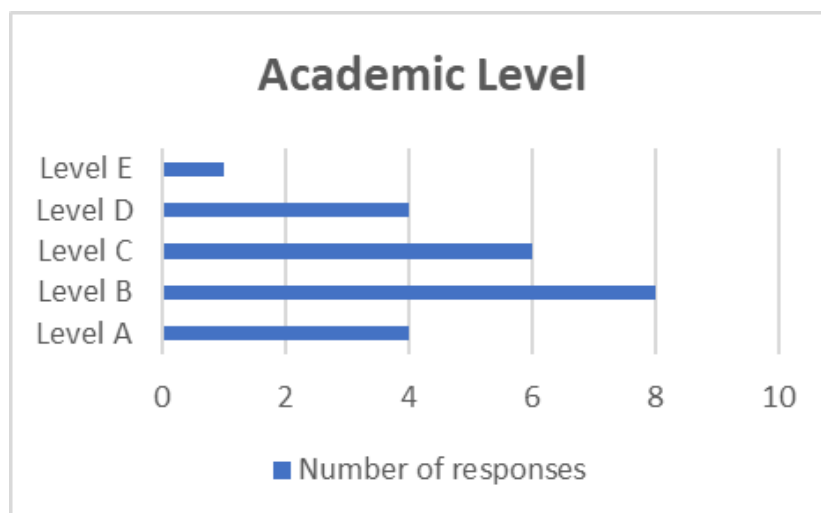


Figure 2. Academic levels of staff responding to the survey

4.1.3 Proficiency in languages other than English

In response to the proficiency in languages other than English question, n=4 academic staff nominated proficiency in 1 language other than English and only n=1 staff member responded to having proficiency in 2 languages, n=18 respondents nominated nil, see Figure 3. Only a small number of academics reported proficiency in languages other than English (n=5). This indicates that while some staff may have the linguistic skills to directly engage with students from diverse backgrounds, the majority may rely on English as the primary medium for internationalisation. Language proficiency can be an asset in creating an inclusive internationalised classroom, where students from non-English-speaking backgrounds feel more comfortable. However, the data suggests that most staff may need to use other strategies to support international students and facilitate global engagement.

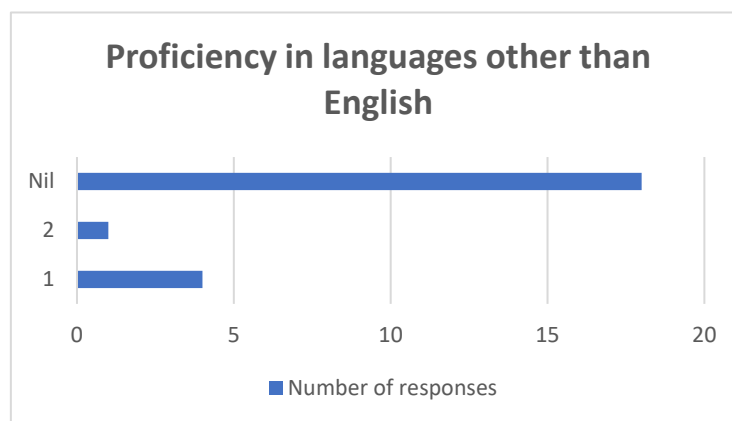


Figure 3. Proficiency in languages other than English

4.1.4 Qualifications and experience gained overseas

The spread of academic staff qualified overseas reflected that majority of the staff did not hold any qualification from overseas (n=18), while rest of the categories had (n=1 each) response as shown in Figure 4. A significant portion of the staff (n=18) did not hold qualifications from overseas, suggesting that many staff members may not have first-hand experience with international education systems. However, the few who do hold such qualifications can provide valuable insights into integrating global perspectives within the curriculum and relating to the experiences of international students. Similarly, only n=3 staff members had teaching or research experience overseas, which could limit the overall exposure of faculty members to international academic environments. Those with such experience are likely more adept at bringing global insights into their teaching, which helps in fostering an internationalised curriculum.

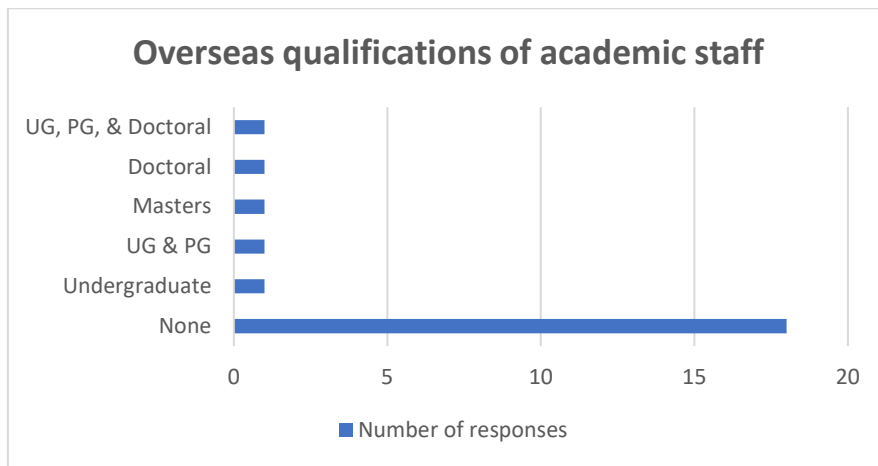


Figure 4. Overseas qualifications of academic staff

4.1.5 Collaborative research and grants involving overseas partners

In regard to the experience of teaching or conducting research overseas, only $n=3$ academic staff responded yes, and rest of the responses were no ($n=20$) as shown in Figure 5. While most respondents had not engaged in collaborative research with overseas colleagues ($n=10$ responded no), a notable portion ($n=13$) had. This suggests that some faculty members are actively engaged in international research partnerships, which can enrich the curriculum with global perspectives and enhance student engagement through real-world international case studies. Similarly, while most respondents had not applied for international grants ($n=18$), those who had ($n=5$) are likely contributing to a more internationalised curriculum by bringing in global research topics and collaborations into their teaching.

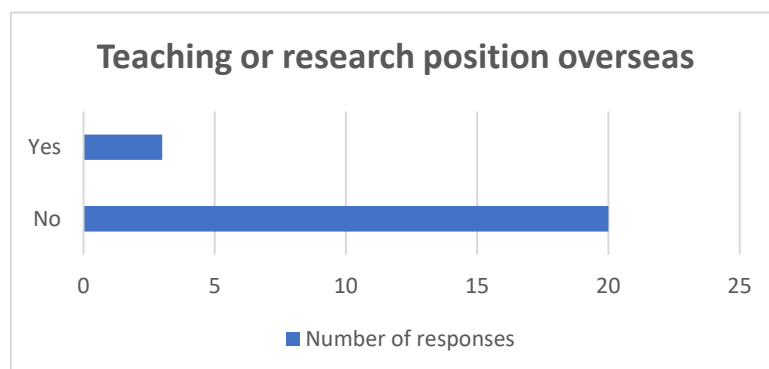


Figure 5. Teaching or research position in an overseas university

4.1.6 International Teaching and Research Opportunities

Similarly, in response to the questions whether academics had held visiting scholarship overseas and whether they had taken part in any collaborative research projects with colleagues from overseas, majority responded 'no' with $n=19$ and $n=10$ respectively, and for the second question $n=4$ and $n=13$ responded 'yes' respectively. And whether they had applied for grants that involved overseas partner

institutions, n=18 responded no and n=5 responded yes as shown in Figure 6. The fact that a majority of staff have not held overseas teaching or research positions may indicate that international experience is not widespread among faculty members. However, those who have engaged in such roles may serve as champions of internationalisation within the faculty, sharing their experiences and influencing the curriculum to better prepare students for a global workforce.

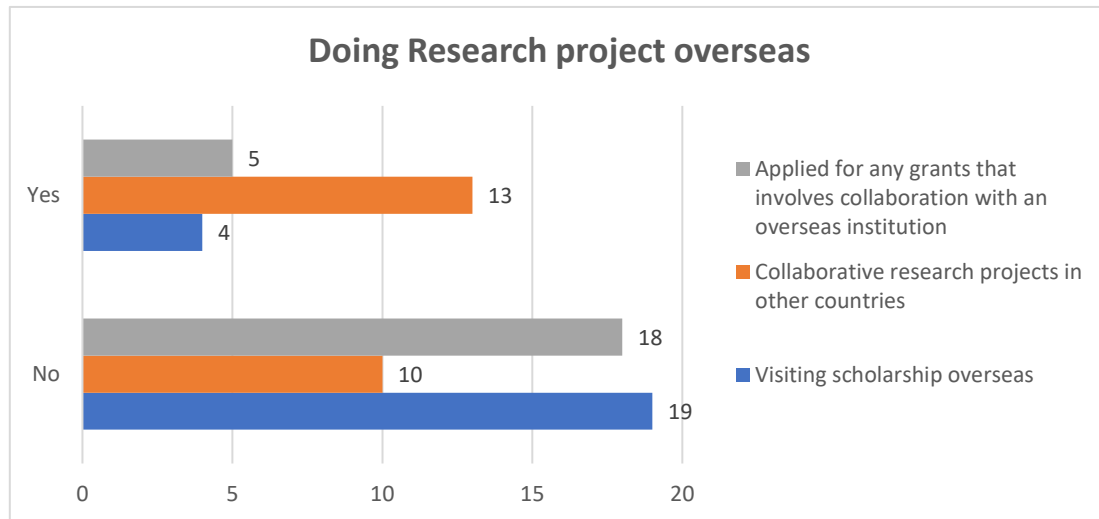


Figure 6. Conducted research projects overseas and participated in collaborative research projects with colleagues from overseas

In conclusion, the data highlights a mix of experiences among staff regarding international engagement, which can influence how they contribute to the internationalised curriculum. Academics with overseas qualifications, multilingual proficiency, or international teaching/research experience are likely to bring valuable perspectives that facilitate engagement in an internationalised classroom, while the lack of widespread international experience may suggest areas for further development, such as professional development opportunities aimed at enhancing global competencies among staff.

4.2 Student responses

A total of 77 responses were received from the student survey, with 53 deemed complete and used for further analysis. Incomplete responses were excluded to ensure data quality and reliability. The data collected captured key information, including the distribution of students across different schools within the faculty, their level of study, home country, and their perceptions of teaching experiences. This data was crucial for understanding how internationalisation was experienced by students. By examining the distribution of students and their diverse backgrounds, as this helped us assess whether the curriculum fosters an inclusive and globally aware learning environment. Additionally, the insights into students' perceptions of their teaching experiences help gauge how well the curriculum prepares them for engagement in a globalised workforce and culturally diverse settings. This contributes to answering the central question of how internationalisation is embedded in the curriculum and whether it meets the needs of both domestic and international students.

The demographic data collected offered valuable insights into students' experiences with the internationalised curriculum and their engagement with diverse peers.

4.2.1 Representation Across Schools

The student distribution across the various schools within the faculty was as follows: highest number of responses were received from the School of Social Work and Arts (n= 52), followed by the School of Education (n=14), School of Theology (n= 2), and from the School of Indigenous Australian Studies and the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (n=1 each), finally, responses were received from Other schools (n= 4), see Figure 7 below. The subsequent survey question only identified one other school as the School of Indigenous Health and Midwifery.

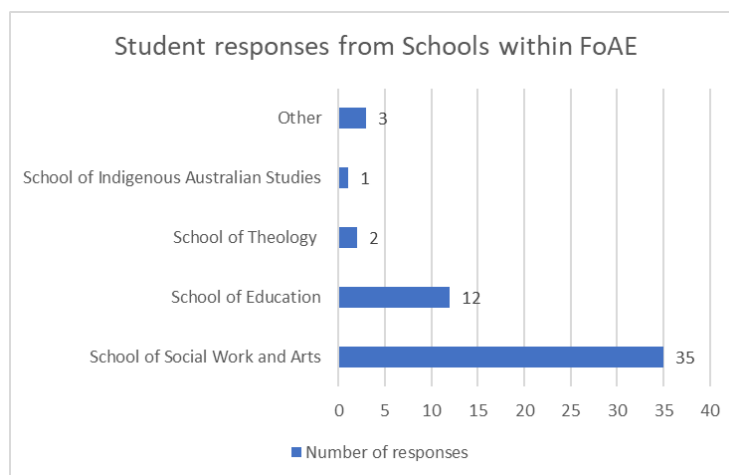


Figure 7. Student responses across the Schools within the Faculty of Arts and Education

4.2.2 Varied Levels of Study

The level of study of respondents was quite varied from commencing students to the ones who had already completed their graduation as shown in Figure 8. Majority of the responses came from students in their final year and session of study (6 – n=11), followed by commencing students year 1, session 1 (1 – n=9), year 2, session 1 (3 – n=9), year 2, session2 (4 – n=8), year 1, session2 (2 – n=7), year 3, session 1 (5 – n=6), and from students who had already completed their degree (n=3) responses.

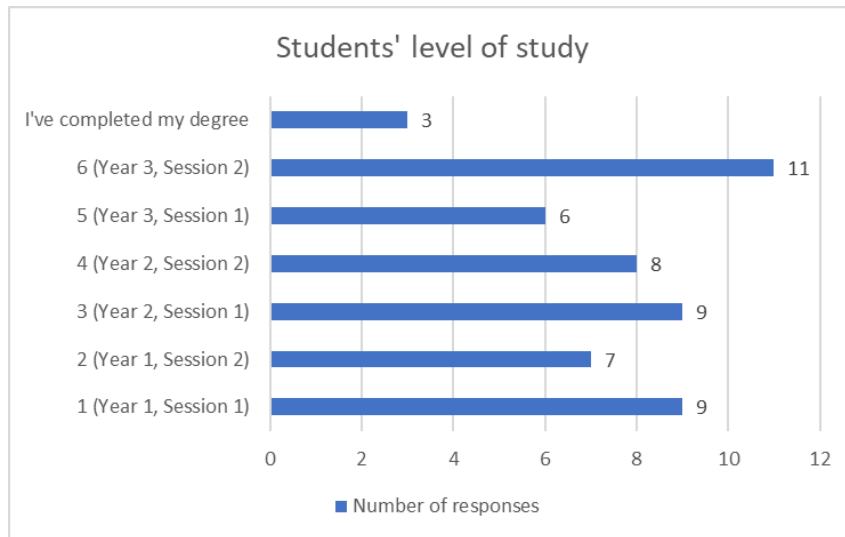


Figure 8. Students' level of study

4.2.3 Cultural and geographic diversity

Students' country of origin can be seen in Figure 9 below with majority of the students being domestic (n=46), overseas students came from India (n=2), from the UK and Pakistan (n= 1 each), and 'other' (n= 3). The subsequent question had students identifying their country of origin as Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands. Information on students' countries of origin helped gauge the extent of cultural and geographic diversity within the student body. By understanding the proportion of domestic versus international students, and the specific countries represented, it helped to assess how well the curriculum addresses the needs and perspectives of students from different backgrounds. This also provided insight into how effectively the curriculum fosters engagement and interaction among students from diverse cultural and geographic contexts.

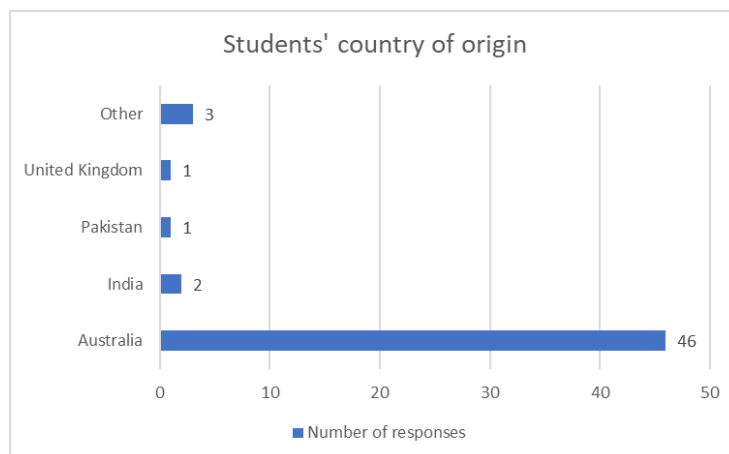


Figure 9. Students' country of origin

4.3 Analysis of Findings in Relation to Internationalisation of Curriculum – Staff Survey responses

To understand RQ1 staff feedback was required on their approach to curriculum design and teaching and learning activities. This was assessed through survey questions using a Likert scale with 1- strongly disagree, to 10- strongly agree, and they had the option of choosing ‘Not applicable’ or making a comment. Their responses are presented in the Figure 10. The responses are themed around curriculum development, expectations explained, benefits explained, peer-to-peer (P2P) collaboration, value of international peers, engage with community, and T and L activities.

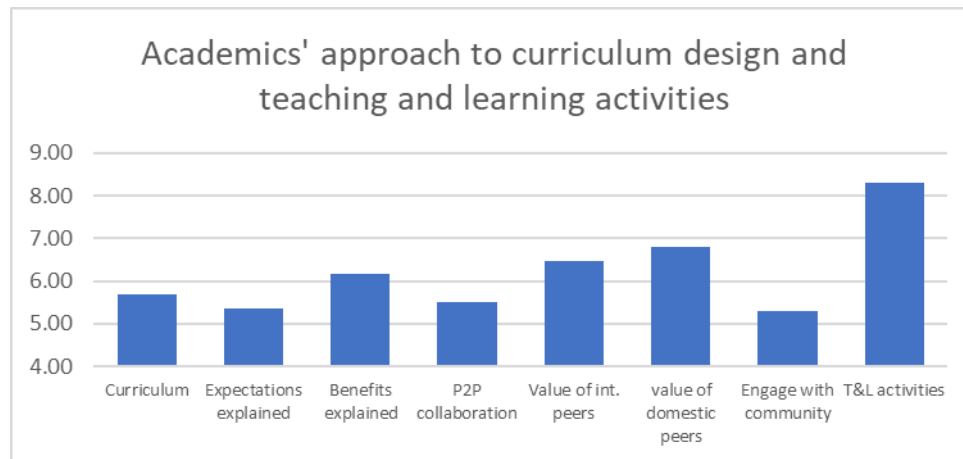


Figure 10. Academics’ approach to curriculum design and teaching and learning activities in their subjects

The bar chart in Figure 10 provides a detailed view of academics’ approaches to curriculum design and teaching and learning activities. When contextualised within the IoC, particularly within the FoAE at a Regional Australian university, several insights emerge. Internationalisation involves preparing students for a globalised world by embedding global perspectives, fostering intercultural competence, and facilitating the inclusion of international dimensions within the curriculum. The staff survey findings suggest the following points.

Academics expressed average satisfaction with four areas: Curriculum design and development (Mean: 5.70), Expectations explained (Mean: 5.36), P2P collaboration (Mean: 5.5), and Engagement with community (Mean: 5.31). This represents opportunities for improvement to enhance curriculum design, be explicit about the expectations, ensure deliberate and meaningful peer interactions and community engagement.

Academics expressed moderate satisfaction with three areas: Benefits explained (Mean: 6.17), Value of domestic peers (Mean: 6.81), and international peers (Mean: 6.47). They could further enhance it by emphasising how engaging with a globally oriented curriculum benefits students, such as enhanced employability skills, through interaction with international peers as well as peers from diverse backgrounds.

Academics expressed highest satisfaction with their Teaching & Learning (T&L) activities (Mean: 8.32) as they engage students through innovative and interactive teaching methods.

4.4 Analysis of Students' Experience of Teaching and Learning (T&L) Activities Related to Internationalisation of Curriculum

The bar chart in Figure 11 shows students' responses to a survey regarding their experience of teaching and learning (T&L) activities within their subjects answering RQ2. Majority of the students' responses to their eight questions also stayed close to the average. These responses can be examined through the lens of IoC, particularly how well international and intercultural perspectives are integrated into students' learning experiences. Below is an analysis of the key findings and their relation to IoC.

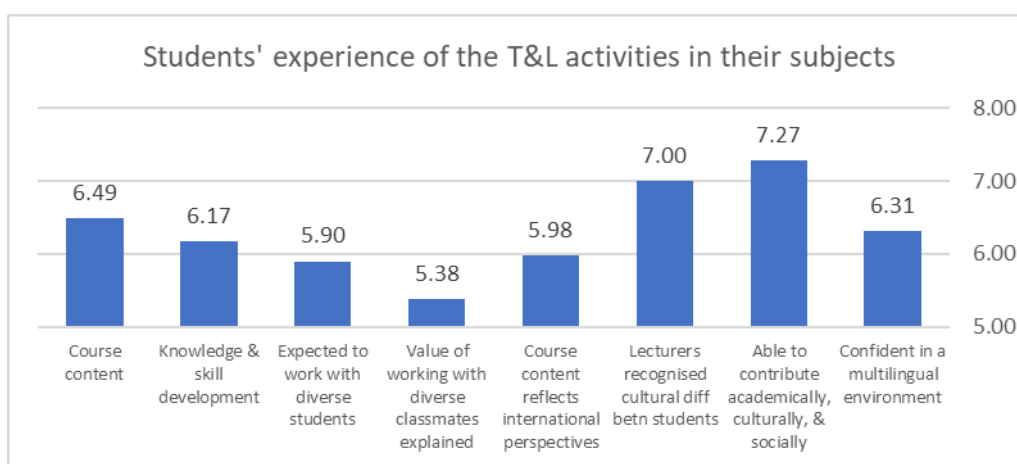


Figure 11. Students' experience of the T&L activities in their subjects

The quantitative analysis of T&L activities reveal that students are moderately satisfied with three areas: Course content (Mean: 6.49), Knowledge and skill development (Mean: 6.17), and Confidence in a multilingual environment (Mean: 6.31). This indicates room for improvement through embedding global perspectives and intercultural dimensions into course materials allowing students to develop skills such as critical thinking and enhance exposure to multilingual environments.

Their satisfaction is average with three areas: Work with diverse peers (Mean: 5.90), Value of working with diverse classmates explained (Mean: 5.38), and Course content reflecting international perspectives (Mean: 5.98). To further enhance these factors, academics could ensure that students understand the value of working with diverse peers and create meaningful engagement opportunities by integrating diverse perspectives beyond English speaking countries.

Students expressed highest satisfaction with two areas: Lecturers recognised for acknowledging cultural differences (Mean: 7.00), and being able to contribute academically, culturally, and socially (Mean: 7.27). This reflects an inclusive learning environment that could be further enhanced by creating safe spaces for cultural self-expression of students.

4.5 Findings – Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis of academics' interviews helped to gain deeper insights into the experiences of academics with internationalisation of curriculum and make more sense of the quantitative data. This resulted in two key themes as discussed below.

4.5.1 Academics' feedback

Curriculum design. Academics valued an internationalised curriculum and suggested that the primary focus of curriculum design should shift from an add-on approach to a more infusion approach (Clarke & Kirby, 2022) to influence the design of course content, assessments, and teaching and learning activities and ensure consistency across subjects within a course. This highlights a deeper insight into the quantitative data analysis that reflects only medium level of satisfaction of *academics* with curriculum design and development. Arkoudis et al. (2012) recommend that there should be focus on “assessments to align curriculum design with learning outcomes” (p. 10).

Professional development. Professional development emerged as the second key theme from academics' interviews. All the academics interviewed concurred with the need for professional development to successfully deliver an internationalised curriculum. They expressed confusion and concern around what a successful internationalised classroom looked like. Some academics focused on IoC only around international students and in their absence did not see its relevance in their teaching. Academics often lacked awareness and understanding of IoC concepts, leading to uncertainty about implementation strategies. This contrasts with academics' satisfaction with their T&L strategies as per the quantitative data and provides an insight into how it could be further enhanced. Some academics even asked for structured support mechanisms, including professional development (Clarke & Kirby, 2022), mentoring, and communities of practice focused on IoC within the university to develop their skills.

4.6 Students feedback

Similarly, the thematic analysis of student interviews resulted in two key themes as follows.

Course content. Students placed high value on an internationalised curriculum and highlighted the need for courses to incorporate current content reflective of diverse perspectives, beyond English speaking countries (Jones & De Wit, 2012) as the global perspectives embedded in some of their subjects still came from English speaking countries like Canada and the United Kingdom. This insight provides a better understanding of the quantitative data finding showing students' average satisfaction with the course content. They also stressed for authentic assessments that are aligned to their future workplaces and allow flexibility to align their learning with their personal interests, diversity in the teaching and learning activities where the academics can bring alternative perspectives and foster engagement through debates, and co-curricular activities.

Intercultural competency. Students valued the need for fostering intercultural competence to prepare to work in a globalised workforce (Clarke & Kirby, 2022). This provides an insight into the quantitative data reflecting students' moderate satisfaction with 'confidence with multilingual environment'. Considering that the majority of the responses received were from Australian domestic students (n=46, 87%), and majority of the respondents coming from English speaking countries (n=48, 91%), it is interesting to see the value they place on working with peers from non-English speaking background (NESB) to foster intercultural competency to work in a globalised workforce further highlighting the need for supporting the agenda of IaH (Beelen & Jones, 2015).

4.6.1 Challenges faced by online students

A common theme emerged for both, academics and students, the challenge of integrating online students. From academics' point of view, it was challenging to ensure the successful implementation of IoC concepts and ensure meaningful interaction between students in online classes as the attendance and participation of students was erratic. This also aligns with their average satisfaction with the peer-to-peer interaction as per the quantitative data analysis.

For students', they missed the opportunity of working with peers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds reflecting a prevailing sense of missed opportunities and homogeneity within their learning environments. Most notably, there's a prevailing sense of minimal diversity in teaching practices, particularly impacting online students who find limited engagement opportunities and sparse participation in discussion forums. Despite some academics coming from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds offering different perspectives, their influence was generally perceived as limited. This aligns with students' average satisfaction of working with peers from diverse backgrounds.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that while there is recognition of the value of an internationalised curriculum, international peers, and teaching and learning activities are robust, there are several areas for improvement in fully embedding internationalisation across the curriculum. Key points include:

5.1 Curriculum design

While students feel that some international perspectives are reflected in their courses, this area could be significantly strengthened. These findings present an opportunity for the faculty leadership to revisit and develop a strategy for IoC in the courses as suggested by Fragouli (2020). By improving the curriculum design processes the faculty will be able to better align with the graduate attribute of developing global citizens. This is likely to improve the profile and attractiveness of the courses offered, improving employment outcomes for students, and potentially attracting more international and diverse student cohorts to the university (Van den Hende & Reizebos, 2023) and better staff (Tight, 2022). By integrating global perspectives and diverse viewpoints, the university can prepare students to navigate and succeed in an increasingly interconnected world. This not only benefits

students academically but also equips them with the intercultural competencies necessary for personal and professional growth in a globalised society.

5.2 International and intercultural collaboration to foster intercultural competence

There is a clear opportunity to enhance peer-to-peer collaboration, particularly by encouraging domestic and international students and/or students from diverse backgrounds to work together, allowing for greater exchange of cultural perspectives helping students to develop the skills to work with people from varied cultural backgrounds. Academics can explicitly discuss the importance of internationalised content, diversity in group work, explaining how it leads to richer learning experiences and better prepares students for the diversity of the global workforce. Experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, service-learning projects, and collaborations with global and multicultural organisations, can enhance intercultural competence while connecting students to both local and global communities. Additionally, confidence in multilingual environments can be strengthened through language workshops, peer-sharing of language skills, and spaces that celebrate multilingual interactions. These initiatives, alongside reflective tasks and assessments focusing on intercultural communication, will equip students to navigate diverse environments academically and professionally.

5.3 Course content

To ensure a truly internationalised curriculum, course content must incorporate diverse perspectives, particularly from non-English-speaking countries, by integrating examples, case studies, and research from various regions, with a focus on underrepresented areas. Highlighting local innovations, indigenous knowledge, and unique socio-cultural contexts provides a comprehensive understanding of global challenges. Utilising literature and resources from non-English-speaking scholars, alongside translated works, preserves authenticity and broadens perspectives. Incorporating non-traditional media enriches the learning experience, while assignments that offer the opportunity to analyse global issues encourage critical thinking. Interdisciplinary connections across subjects like economics, science, and the arts help students understand complex issues from multiple angles. Real-world applications, such as collaborations with international institutions, bring practical insights into the classroom. Dynamic, regularly updated content ensures relevance, and leveraging digital tools enhances the learning experience, preparing students for a globalised workforce with the necessary knowledge, skills, and intercultural competencies.

5.4 Professional development of academics

The findings underscore the critical need for universities to invest significantly in the professional development of their academic staff to effectively design and deliver internationalised courses, as highlighted by Ryan (2020). This can be achieved through the establishment of communities of practice, which foster collaborative learning and sharing of best practices among academics. Additionally, providing industry benchmarks, exemplars and a range of resources can serve as valuable guides for academics. Implementing incentive schemes could help to motivate and support

academics in expanding their teaching and research activities to international institutions. Such initiatives not only enhance the quality of education but also ensure that academics are well-equipped to contribute to a globalised academic environment, ultimately benefiting students and the broader educational community.

5.5 Address challenges faced by online students

Online students face several challenges when engaging with an internationalised curriculum, primarily due to the lack of meaningful interaction with peers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which hinders the development of intercultural competencies and global awareness. Erratic attendance and participation patterns further complicate consistent engagement and collaboration. Additionally, the minimal diversity in teaching practices tailored for online students limits the influence of academics from CALD backgrounds. Online students often miss out on experiential learning opportunities and cultural exchanges more easily facilitated in-person, and sparse participation in discussion forums reduces the richness of the learning experience. These challenges highlight the need for intentional strategies to integrate online students into the internationalisation process, such as designing interactive and inclusive online teaching practices, facilitating cross-cultural virtual collaborations, and creating digital spaces for active engagement with diverse peers. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure online students benefit equally from an internationalised curriculum.

5.6 Limitations

The aim of internationalisation impacts various functions within a university; however, this study has only focussed on the curriculum and teaching and learning activities, therefore, the findings may be limited in achieving the larger goal of internationalisation.

The authors acknowledge that the study was limited within the schools in the Faculty of Arts and Education using the research questions, survey and interview questions approved by the University of Melbourne Ethics committee. The analysis presented in this paper is based on a limited number of survey responses and interviews and therefore may result in skewed findings. Therefore, a future larger study to possibly include all the faculties within the university could help to strengthen the findings of this study.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The higher education institutions have long acknowledged the value of an internationalised curriculum and committed to developing global citizens as one of their key graduate attributes. However, the implementation of it appears to be patchy and uncoordinated. The purpose of this study was to identify how well the subjects within the FoAE at an Australian regional university were delivering an internationalised curriculum, and whether there were any gaps, if so, to identify the areas to strengthen to improve the implementation of IoC. As a result, these have been identified, in

the order of priority, as curriculum design, professional development of academic staff, facilitating the intercultural competency of students and addressing the challenges faced by distance and online students.

The findings also highlight the importance of reiterating the importance of the IoC concepts away from the presence of international students or limited to overseas study travels. The importance that students place on developing skills to work in a globalised workforce further underscores this purpose. Thus, by refocusing on IoC in every classroom and leveraging the diversity in the (multicultural) classrooms, academics could bring diverse perspectives in their subject content, assessments, readings, T&L activities, and encourage intercultural peer interactions.

The findings of this study would be valued by academics, students, and educational institutions. Academics would benefit by understanding the need of systematically integrating IoC when designing new courses or revising existing ones as well as in the planning their T&L activities. Students already place a high value on being ready to work in a globalised workforce and would value opportunities to experience an internationalised curriculum that helps them to develop their skills and knowledge, intercultural competence, and confidence before joining the workforce. For educational institutions, the importance of investing in the professional development of academics in designing and delivering internationalised courses is crucial. Also, carefully designed and delivered internationalised courses is expected to improve employment outcomes for students and bound to have an impact on the reputation of the institution and potentially attracting higher number of international and diverse students impacting the financial bottom line.

The study can offer the following recommendations for enhancing IoC

- **Internationalise the curriculum:** It is crucial to design courses that focus on internationalising the curriculum at the core rather than being an afterthought. Thus, it will impact every facet of a course from content to assessments and teaching and learning activities. Generative AI can be leveraged to create virtual simulations or role-playing scenarios where students explore global issues through the lens of different cultures and regions.
- **Promote peer interaction among students from diverse backgrounds:** Design learning activities that facilitate more interaction between domestic and international students and/or students from diverse backgrounds to encourage the sharing of global perspectives and development of intercultural competence. Create partnerships with local and international organisations to offer students practical experiences that bridge global theory with local practice. This could include exploring the use of digital tools for global collaboration such as virtual exchange programs or cross-institutional projects.
- **Address challenges of online students:** Implement intentional strategies to enhance the learning experiences of online students to work effectively in a globalised world. This could be achieved through groupwork, online discussions, as well as through the use of Generative AI to offer meaningful learning experiences that could be missed due to the challenges of online learning.
- **Professional development of academics:** Enhance the capacity of faculty to design and deliver internationalised courses through internal training programs as well as opportunities to extend teaching and research activities to international institutions.

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