

## **Staff perspectives on the connection between internationalisation and inclusiveness in a UK university**

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### **Abstract**

Institutional internationalisation agendas underpin the recruitment and presence of staff and students from diverse nationalities on university campuses. However, the extent to which inclusive learning pedagogies are fostered on internationalised campuses is less understood. In this session, we discuss preliminary findings of our ongoing mixed-methods research project that examines staff perspectives on connections between cultural inclusion and normative manifestations of internationalisation as facilitating diversity on campuses.

For the research, we collected data at three stages. Stage one involved a scoping exercise to navigate the terrain of the study's context. This revealed sparse references to inclusion in internationalisation-related university documents. Stage two involved using an online survey, which was completed by 127 staff from all 21 Schools across the University. Further demonstrating engagement with the project, 28 survey respondents indicated interest to participate in follow-up interviews for the third stage of data collection. Purposeful sampling and snowballing helped further to expand the range of participants across varying disciplines, including the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering, medicine and veterinary medicine. For this third stage, the research team organised 26 individual interviews and 5 focus groups (3 – 5 participants). The research design provided a rich tapestry of viewpoints on how teachers perceive and navigate their roles working with culturally diverse individuals in internationalised classrooms. Emerging findings reveal differing perceptions on the intersection of inclusiveness and internationalisation in policy and practice.

The considerations of interactions within internationalised spaces link our research to Dr. Hlengwa's think-piece on intra-academic power dynamics in a South African mentorship programme. Hlengwa contextualizes mentorship relationships with internationalisation alongside higher education institutions' and senior academics' self-interests in preserving institutional status quo. While the UK is not a settler colonial context and does not have the same dichotomy of 'historically black' and 'historically white' higher education institutions, we can take a lens similar to Hlengwa and apply it to the cultural and power relationships that may manifest for academic teaching staff in an internationalised university.

Our research makes a contribution in two main ways. First, our scoping work highlight the gap created by treating internationalisation and inclusion as unrelated initiatives. This points to the need to embed inclusivity into the development of internationalisation strategies. Second, academic staff insights reveal the support needed for working in internationalised universities. This informs our recommendations on developing initiatives to ensure that internationalisation does not merely represent diversity, but how diversity endears inclusivity in internationalised universities.

### **Keywords**

Internationalisation, inclusion, inclusive practice, inclusive pedagogy