

## UNIVERSITY LEARNING & TEACHING AWARD HOLDERS PROFILE

### [Marina Mozzon-McPherson](#)

#### [Modern Languages, , Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences](#)

Internationalisation is an integral part of the University of Hull strategic plan and is increasingly part of academic discourse. However, embedding internationalisation policies into the academic practices of an institution requires a strategic, staged approach which permeates processes and structures but, above all, shapes the way in which the curriculum is conceptualised, designed and delivered.

Led by Marina in collaboration with colleagues in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Sports Science, this pilot project has tried to map students and staff perceptions in relation to internationalisation, and address a gap in the literature on internationalisation of the curriculum (Caruana 2004).

It is the case that some HE disciplines (e.g. business, law, politics) have an obvious international relevance and their curricula can be readily developed accordingly. In other disciplines, such as the sciences, it is often less obvious to students that they could potentially be preparing themselves for a career in a multinational company. Consequently, the internationalisation of the curriculum may be more of a challenge.

Recent CBI data emphasises the reliance of UK trade on exports to countries where English is not the first language and the need for active knowledge of one, or more, foreign languages and competence in intercultural skills as key to future graduate profiles in STEM subjects.

This Innovations in Student Learning funded project involved a survey of first year students in all four science subjects (total returns 120) and looked at previous language learning, experience, and perception of how international is their discipline (e.g. in relation to job opportunities, career profiles and requirements). It tested knowledge of existing opportunities within the University (e.g. the free elective Passport Programme) and examined how supported and/or encouraged students feel in taking advantage of these opportunities. Finally we proposed a range of flexible models which could be considered for the development of an integrated module on language and intercultural competence for scientists. The preliminary findings are very encouraging. Students are positive towards the opportunity to add an additional set of skills which can enhance their degrees and potential for mobility. The great majority aspire to work in multinational companies or abroad. Amongst the students who were less inclined to work abroad, anxiety about language use, the lack of sufficient language competence and the resultant lack of confidence, were revealed as major barriers.

In the course of the second phase of our project (2009-10) we intend to extend our research to second year and finalists. We shall also include a staff survey following a small pilot with biology staff.

[www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/skills\\_report0408.pdf](http://www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/skills_report0408.pdf) CBI Report Taking Stock: CBI education and skills survey 2008 :  
[www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/skills\\_report0408.pdf](http://www.cbi.org.uk/pdf/skills_report0408.pdf)

**Keywords:** [internationalisation of the curriculum, intercultural](#)