International Entrepreneurship Education:
postgraduate business students experiences of Entrepreneurship Education

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Objectives
The study aims to enhance understanding of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in meeting the expectations and motivations of international postgraduate students participating in UK business & management education. Specifically, it explores within sample groups of learners:

RQ1.   What is the typical profile of the international students' prior education and work experience?
RQ2.   What do students expect from studying an entrepreneurship PG course in the UK?
RQ3.   What are their experiences of, and learning outcomes from, the entrepreneurship course?
RQ4.   What benefits regarding their skills and knowledge do they perceive result from participation?

Prior Work
International Postgraduate education has grown substantially in the last decade (UUK, 2010). There has been significant growth in international postgraduate student participation in UK business related subjects, involving both MBA and other Masters' programmes such as MSc in Management and a range of specialist awards, which increasingly offer Entrepreneurship as a core or option. Prior research focuses on transnational comparisons between France, Germany and Poland (Packham et al, 2010) USA, Spain and China (Pruett et al, 2009) Africa and Europe (Davey et al, 2011) China (Millman et al, 2010) and Poland (Jones, et al, 2011) with relatively little research specifically addressing entrepreneurship for international students on postgraduate courses in the UK (Hall and Sung, 2009, Liu, 2010).

Approach
This article originates in the authors' experiences in running postgraduate entrepreneurship modules for international students in UK Business Schools. They found that students often experienced concerns about a 'mismatch' between their expectations of UK business and management education and their actual experiences, with experiences of cultural tensions between prior learning experiences and their acculturation to the requirements and norms of UK business education. The study is a microcosm of a wider issue as these concerns are shared more generally by international Postgraduate students.

Results
The results confirmed that career development was a major motivator for international study in the UK. Interest in entrepreneurship is increasing but there are tensions between the expectations of the postgraduate experience and the experienced reality. Entrepreneurship was in some cases seen as a distinctive 'peak experience', but cultural factors, learning effectiveness and linguistic capability need to be addressed in designing learning programmes.

Implications
The study contributes new evidence and ideas to the debate on entrepreneurship education in meeting the career expectations and motivations of international postgraduate students participating in entrepreneurship education, especially in the light of new curricular guidance (QAA, 2012) and UK government regulation.

Value
It offers suggestions for educators on the effective design and delivery of entrepreneurship for international students in the rapidly changing and competitive postgraduate market.

Keywords
Entrepreneurship, Higher education, enterprise, internationalisation, learning

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Introduction

Postgraduate education in the UK has grown substantially in the last decade (Universities UK, 2010). There has been significant, long-term growth in international postgraduate student participation in UK business related subjects, involving both MBA and other Masters' programmes such as MSc in Management and a range of specialist awards. International students formed 14% of the total full-time student population in the UK in 2009/10. 45,180 students were enrolled in 2008/09, increasing to 51,310 in 2009/10.

This growth in postgraduate numbers has benefited universities enormously, to the extent that many have a high level of reliance on international student income. Taught postgraduate provision alone brought in income of over £1.5 bn for universities in 2008/2009 (UUK, 2010). But there are major questions over how well the expectations and aspirations of these students are understood and met by Universities. Indeed, can UK HEIs meet their expectations during a period of major change for the sector?

South-east Asia and African states are the main origins of international students. The biggest increase has been in the number of non-EU domiciles registering for taught masters courses, which rose by almost half between 2002/03 and 2007/08 (UUK, 2010). These trends demonstrate the growth, popularity and strength of the UK postgraduate sector, which has a central pull towards developing the UK's position in the international market. Yet, until recently, Postgraduate education for international students in the UK has been comparatively under-researched. Recent studies have focused on cross country comparisons between France, Germany and Poland (Packham et al, 2010) USA, Spain and China (Pruett et al, 2009) Africa and Europe (Davey et al, 2011) China (Millman et al, 2010; Monk, 2012) and Poland (Jones, et al, 2011) with relatively little research specifically addressing international students on postgraduate courses in the UK (Hull and Sung, 2009, Liu, 2010), although there have been some studies exploring teaching and learning aspects (Turner, 2006; Bamford, 2008).

The levels of participation in enterprise and entrepreneurship education are not easy to determine, but there has been an expansion in provision and again indications of rising demand for entrepreneurship within business and management programmes as well as, to a lesser extent, specialist Master's degrees. This article originates in the authors' experiences in running postgraduate entrepreneurship modules for international students in two UK Business Schools over a number of years. They observed that students often experienced concerns about a 'mismatch' between their expectations of UK business and management education and their actual experiences. Also, many students experienced cultural tensions between their prior learning experiences and their acculturation to the requirements and norms of UK business education. Designing and running courses for increasing numbers of international students who displayed diverse characteristics in their prior learning, linguistic and academic ability and orientation to learn posed growing challenges for educators, who were not always well supported by their institutions. A concern with these issues led to the decision to explore student perceptions of entrepreneurship education during 2011-12.

The study aimed to enhance understanding of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in meeting the pre-entry characteristics, expectations and motives of international postgraduate students participating in UK business & management education. Specifically, it explored:

RQ1.   What is the typical profile of the international students' prior education and work experience?
RQ2.   What do students expect from studying an entrepreneurship PG course in the UK?
RQ3.   What are their experiences of, and learning outcomes from, the entrepreneurship course?
RQ4.   What benefits regarding their skills and knowledge do they perceive result from participation?

The study is based on the authors' experiences in running, separately, five courses for international postgraduate students in Spring-Summer 2011 and in 2012. One took place at the University of Derby and four at the University of Lincoln. The modules which ran across the two universities, shared common design features, notably the use of an opportunity centred approach to learning (Rae, 2007), as well as innovations introduced by each of the authors. Both universities attract varying numbers of postgraduate students, the University of Derby enrolling a total of 3085 and the University of Lincoln enrolling 1545 in 2009/2010, of which other EU and non-EU accounted for 425 at the University of Derby and 275 at the University of Lincoln (HESA, 2011). Whilst this is a small-scale study located in two HEIs, the issues it explores are of much wider concern, affecting much of the UK HE Business School sector, as well as Government policy and the UK's reputation in a hyper-competitive and dynamic international market.

Review of prior work
1. The Postgraduate environment for international study in the UK

UK HEIs were encouraged to seek new sources of funding from the 1990's, resulting in significant growth in postgraduate education in the last decade (UUK, 2010) and many more international students from non-EU countries, EU countries and Asia chose to study in the UK. This has increased since the Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) in 2006. International students overwhelmingly come to the UK to experience full-time postgraduate study, compared with UK students where there is a higher level of part-time postgraduate study. However, there is a range of challenges for both the students and for academic staff teaching and assessing them (Warwick, 2007).

It has been suggested that, with the growing trend towards attracting international students to UK campuses, "genuine educational considerations for overseas students' may have been overlooked" (THES, 1994, cited in McNamara & Harris, 1997: 3). Research carried out by Liu, (2010) investigating postgraduate marketing students, indicated that there had been a lack of research in the prior motives, expectations and preparedness of postgraduate students in the UK. However, an emergence of research on the impact of growth in postgraduate students studying in the UK is transpiring from the impact on academic life (Warwick, 2007; Hall and Sung, 2009), learning, teaching and assessment (Clarke and Flaherty, 2002; Turner, 2006; Liu, 2009) and students experiences (Moss, 2005; Cathcart et al,. 2006). The importance of such research is emphasised by Ryan, (2005) to be an area which must be addressed to sustain and create successful teaching and learning environments, but also to sustain the UK's commercial success to date. Mismatches between students' respective expectations and needs can create fundamental gaps and tensions between students and staff, hence it is important for lecturers to be aware of these (Ryan, 2005).

Diverse research evidence has been conducted on home and overseas business and management students experiences in the UK, finding numerous tensions, including a lack of group interaction (Volet and Ang, 1998); home students feeling burdened by the needs of overseas students (Cathcart et al., 2006) and overseas students feeling unfamiliar with western modes of teaching (Robinson, 2006). Furnham (2004) recognised that, as well as the 'culture shock' that many overseas students experience upon arrival in the UK, they are also expected to adapt to the norms within the academic environment, including rapidly conforming to the UK HE systems expectations of learning at PG level. For Chinese, Taiwan and Thailand students studying in the UK, there is evidence of social isolation and lack of initiation into local, culturally-based academic norms (e.g., Volet & Ang, 1998; Wu, 2002; Robinson, 2006; Turner, 2006). Furthermore, in a 2003 survey on Business School staff at a British university, Gannon-Leary and Smailes (2004) reported that lecturers believed that international students had a significant impact on their teaching.

Current literature highlights that there are significant differences between home and international students in terms of culture, previous educational experience, learning styles, transition from undergraduate to postgraduate education, and perception of the effectiveness of the learning and teaching methods (Biggs, 1999; Egege and Kutieleh, 2003; Cathcart et al., 2006; Sliwa and Grandy, 2006; Turner, 2006; Liu, 2009; Hall and Sung, 2009). For example, Chinese students often respond better to tutor-centred learning than to process-based, student-centred learning and find it difficult to adapt to the British learning and teaching conventions (Liu, 2009). Whilst lecturers believe language to be the main cause of concern for East Asian students', interestingly students believe that, a lack of culturally related knowledge of British academic norms present a fundamental challenge to their learning (Hall and Sung, 2009). There are clearly different perceptions held by lecturers and students to why international students may encounter difficulties with the UK educational environment. Students' own perceptions need to be better understood: Brown (2008) explored the anxiety and 'culture shock' experienced by learners embarrassed and frustrated by their limited mastery of English. Turner (2006) questioned the assumption that Chinese students lacked the ability for 'critical thinking', suggesting a need for greater transparency and explicit discussion of what is required.

However, these and other sources demonstrate the growth, popularity and strength of the UK postgraduate sector, which has a central pull towards developing the UK's position in the international market. Research conducted by Liu, (2010) suggests that lecturers should understand overseas students' pre-entry characteristics such as their motives, expectations, and preparedness in order to facilitate teaching to an increasingly diverse student population (Ridley, 2004). It is suggested that potential students are, and in future will, increasingly demand "value for money" from their host institutions (Centeno et al., 2008; Taylor, 2002). Around half of international students coming to the UK take postgraduate qualifications (Universities UK, 2010), therefore enhancing the educational experience for students and understanding the role and purpose of such education (Centeno et al., 2008) will contribute to the future success of the UK in the international higher education market.

A new factor which is of growing significance is the outlook of the UK Coalition government towards international students as potential contributors to unwelcome immigration. Whilst the evidence underlying this political stance may be questionable, it has led to stringent measures being introduced to 'clamp down' on international student visas and working in the UK, college provision, and monitoring of student activities, by the UK Border Agency. The stated intention is to reduce immigration based on spurious studentships, but the actual result is very likely to reduce international student participation in the UK more generally, an outcome which has caused great concern to Universities which may be most affected. There appears to be little economic rational for this xenophobic approach, Vickers and Bekhradnia (2007) having demonstrated that international graduates are likely to contribute significantly more to the UK economy than they take from it, and if employed they are likely to pay some three times more in tax than the cost of public services they use. Yet this policy is already having a negative effect on the perceptions of current and potential future students in relation to the openness of the UK to international students, as can be seen in Min Jae Huh's (2012) campaign and responses by students: http://www.futurewithoutpsw.com/

2. Postgraduate entrepreneurship education in the UK

In relation to entrepreneurship education, there has been significant activity at international level in connecting this with economic development (World Bank, 2009), in establishing levels of activity (GEM, 2010) and in establishing its effects and impact (EU, 2012). In the UK, the government initiated the development of curricular guidelines for enterprise and entrepreneurship education which were drafted by practitioners and researchers (QAA, 2012). These explicitly apply to programmes open to international as well as home & EU students, their scope including both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The guidelines aim to capture 'best practice' in current entrepreneurship education and are based on the concept of students achieving a learning outcome of entrepreneurial effectiveness, through experiencing enterprise awareness, the development of an entrepreneurial mindset (way of thinking) and capabilities (skills and knowledge, developed through experiential learning). They also comment on the relative merits of education 'about' and 'for' entrepreneurship with a disposition towards the latter as being more relevant and useful.

There is rapid evolution of entrepreneurial teaching and learning approaches, not only in the UK but worldwide, with a critique of 'academic' models which can be seen to privilege cognitive, 'theoretical' knowledge over 'practical', experiential approaches associated more directly with entrepreneurial businesses, as well as increasing research interest (Matlay, 2012). Given the fast pace of development in the entrepreneurial business arena, the perceived currency and relevance of entrepreneurship education is an increasingly important factor, with growing emphasis on skill acquisition and outcomes (Penaluna et al, 2012). So too is understanding and meeting student expectations of entrepreneurship education.

The 'Tomorrow's MBA' survey (Carrington Crisp, 2011) found that entrepreneurship had entered the 'top five' subjects most valued by MBA students, but the following year they noted the declining attractiveness of the MBA and the subject had dropped to eighth:
 'Entrepreneurship has not gone away as a popular subject, but the edge has come off it'.
(Carrington Crisp, 2012:6). Monk (2012) explored the experiences of Chinese postgraduate students in Britain studying specialist Master's in Business programmes, finding that the economic benefits to these graduates from subsequent employment in China were small, but were counterbalanced by non-economic benefits.

3. International entrepreneurship education

Although there have been attempts to 'internationalise' the curriculum of universities and to cater for the different understandings and knowledge of international students, researchers report widely differing views of learning and attitudes to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that need to be addressed (Butorac, 1997; Hellmundt, 2001; Ledwith, Lee, Manfredi & Wildish, 1998; McNamara & Harris, 1997; Shaddock, 1996; Talbot,1999) cited in Ryan and Hellmundt (2003).

In Ryan and Hellmundt's (2003) study, the major issues found were relevancy of course content, use of ethnocentric perspectives and materials, and the lack of recognition of different experiences, perspectives, and background knowledge. With complicated texts and course content proving problematic for students that lacked background knowledge, lecturers reported that finding texts which provide a range of different cultural examples and perspectives is difficult. Furthermore, pedagogic problems involving the format and speed of lectures with unfamiliar concepts, expressions and anecdotes have been highlighted as causing problems for international students.

Ryan and Hellmundt (2003) also examined how well universities cater for the learning needs of international students; assessment was commonly perceived by international students as being unfair and unclear. Difficulty in understanding what the lecturer was looking for and inability to showcase their abilities due to a lack of alternative assessment choices were cited as common complaints. Not being able to make sense of their learning, feeling excluded or marginalised were major issues. However, in the study it was found that students found their most effective learning experiences occurred when they were given the chance to draw from previous experience and demonstrate this in group discussions or in assessment tasks.

There is a notion that learning approaches are dynamic and are influenced by the learning environment including an array of personal factors such as students prior learning experiences (Liu, 2010). The study by Byrne and Flood (2005) suggests that it is rather the students perceptions of their prior intentions, expectations, and experiences that affect their learning. Ridley (2004) suggests a fuller understanding of the differences in expectations between lecturers and students is crucial towards ensuring a smooth start to an academic programme. In a study by Liu (2010) the motives, expectations and preparedness of postgraduate marketing students are assessed, finding that international students generally feel less prepared than their British counterparts, which is consistent with similar studies maintaining that international students are in need of more support (Turner, 2006; Liu, 2009; Hall and Sung, 2009). In Liu's (2010) study it is highlighted that perceptions can be influenced by respective cultural and educational backgrounds, but further research needs to be undertaken to study the impact of these influences on their pre-entry characteristics (Browne, 2004).

A study by Warwick, (2007) on international students studying at the University of York found that international students have very generalised views of what to expect from studying in the UK, but it has been found that they assume that their successful prior learning experiences will serve them well at there chosen institution (Ladd and Ruby, 1999). It is suggested that instead of highlighting the differences and difficulties between home and international students, institutions need to adapt to reflect their diverse student population, validate diversity and make difference a normal expectation (Tierney, 2000 cited in Warwick, (2007, p. 8). Furthermore, it is suggested that "universities should reject the idea that international students have to assimilate to the UK norm and should instead re-orientate themselves to reflect their student population".

The 'Opportunity-centred entrepreneurship' approach

Both modules were based on the 'Opportunity-Centred Entrepreneurship' approach to entrepreneurial learning (Rae, 2002; 2007). This was developed from research and postgraduate teaching experience and has been widely adopted as an experiential, discovery-led learning methodology for entrepreneurship, both in the UK and internationally. It locates the creation, investigation and development of opportunities as a central focus in the discovery-learning process (figure 1). This involves active progression through the four aspects of learning: personal enterprise (reflection), creating and exploring opportunities (generative curiosity), planning opportunities (prospective imagination), and acting on opportunities (active social engagement). Each of these aspects is accompanied by sets of questions to prompt investigation, and by frameworks and tools to support learning.
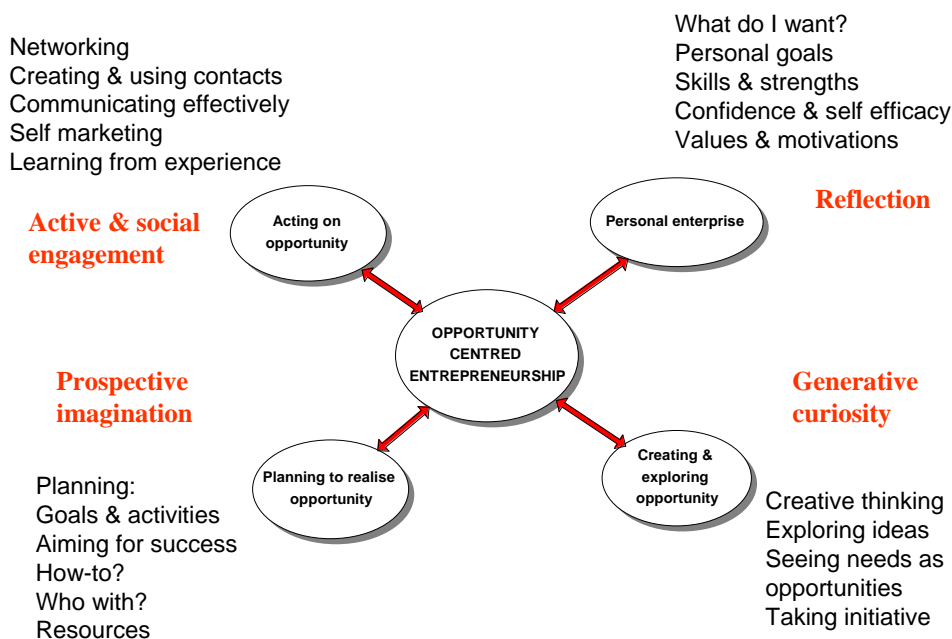
Networking
Creating & using contacts
Communicating effectively
Self marketing
Learning from experience

What do I want?
Personal goals
Skills & strengths
Confidence & self efficacy
Values & motivations

Active & social engagement

Acting on opportunity

Personal enterprise

Reflection

OPPORTUNITY CENTRED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Prospective imagination

Generative curiosity

Planning to realise opportunity

Creating & exploring opportunity

Planning:
Goals & activities
Aiming for success
How-to?
Who with?
Resources

Creative thinking
Exploring ideas
Seeing needs as opportunities
Taking initiative

Figure 1: Opportunity-centred entrepreneurship methodology

Methodology

The research is empirical, with primary data collected from international postgraduate students in five entrepreneurship groups across two university Business Schools through a standardised end-of-module evaluation survey over a two year period. This was supplemented by the observations and experiences of the researchers delivering the modules, and by examples of work produced by students and feedback from former students.

To gain a more representative sample, the research took place in two universities where the opportunity-centred learning approach (Rae, 2007) was being used at postgraduate level. University A (Derby) is a post-1992 'new' university with a total of 17,475 HE students enrolled in 2009/2010 and 3085 PG students of which other EU and non-EU accounted for 425 and University B (Lincoln) with a total of 12,070 HE students (2009/10) and 1545 PG students of which other EU and non-EU accounted for 275 (HESA, 2011).

The surveys used self-administered, anonymous and optional online questionnaires completed at the end of the student's module. This approach aimed to avoid the risk of distortion by students being concerned about tutors' responses to their feedback. The survey was designed to capture the background, prior education, expectations and experiences of international postgraduate students who had completed the modules. The survey questionnaire was divided into four themes: students' personal information such as gender, age and domicile of the students and their prior education and experience; their expectations of the module; their experiences during the module regarding the effectiveness of course and assessment; and whether the module reached their expectations and 'added value' in career preparedness. Specific questions explored students motives (why they chose to study an entrepreneurial module at postgraduate level), expectations (what they expected from the module) and preparedness (how prepared they were following their module). Students were also invited to leave open feedback and comments. The design of the survey instrument was piloted with a test group of staff and students and modified following their feedback prior to its administration. Responses used check-boxes, categorised scaling, lists of skills, personal attributes and abilities. The survey questions and response options were drawn from current research and literature on international entrepreneurship and were congruent with the goals and objectives of the research.

The data collection took place during the last week of each module in the academic years 2010/2011 and 2011/12. The objectives of the research were explained to the students face-to-face with voluntary participation and anonymity explained. The primary means of distribution of the surveys were online with the link sent to the students via email. Students were asked that if they agreed to participate they should complete the online survey within three weeks of completion of the module. Table I shows the numbers involved in the research and number of survey responses.

University	2011	respondents	2012	respondents
Lincoln	2 courses	22	2 courses	56
	37 students	60%	99 students	55%
Derby	1 course	12	0 course	
	16 students	75%		
Total	152 students		60% response rate	

Table 1: Survey responses

Aware of potential bias, distortion and changes within the research context, the questionnaire survey was supplemented with narrative material from student course work and comments from students who had completed the modules. The students were asked to comment on their overall learning experiences on the module, highlighting their expectations of the module, how this was met and specific information relating to the module content, approach, assessment and delivery. Students completed an assignment which asked them to reflect critically on what they had learned from the module and how they would apply this in their future career. Extracts from this work contributed narrative material to the survey data, adding depth to enrich the findings. The students that contributed to the online survey all showed a high level of commitment to the module and similar degrees of motivation. Some had understandable concerns about the timescales, expectations and assessment requirements but all were able to meet these requirements.

Analysis of the survey results

The survey results address four themes comprising:
1. Background age, nationality, education and work experience profile of respondents
2. Expectations of respondents from studying a Postgraduate degree in the UK
3. Experiences of, and learning outcomes from, the entrepreneurship course
4. The perceived benefits regarding skills and knowledge from participation

1. Background of respondents

The characteristics of the respondents presented in Table I show a similar profile in both 2011 and 2012. Around 59% of respondents were aged between 23-25 and over 60% were male. The respondents represent mainly young, male students with little work experience, China being the principal country of origin. It is important to note that the 60% average respondents in each group were not necessarily typical of the overall course demographics in relation to age, gender and ethnic origins.

Variable	Sub-variable	2011 numbers	%	2012 numbers	%
Age	22 years or less	7	20.6	15	27.8
	23 - 25	20	58.8	32	59.3
	26 - 30	4	11.8	6	11.1
	30 - 34	3	8.8	1	1.9
	35 or more	0	0	0	0
Gender	Male	20	60.6	34	63
	Female	13	39.4	20	37
Nationality	United Kingdom	5	14.7	3	5.6
	China	14	41.2	34	63
	India	4	11.8	14	25.9
	Pakistan	0	0	0	0
	Another country	11	32.4	3	5.6
Prior education	Business	13	38.2	18	33.3
	Management	10	29.4	11	20.4
	Marketing	2	5.9	1	1.9
	Finance	0	0	6	11.1
	Human Resources	2	5.9	2	3.7

	Information Technology	1	2.9	2	3.7
	Another subject	6	17.6	14	25.9
Years of work experience	Less than 1 year	24	70.6	37	68.5
	1 - 2 years	7	20.6	11	20.4
	2 - 3 years	1	2.9	3	5.6
	3 - 5 years	0	0	0	0
	More than 5 years	2	5.9	3	5.6

Table I. Demographic profile of respondents

The nationality mix was diverse, with international students accounting for 85.3% in 2011 and 94.5% in 2012, the highest being Chinese respondents at 41.2% and 63%. Although studying Entrepreneurial Management as a module at postgraduate level, most respondents had less than 1 year work experience (70.6% in 2011 and 68.5% in 2012), with a background in various subjects for their first degrees, business and management accounting for over half.

2. Expectations of respondents studying a Postgraduate degree in the UK

The study aimed to explore variations in respondents' expectations of postgraduate study in the UK and of the entrepreneurship module. Two specific questions were asked with multiple-choice responses. Developing higher level-skills was the aim of 53.1% of respondents in 2011, and this increased significantly to 76.1% in 2012 (figure 2). Gaining career advantage and experience of studying in the UK also increased by similar proportions.
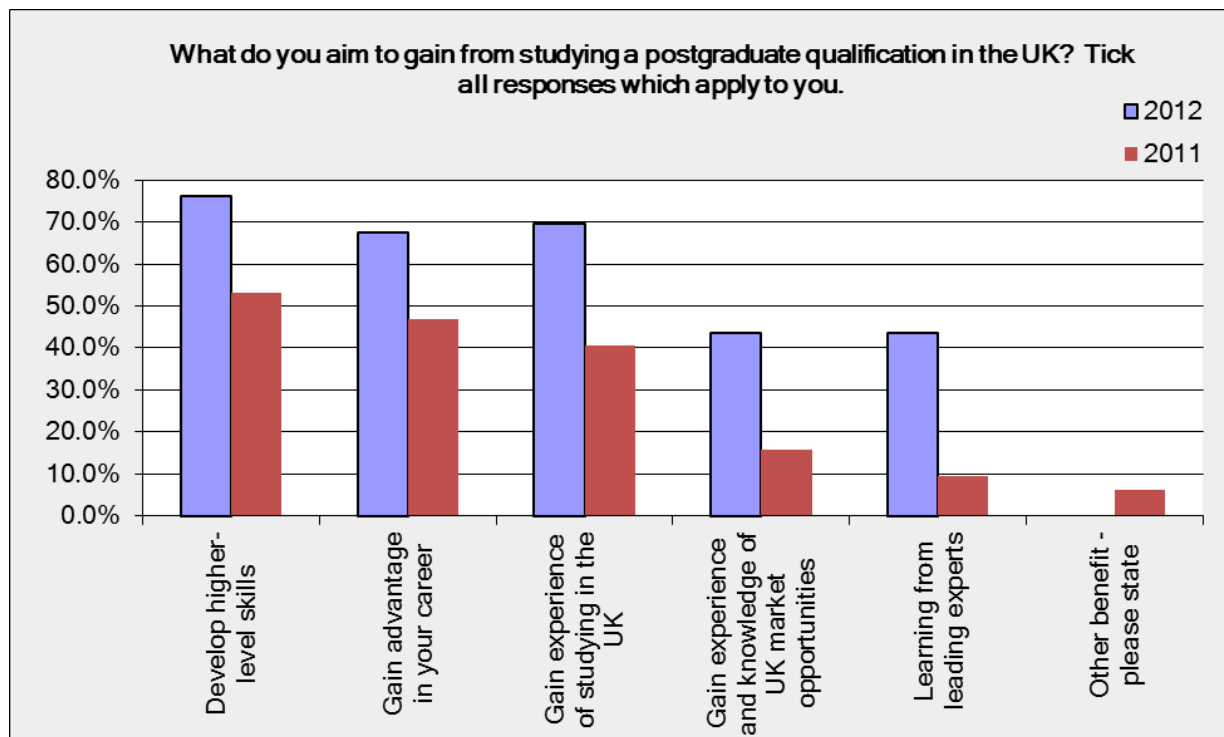

Figure 2. Respondents' expectations of a postgraduate qualification in the UK

Respondents expectations of gaining skills and knowledge to help them start a business from the entrepreneurship module increased from 75% in 2011 to 82.6% in 2012. Finding out about entrepreneurship and developing capabilities they could use within an organisation also increased to over 60%. However, respondents showed little interest in meeting like-minded entrepreneurial students and developing an existing business idea in both years (figure 3).
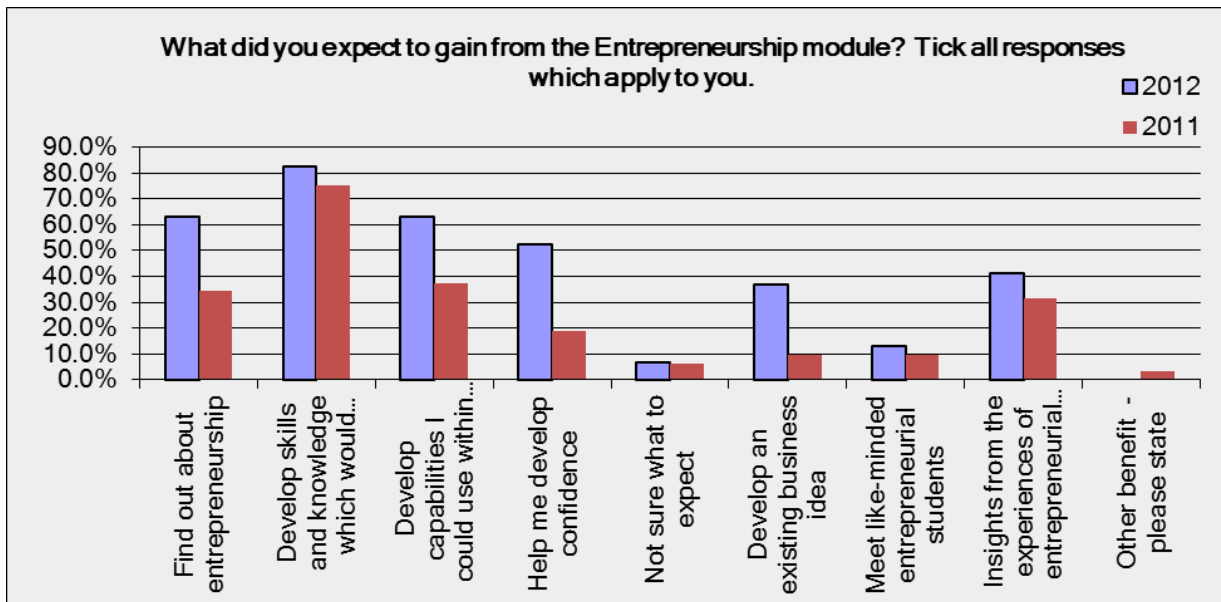
Figure 3. Respondents' expectations of the entrepreneurship module

3. The experiences of, and learning outcomes from, the entrepreneurship course

In accordance with the research questions, the respondents were asked to evaluate their experiences during the entrepreneurship module and indicate what aspects of the module helped their learning most. Given various options, respondents across both 2011 and 2012 groups rather surprisingly showed that the use of eBooks as the course text and the use of online tools to develop a business alongside the use of e-learning materials were seen as being less useful aspects of the module. This rather counters the topical view that the use of e-learning media and online business tools are essential and valued features of international business students' learning. Interestingly, the opportunity-centred learning approach rated highly amongst respondents in both 2011 and 2012, alongside working in teams on a business opportunity and the use of a goal-setting exercise in relation to future career planning.
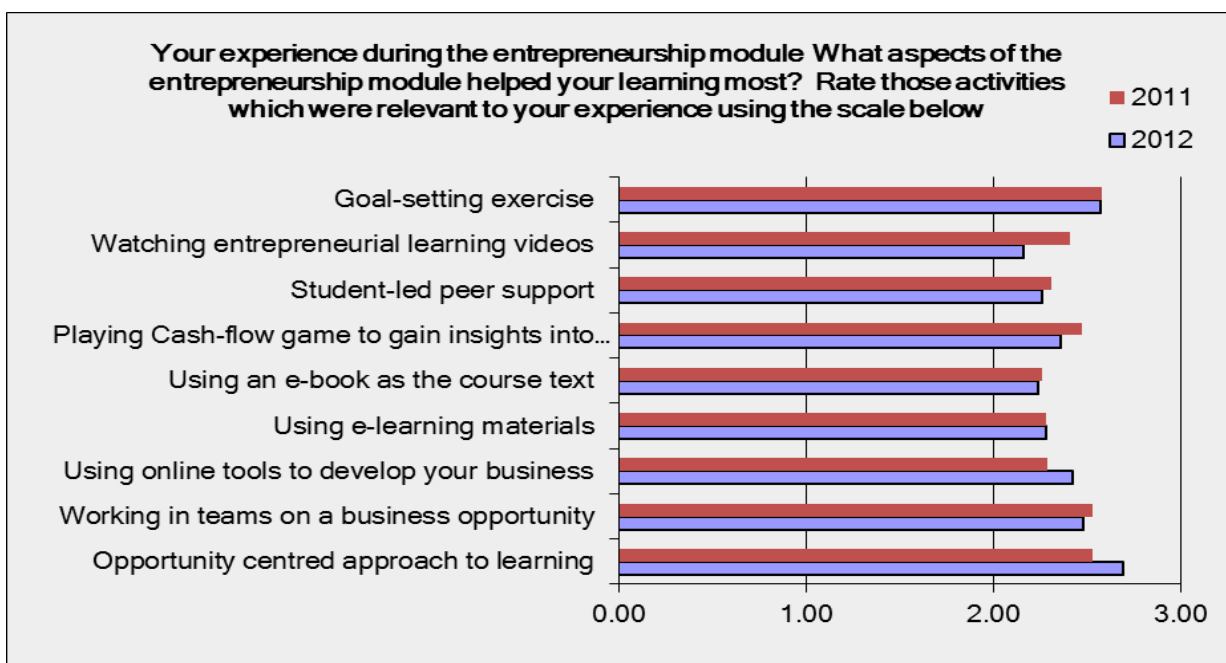

Figure 4. Respondents' experiences of the entrepreneurship module

Respondents worked on team business projects during the entrepreneurship module, and were asked to comment on the perceived benefits gained from this. Respondents in 2011 and 2012 scored these for the development of their entrepreneurial skills at 82.6% in 2012 and 68.8% in 2011 whilst working on team business projects. Respondents also highlighted the significant value of the individual assignment aspect of the module, reporting an increased development of their personal development and career as well as an

awareness of their learning in both 2011 (51.6% and 45.2%) and 2012 (72.7% and 72.7%). This is an interesting result as students quite frequently complained that the requirement to submit two pieces of course-work, one group and one individual, was burdensome and resulted in over-work.

4. The perceived benefits regarding skills and knowledge from participation

Respondents were asked to rate what difference the entrepreneurship module made to the development of their skills. New venture planning, recognising and developing opportunities, and personal organisation and planning were all rated highly. Respondents in both 2012 and 2011 rated financial planning as the least valuable, whilst in 2012 respondents rated creative thinking as significantly valuable with 2011 respondents scoring team organisation and market research and development as significantly valuable in developing their skills. It may be that the financial planning sessions repeated some concepts they had previously been taught, but these were seen by the course leader to be essential within a new/small business context.
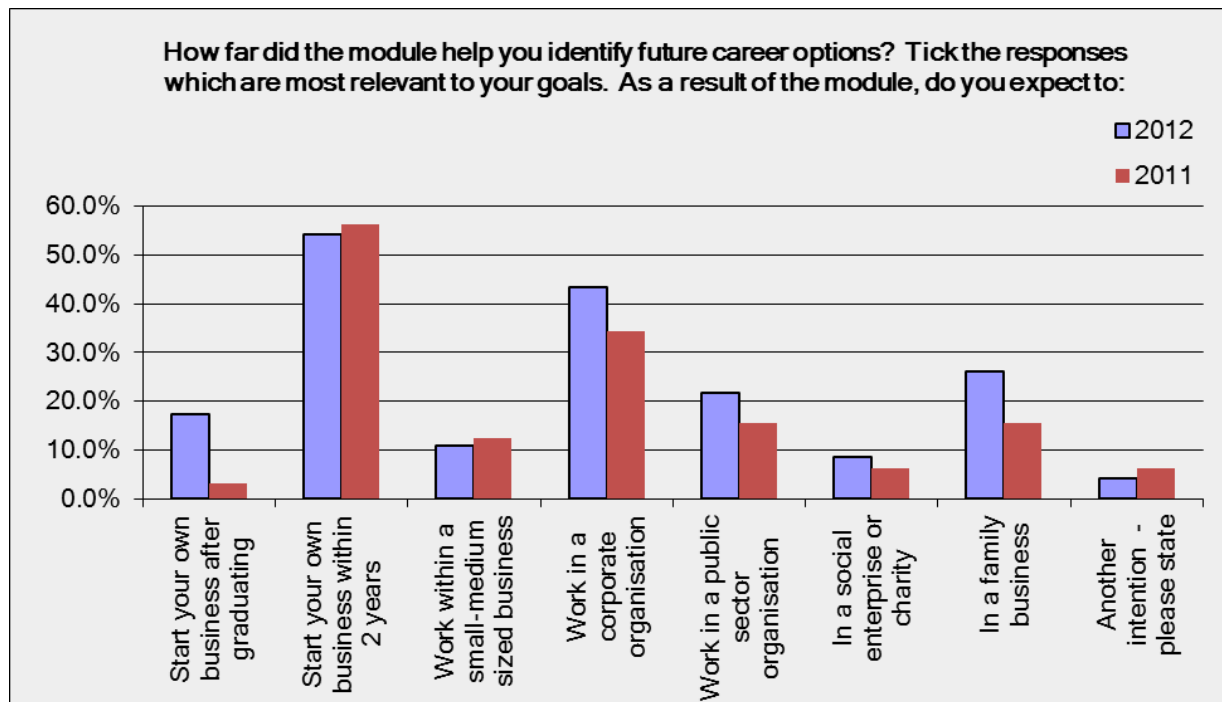

Figure5. Respondents future career options

Interestingly, both groups believed that the entrepreneurship course had either exceeded or fully met their expectations (72% in 2012 and 69% in 2011) as well as a similar proportion commenting that it helped them identify and develop their career options and goals. Significant proportions felt that it enabled them to demonstrate their knowledge (66%) and made them aware of their learning (73%) in 2012. The career outcome of intending to start their own business after graduating increased from 3% to 17%, whilst intending to start a business within 2 years decreased slightly from 56% in 2011 to 54% in 2012. Working in a corporate organisation was consistently the second preferred career option, with public sector, family, small and social enterprises having minority interest. It was also evident from the student's personal assignments that for a significant proportion, their ambition to start and run their own business had either been a determining factor in selecting the module, or had been an outcome from it.

Narratives of student experiences

These are examples provided by students of their learning experiences and outcomes gained from the module in relation to their learning and career aspirations.

Winnie, a graduate from the 2010 programme who runs her own Chinese/English translation and interpretation business, commented that:

"*The course design is not only based on solid academic entrepreneurship knowledge but also in a very practical way, is based on real enterprise contexts. What we expect and need are to build overall concepts or knowledge to become a CEO or self-employed business owner in the future. I found that the financial knowledge we learnt on the course was very practical and refreshed my previous knowledge*"

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Assessment tools were described as being *"very practical for class work also applicable in the real business world"*.

> "*The course provided the most up-to-date business knowledge and information and learning methods. The teaching adapted lots up-to-date business knowledge and information by using real cases of successful enterprises like "the Innocent juice", "the Tyrell's chips"...etc which we could easily found on news or TV, which made our learning more vivid and interesting*".

Examples of statements from students in the 2012 group were drawn from their personal assignments in which they were asked to critically reflect on their learning and to identify how they would apply this in the context of their career plan. Turner (2006) challenged the cultural assumptions underlying the Western view of critical reflection, and it was certainly the case that careful explanation and discussion was often necessary to assist students to appreciate what was being expected. Expressing their ideas in the English language was a real challenge for many students, who often struggled to produce postgraduate written work in an unfamiliar language, using imperfect grammar and limited vocabulary. This raises the question of how students can express, and how teachers can assess, what they have learned. For whilst the quality of the English may strain the bounds of meaning, their personal insights can nevertheless often be seen. But it does raise the question, rarely aired but very evident in Business Schools, on whether students with limited competence in English are actually producing written work at postgraduate level. It is important to differentiate between such students' intellectual ability, which may not be matched by their linguistic fluency. The need for alternative forms of assessment, which provide evidence of what the student can produce, using knowledge and skills developed through the course, as distinct from writing critically (or too often, descriptively) about it, is one approach to be explored.

'Entrepreneurship is not a mere passion and dreams can be successful, start early to develop a complete, executable business plan should be every venture rights to do homework.'

'It show me the way how entrepreneur should think and do, this is the most inspiriting part to me.'

'I came to a concept that "Always think Big and Make it simple" which motives me to be a successful entrepreneur.'

Yet for those who have more advanced linguistic skills, possibly having studied in a partner college where English is an integral part of the learning process, higher-level expression is more evident, and the work is more explicitly at postgraduate level.

'I have a profound understanding of how to open a new business and to consider things from the entrepreneurs' perspectives. I have a career plan for my future with a clear objective and am on the way to achieve my goals.'

'The career plan from the entrepreneurship module has inspired me to have a clear plan of my personal vision for my future goals and motivations, and to make myself valuable and unique. It enhanced my ability for critical assessment and forecasting.'

'I know that to be an entrepreneur, I should strive to cultivate some essential personal quality required by venture creation, including adaptability and perseverance.'

Discussion

One of the interesting points from the student responses is the limited work experience they had gained prior to their postgraduate study, most having less than a year and some no formal work experience. This is a challenge to the concept of the MBA as a post-experience qualification, although the 'early career MBA' is an attractive product aimed at this group. This profile is fairly typical of the young Chinese college-leaver, but it does pose educational challenges in relating entrepreneurial learning to such limited business and career experience.

Students' learning is influenced by the perceptions of their intentions, expectations and experiences (Byrne and Flood, 2005). The survey enabled the researchers to gain a fuller understanding of the differences in students expectations to assess the preparedness of the postgraduate entrepreneurship student. The responses of the students indicated that their expectations were to develop higher-level skills through postgraduate study in the UK, specifically developing skills and knowledge to start a business at some point in the future, but in most cases not immediately. This located the module appropriately as a developmental

educational programme, not as a business start-up course. Even more experienced students with some prior small business experienced that they had re-evaluated their skills and approaches, and would approach entrepreneurship with increased strategic understanding and ambition in future.

The survey indicated broad support for the module design and the learning approaches, specifically the opportunity-centred entrepreneurship approach to learning. Students indicated that the usefulness of the opportunity-centred approach helped them relate their career goals and expectations to developing their skills and knowledge to start a business. There may be a measure of positive bias towards the researchers in operation here, as the direct feedback from students was also very favourable, since immediate post-course validations may differ from longer-term measures of the impact of learning in practice. Although Chinese students in particular (but not exclusively) tend to have experienced instructor-centred directive learning in their formative education, they generally proved able to adapt to and to benefit from an experiential, discovery-oriented approach which also incorporated a team-based rather than individual form of assessment. There were benefits to students in enabling them to develop entrepreneurial skills and to appreciate how these could be used to develop their career goals and planning using an entrepreneurial mindset. There were noticeable gains in self-confidence during this process (confirmed by 59% in 2012).

The module at Lincoln was delivered twice in each year, once in a conventional 12-week format involving 1 hour lecture and 1 hour tutorial group per week, in which the students were expected to progress the team-based opportunity exploration. It was also delivered in an accelerated 6-week module over 4 hours in one day per week (1000-1500 with a lunch break) for students who had started their UK study programmes in January and who fell outside the normal academic year. This was run in the May-June period and provided an interesting comparison. The 12-week programme was negatively affected by timetabling constraints, such as including a two-week break for Easter, and the small exposure to learning each week also limited the students' continuity of learning. In contrast, the accelerated programme was delivered outside normal timetabling and was able to stretch, if not break the 'rules' of normal delivery. The group size in the second year increased to 42 students who formed a diverse and vibrant community. The one day per week immersion enabled them to interact with each other and the tutorial team much more fully and less formally than in the longer programme. They were able to get to know each other and to focus in more depth on the processes of opportunity exploration, development and planning, albeit within a shorter overall timeframe. Overall, the accelerated programme had a much more entrepreneurial culture and way of working than the normal programme, in which students' levels of confidence and participation were much higher.

The assessed work for both modules consisted of a team-based project to explore an opportunity and to present a business proposal for its development. Individually, students were asked to write a critical reflection of what they had learned and how they could apply this in their future career. Each provided 50% of the total mark, balancing individual with group attainment and including both more practical and more conceptual learning, but in both cases with a bias towards drawing on and using theories and frameworks rather than simply reciting extant knowledge. Both these expectations challenged students, but in different ways and was found in the results to have benefited students significantly in developing their entrepreneurial skills and their personal development or career with an increased awareness of their learning. It is entirely appropriate for postgraduate education to pose such challenges, although this is not always expected or welcomed by students. The group project could be completed successfully by students who were able to find, select and apply the developmental tools to an opportunity which could be defined by the 'DIFA' criteria: that an opportunity should be able to demonstrate Demand; Innovation; Feasibility; & Attractiveness (Rae, 2007). Groups which adopted a structured, methodical approach were almost always able to complete this successfully, whilst those with poor attendance records and a casual approach towards the methodology tended to encounter difficulties in meeting the assessment criteria.

The individual assignment also posed unfamiliar expectations for many students, in asking them to reflect on their own development, using the first person to explore their learning narrative prior to, during and in anticipation of future experiences. Many students were able to express their learning with insight, candour and to relate their experiences to the development of their self and social identity. Others simply misunderstood the brief, and presented a descriptive account of entrepreneurship theories trawled from the Internet, or another business proposal, and hence failed to meet the assessment criteria. From these experiences, repeated over a significant number of students, it is clear that many do develop an entrepreneurial awareness, mindset, and conscious awareness of the skills and knowledge they have gained. A small but consistent minority do not. Some do not have sufficient grasp of written and spoken English, or confidence in its use, to participate fully, although active participation, confidence and linguistic proficiency can increase significantly during the module. A small number showed little commitment to actually learning from the module, demonstrating poor attendance and scant use of the content or methods introduced during the module. These tended to result in marginal or complete failures of the assessed work.

Conclusions

Although this paper presents a small-scale study, it contributes to the debate on postgraduate study by international students in the UK at an important time. From our experience, entrepreneurship education can make a legitimate and valuable contribution to postgraduate international students' development. These students felt that they had gained significant learning, personal development and confidence in working towards both educational and career goals through the entrepreneurship module. There are however challenges posed, in relation to students' expectations; universities' support for both educators and student; and the broader economic and political context.

A significant number of students performed well, had a more than satisfactory experience and were very positive in their views towards the course; in a well-designed and taught programme which matches learning with student ability and potential, that is as it should be. Problems occurred with students whose levels of English, prior learning or motivation to learn did not match the course requirements. Whilst an IELTS level of six is required, the score presented by an applicant may not equate to their actual proficiency and is not a reliable predictor of academic performance. Greater care in selection of students to ensure they can meet academic requirements may be indicated here. There may be some legitimacy over the political concern, discussed below, that some students simply wish to be in the UK rather than to learn, and should be excluded either at interview, or during their studies if they fail reasonable attendance and work submission requirements. But there is likely to be as much need for enhanced levels of pastoral and linguistic support for international students.

Both researchers had experienced expectations from their universities to respond quickly, during the academic year, to increasing numbers of international students opting for entrepreneurship, with large proportions from China, India and other South-east Asian countries. There is a widely-held and only partly incorrect view that the principal interest of universities in international students is the volume of income they bring. This must be balanced against the reasonable need to invest, prepare and create an internationally-informed learning environment and programmes of commensurate value to the students' investment in their education and career development. International students, perhaps especially at postgraduate level, can bring not only ethnic and cultural diversity but also personal insights, experiences and connections which are of real value to the university as a learning community. Smaller cities and universities, such as Lincoln and Derby, can benefit significantly from this cultural exchange which is in the spirit of a true university.

However there is, arguably, too little support and development available to educators (and probably also administrators) in designing and running programmes for international students, as Bamford (2008) recommends. Mandatory training on 'Equality & Diversity' legislation, for example, does not meet the need. Greater familiarisation by educators with the cultures, educational systems, prior learning expectations and so on, is required. This is not offered widely, although there is valuable work by the Higher Education Academy through their 'Teaching International Students' initiative, which deserves to be better known (HEA, 2011). Staff development in designing and running programmes for international students, and providing both academic and pastoral student support, should be a priority for institutions which are increasing their provision. Too often, staff are left isolated and unprepared to respond to significant demand from international students from diverse cultures.

The role of international students in the UK has an important political and economic dimension. The Wilson Review of HE valued the contribution of international students to the UK economy at £17bn in 2009, in tuition fees and student spending (Wilson 2012: 76). Through its 'plan' for growth' the UK coalition government seeks to 'maximise education export opportunities in the priority markets' of growing economies (Cable, 2011 quoted in Wilson, 2012: 77). This neo-mercantilist approach is accompanied by strict policies administered by the UK Border Agency to 'clamp down' on 'bogus' international students entering the UK. After completing their studies, students are no longer allowed to work in the UK. Entrepreneurs wishing to start a business must meet the criteria for 'high-value migrants', a term unlikely to make anyone feel welcome, and have at least £50,000 to invest. Hence there is little point in educating international students to become entrepreneurs in the UK.

These policies make clear the UK government's focus on valuing the export income of higher education, but show little interest in developing the softer cultural and educational links, which can ultimately lead to international graduates who feel an affinity with the UK creating trading and economic advantages. In turn, countries such as Australia, which for a time adopted a similar approach, may be expected to benefit from the UK stance. So the question which both the UK government and universities must address regarding international students is, 'are we in it just for the money, or do we recognise the creation of cultural capital and the longer-term economic benefits international students can bring?'

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Annex 1

University of Lincoln: Postgraduate module for international students on a 1 year full time Management Masters programme

This module addresses the increasing popularity of Entrepreneurship and demand from International MBA and Master's in Business students studying at Lincoln Business School. The established Entrepreneurship module enables students to build on the business and management skills and knowledge they gain in other modules and apply these to develop entrepreneurial skills and experience which they can use in their future careers. The target audience are students who have gained a first degree normally outside the UK, either in business or a non-business subject.

Module learning outcomes:

On completion, learners will be able to:

- Explain & discuss the core concepts of entrepreneurship

- Apply creative thinking to practical problems & opportunities

- Identify and critically evaluate business opportunities

- Develop & present plans to create viable organisations

- Plan your career development as an entrepreneurial person

- Develop ideas, create opportunities and make them happen.

Teaching, learning & assessment:

The course is based on the opportunity-centred learning approach to entrepreneurship. This is an action and discovery-based approach to entrepreneurial learning which has been used successfully by hundreds of graduate students internationally. The learning and assessment approach is twin-track, with students being expected to work in small teams of 2-4 to investigate, develop and present a business opportunity through action and discovery learning as a group project, assessed on the basis of a presentation and business proposal. They are also asked to keep a 'learning log' and to use this to prepare a reflective insight of what they have learned from the module and how this may be used in their future career. This means that both individual and social learning, both 'for' and 'about' entrepreneurship, is assessed on the module. During the programme, students in their entrepreneurial teams specifically;

o develop innovative value-creating concepts;

o research and investigate business and related opportunities;

o build innovative business models to address these;

o create simulated business ventures using online technologies;

o test-market the concepts to gain market feedback;

o develop and present a venture proposal;

The balance of team and individual learning and assessment is important, although some students may have a preference for entirely individual assessment. The nature of entrepreneurial working is dependant on the ability to interact socially, to work collaboratively with others on ideas, opportunities and innovations, and to be able to work flexibly within a team to achieve results within constraints of time, resource and knowledge. Therefore these capabilities are developed and contribute to the team and individual assessment.

In advance of the module, students are asked to identify possible entrepreneurial venture opportunities. Each team of students required a Wi-Fi laptop or tablet PC to use every week, with all course materials available

electronically via Blackboard. Students were encouraged to make use of the Business School facilities as a live workspace and were supported by Faculty team members that provided tutorial support, expert speaker talks and guest entrepreneurs. In previous modules students were making increasing use of proprietary, often free, online applications to develop and present the business opportunities they had explored. These included social media, survey tools, website tools, and others. As this was a student-driven approach which demonstrated innovation and enabled faster development of business concepts, it was decided to adopt this within the accelerated module, so that students would be expected to use online tools in ways which they chose within their business concept development. A presentation from a business practitioner was included in the programme. The activities within the modules were aimed to enhance learning in an active environment, meet the course academic assessment requirements, and reflect the University's expectations of students as active learners.

Formative assessment:

Initial presentation by each group of the business opportunity identified, initial business model and outline venture plan in week 3.

Summative Assessment

Element 1   A presentation with supporting information for a new business venture. This includes a group presentation and submission of a business proposal and business model, demonstrating application of online technologies. (50% of marks)

Element 2   An individual assignment/essay title: A critical reflection of my learning during the programme and how I can apply this in my future career. 3500 word limit. (50% of marks)

Teaching schedule for the Accelerated Entrepreneurship Programme

Week	Topic
1 am	Introductions & overview Personal Enterprise: connecting opportunities with personal goals Applying creativity, innovation methods and skills. Team formation
pm	Entrepreneurship theories and the global economic context Internationalisation and entrepreneurial opportunities
2 am	Opportunity Exploration. Using online tools to build a simulated business Opportunity search - applying research skills to find your market
pm	Introduction to venture finance
3 am	Venture finance: capital, cost, cash flow, profitability and break-even. Financial business modelling. Sources of investment & loan finance & microfinance
pm	Opportunity Assessment: opportunity building, refining the business model
4 am	Entrepreneurship & innovation in China
pm	Planning to Realise Opportunities: business proposals, venture strategy and planning. Presentation Skills.
5 22.6.11 am	Acting on Opportunities: implementing the business plan, early-stage new venture success, business growth. Entrepreneurial Learning & career options. Personal assignment.
pm	Rehearse presentations; group work on business proposals. Individual tutorials.
6	Final Group Presentations to a panel of potential investors and entrepreneurs.

| Am-pm | Awards for winning business proposals. |

| Am-pm | Awards for winning business proposals. |

Annex 2 **University of Derby "Entrepreneurial Management" module**

The "Entrepreneurial Management" module as part of the MBA programme ran in the summer of 2011 for 6 weeks (6 hours) a day, aimed primarily at a mixed demographic of students.

Module learning outcomes:

On completion, learners will be able to:

- Assess and develop their own personal development goals, skills and praxis as entrepreneurial managers in relation to the theoretical and social context.

- Apply a processual approach to developing an idea into a business concept, using appropriate business strategies to plan for the creation and growth of a new business venture.

Teaching, learning & assessment:

The course is based on the opportunity-centred learning approach to entrepreneurship, similar to that of Lincoln University. An action and discovery-based approach to entrepreneurial learning with students being expected to work in small teams of 2-4 to investigate develop and present a business opportunity through action and discovery learning as a group project, assessed on the basis of a presentation and business proposal. They are also asked to keep a 'learning log' and to use this to prepare a reflective insight of what they have learned from the module and how this may be used in their future career.

The University of Derby encourage active and discovery based approaches and as lecturers we found that the learning and assessment created a natural environment for students to work entrepreneurially as part of a team and individually. Students developed social interaction skills and working collaboratively with others on ideas, opportunities and innovations, enhanced their team working skills.

Similar with the University of Lincoln, the University of Derby encouraged the use of the business facilities and workspace. Additionally the lecturer had current business experience herself and alongside guest speakers was able to create an entrepreneurial atmosphere in helping students explore their creativity and ideas. The use of social media, website tools, business games, inspirational and entrepreneurial videos were some of the various number of resources drawn upon within lectures, which were student-driven. The activities within the modules were aimed to enhance learning in an active environment, meet the course academic assessment requirements, and reflect the University's expectations of students as active learners.

Formative assessment:

Initial presentation by each group of their business opportunity that they have identified.

Summative Assessment

Part 1   A group presentation to demonstrate the investment case for the business opportunity proposed and submission of a business proposal demonstrating relevant conceptual and theoretical methods that have been applied to their opportunity evaluation and business strategy planning. (80%)

Part 2   An individual reflective personal learning assignment, focusing on the students learning during the programme and how can this be applied to their future career. (20%)

The Entrepreneurial Management module was intensive, over 6 weeks with 6 hour long days. Only one lecturer took full responsibility for teaching across 6 weeks with very little input and support from colleagues. With guest speakers and an action and discovery-based approach to entrepreneurial learning, the lecturer was able to sufficiently provide a stimulating and thought provoking entrepreneurial experience with her current business knowledge and through a student driven approach, students thrived in participating in the planning of class activities.