

10/1/2012



SHARE

Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Researcher Education



SHARE Newsletter October 2012

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Welcome to the first newsletter of SHARE (previously ASHPIT), the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Researcher Education network. In this newsletter you will find:

- Details of the thinktank in Manchester in July on International working for researchers, including:
 - A short review of policy documents pertinent to that topic
 - Summaries of contributions from presenters
 - Outcomes of collaborative resources development workshops
- Information and sign-up instructions about a forthcoming thinktank on **Methodological Training in Arts, Humanities, and Social Science Disciplines**, to be held in **Manchester on Thursday 22nd November**;
- More details about our new identity.

Please bear with us while we get our web presence and branding sorted out!

POLICY REVIEW

The Wilson Review was unequivocal in its support for work experience for researchers as a means of easing the transition between academia and work. If institutions weren't already gearing up for this, they certainly are now: walking round town this morning, I am struck by adverts on phone booths for one university which is offering every undergraduate on its courses a placement as part of their programme. Although I have yet to hear of an institution that is now doing this for postgraduates, I imagine it is only a matter of time. This raises all kinds of questions for the short and medium term about how the quality of such a large scale proliferation of placements and internships will be maintained, but that is a question for another day. The Wilson Review also asked us to 'reflect on mechanisms that promote international internships and placements amongst the student body'. In its response to the review, BIS acknowledged that 'Outward student mobility exchange and work placements benefit students, universities and the UK as a whole'. As part of this renewed focus on outward student mobility, the Government commissioned a Joint Steering Group to report on Outward Student Mobility (The Riordan Report 2012) with an aim of reviewing 'obstacles and incentives to mobility and identify(ing) actions that institutions might take to increase the number of students going abroad. Although it doesn't have an explicit focus on researchers, the headlines seem to be pertinent to us nevertheless.

The Riordan Report (from the Joint Steering Group on UK Outward Student Mobility)

The Report recommended a national strategy for outward student mobility on the grounds that we are not doing enough of it, and that we currently have a significant imbalance between inward mobility and outward mobility. The strategy should: include measures to deliver 'sustainable funding'; be based on an agreed definition of what constitutes mobility; promote the sharing of good practice; including mechanisms for promoting mobility prior to university; place greater emphasis on language-learning from primary-stage onwards. Particularly interesting for those of us working in contexts where international travel is not feasible (through financial, employment or familial constraints), the report suggested that employers were looking for students that can demonstrate a 'global mindset' (an awareness of different cultures and an ability to operate and communicate in diverse contexts), but are less concerned with the route through which it is achieved. UK-based experience would offer 'international opportunities for students unable to travel abroad'. This gives us plenty of food for thought.

AHRC & ESRC - Drivers for International mobility at researcher level

Both the AHRC and ESRC have international mobility in some form or other written in to their strategy documents. The AHRC's International Strategy 2009-2012 suggests that 'building relationships with institutions abroad encourages the internationalisation of postgraduate studies and prepares the next generation of researchers to work in a global research environment'. The ESRC's Delivery Plan 2011-2015 reports that many of the issues identified in their strategic priorities and cross-Council programmes are international in scope 'and therefore a global research response is required to address them'. They go on to state (under their Impact through International Leadership strategic objective) that by 2014 they will have 'Radically expanded the international mobility of early career researchers through targeted international networking initiatives'. For those of us currently feeding into the BGP2 bid-writing process, there is a strong focus on developing opportunities for researchers to gain experience outside their disciplines, outside HE and outside the UK.

From Wilson and Riordan to the Research Councils we are, then, left in no doubt that as researcher developers our role increasingly includes thinking about the development of researchers in international terms.

What do we mean by international mobility?

Mobility is increasingly used in strategy and policy documents as if a shared understanding of the term was long-established. I am not going to provide a lit review here on mobility (if this is something that interests you, can I point you in the direction of the fabulous employability JISC?). Instead I am offering the definition from the Riordan Report: 'An awareness of different cultures and an ability to operate and communicate in diverse contexts' (Joint Steering Group on UK Outward Student Mobility, March 2012) and some activity that would seem to squarely, and relatively uncontentiously, count as facilitating international mobility (also from the from the Joint Steering Group on UK Outward Student Mobility, March 2012).

- Industrial placements, internships or work experience undertaken either in the summer vacation or as part of a structured intercalary year
- An intensive vacation language course
- Volunteering on a recognised project overseas during the vacation

- A combination of studying and working, or working and volunteering, or a permutation of the three.

Why is it a good idea?

There are multiple drivers. It is increasingly expected (see the policy and strategy reports referred to above), and if we don't do it, we can rest assured that competitor institutions will. So on a purely pragmatic level, it is a good idea to do it in order to continue to attract high quality students. It is highly likely to be part of most individual universities' strategies.

The Riordan Report also suggests lots of positive outcomes for the students themselves: "Spending time abroad in a structured way improves student outcomes and prospects in ways that make its encouragement a valid aim for both HE providers and government." Participants are 'likely to be more employable and to earn more'. It has a positive impact on attainment. UK businesses have recently been vocal in espousing the value of skills acquired during work and study abroad

International mobility and collaboration is currently a hot topic for established researchers. Elsevier recently undertook research commissioned by BIS on the mobility of academic researchers, which concluded that research in the UK is 'mobile and international', and that it is vital to the UK's capacity to remain at the forefront of global research that this continues to be the case. International collaborations are associated with significantly higher citation rates, which is one key measure of quality. Since researcher collaboration is tied to researcher mobility, it is clearly important to encourage the latter. Continued international collaboration relies on our capacity to maintain and increase interpersonal connections, since research collaborations usually arise from 'small-world' personal networks: as such, we need to enhance researchers' capacity to institute and develop these sorts of network.

Expanding on the student outcomes outlined in the Riordan Report, the British Council Erasmus webpages cite the following reasons to undertake an international work placement (from a student perspective)

- work experience in an international environment
- opportunities for personal, academic, cultural and linguistic development through living and working in another country
- enhance your curriculum vitae by providing international employment experience, recognised by your HEI
- transferable skills, including communication across cultural boundaries, self management, independence, confidence, adaptability and self-reliance
- enhance your employability potential and may lead directly to future employment

What are the main barriers to international student mobility?

Given that we know we need to do it, and it seems to be a good thing for students and employers, why aren't we doing more of it at researcher level? Data suggests that the two major obstacles to student mobility are financial constraints and linguistic barriers (Riordan Report). An institutional perspective from colleagues who have recently tried to set up international placement schemes at researcher level points to additional factors.

- It is expensive for the institution
- It is admin-heavy (you need to do multiple placements to justify the start-up costs)
- It takes a lot of time to organise
- Researchers take time to make decisions about international placements in a way that they don't for UK placements (even when the timescales and commitments are similar)
- Paying placement stipends in arrears (when often money up front would be much more useful for someone about to travel abroad) is problematic
- Managing the challenges that researchers experience whilst 'out there'
- Payment of money in addition to stipend (practical institutional issues - additional payment as expenses agreed in advance without a receipt).

Other ways of developing a global mindset

“8. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE GAINED IN OTHER WAYS. HE providers and any national strategy should recognise the many forms in which mobility experience can be acquired, including insight gained within the UK. Employers are looking for students that can demonstrate a 'global mindset', but are less concerned with the route through which it is achieved” (Riordan Report).

Given that employers seem to understand that going abroad isn't the only way of developing a global mindset, what can we do to facilitate non-international international mobility? Sarah and Rachel proposed a part-International Global Mindset Placement, brief details of which are outlined below. This mirrors existing UK-based placements that the University of Nottingham currently does with regional creative industry partners (and undoubtedly mirrors practice at other institutions):

- Agree a business-led brief with an international partner
- Researchers visit the host organisation
- Return to UK and undertake the brief with remote mentoring

Can this version of a UK placement with international 'fringe benefits' deliver the same returns as a fully-international placement? It certainly offers work experience in an international environment. It provides opportunities for personal, academic, cultural and linguistic development through living and working in another country (albeit over a much shorter period). It enhances curriculum vitae by providing international employment experience, recognised by your HEI. It offers opportunities to develop transferable skills, including communication across cultural boundaries, self management, independence, confidence, adaptability and self-reliance. It enhances employability potential and may lead directly to future employment.

Given the concerns raised above, and other concerns shared by colleagues in the new generation of DTCs around a form of 'provision apartheid' developing (whereby funded students get an absolute gold-standard provision, and for the wider cohort it is business as usual), part-international global mindset placements might well be a feature of the landscape going forwards.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

Dr. Mark Rawlinson: Head of the department of Art History and Associate Dean of the Graduate School, University of Nottingham

The arts scene in Nottingham has flourished in recent years, and both of its major universities have sought to forge fruitful working relationships with its principal gallery, the Nottingham Contemporary. As part of its efforts to embed this sort of collaborative relationship, the University of Nottingham's Art History department has been working with the Contemporary on the institution of a Masters by Research titled "Contemporary Arts, Curating & Criticism". In this session, however, Mark outlined a proposal currently being explored within the department for that programme to be developed in collaboration with an international partner, as well as with the Contemporary. The proposed programme will deliver training in partnership not only with Nottingham Contemporary, but also with partner institutions in Europe (possibly Holland) and the United States, where Mark hopes to collaborate with colleagues at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The programme would incorporate (fairly short) placements at these partner institutions, and would be assessed on the basis of students' delivery of the following three distinctive strands:

1. A 36,000 word dissertation
2. Their contribution to the development of an exhibition at a partner institution
3. Their organisation of an academic and/or public-facing conference or symposium based on that exhibition

Mark highlighted some of the potential challenges and opportunities that the development of this sort of programme is likely to entail.

Opportunities

- Offers something new: although many institutions offer curating qualifications none yet include this international curatorship element.
- Combine high-quality academic training with some of the well-known benefits to students both of undertaking periods of work experience, and of spending time abroad during their studies.
- International element should allow students to significantly boost their profiles.
- Provides a better bridge between undergraduate study and doctoral work.
- Equally, though, will also better equip students for careers beyond academia. Students need a fuller understanding than is provided by most MRes programmes of how galleries work if they intend to pursue careers in the galleries and museums sector. The skills they learn on placement would also be useful for careers in other sectors too.

Although the opportunities that this type of programme provides to students are self-evident, Mark pointed out that it was vital to be able to articulate the benefits of this sort of collaborative programme delivery to partner institutions too. It is, he said, particularly difficult to do this sort

prestigious international institutions which are usually endowed (so have no financial motivation to work in this way) and which, at least in the USA, do not usually place the same emphasis on widening participation or public involvement, with which a student intern might be able to help. However, he suggested that the benefits to such organisations lie primarily in knowledge and resource exchange: a US institution might be keen to be involved in this sort of project if it helped them to develop productive relationships with European institutions and thereby to bring their exhibitions to Europe. He also suggested that they might be keen to export, through their UK student interns, the business-led model characteristic of many American organisations' approach to curatorship and gallery management.

Challenges

- Time: it may be difficult to fit the placement into a relatively short period of study without detracting from existing elements of the MRes programme. It is also hard to determine which would be the best point in the programme at which to include an international placement. Not only will the timing of taught components of their programme of study need to be taken into consideration, but the placement will also have to fit in with the timing of events at the host institution too. Ideally, students should be placed there from just before to soon after an exhibition opens so that they can experience every part of the processes surrounding its delivery.
- Funding: this would be an expensive programme both to set up and to run and it is unclear whether it would be financially viable, certainly in its first few years.
- Elitism: Art History already has a somewhat elitist image and a course such as this might entrench that further. The high costs would, at least in its early years, make it prohibitively expensive to all but the most wealthy students.
- Students' existing skill-sets: staff at host institutions will not have time to provide extensive on-the-job training to students placed with them. As such, they are reluctant to take on students who do not already have at least some of the skills they need to make a useful contribution to the institution. If only those students who already have the skills to work in these institutions can be placed with them, is there any benefit in collaborating with them? Mark suggested that work shadowing might present one way to overcome (or at least reduce) this particular challenge, since students would still gain useful insights into working within a gallery / museum context without burdening staff with teaching responsibilities.
- Sustainability: The programme's success relies on relationships with personal contacts at partner institutions, but those contacts are liable to leave those organisations at short notice.
- Quality Assurance issues: (how) can you guarantee the value of this sort of placement? Are they comparable with other sorts of project? Is a year at LACMA really "worth" more than 4 months at a local gallery, or 6 weeks at a London institution?
- Selling the programme: is it possible to 'sell' the programme as a preparatory course for entry to doctoral study without admitting that the primary reason for undertaking this sort of work experience is because students are unlikely to find academic jobs at the end of a PhD and will therefore need other skills to fall back on?

Please send your comments about this placement model to: mark.rawlinson@nottingham.ac.uk

Heather Sears (University of Leeds) - The “Copenhagen-Leeds-Oslo International PhD Training Course”

Heather presented the “Copenhagen-Leeds-Oslo International PhD Training Course”, an innovative strategic arrangement between the Universities of Leeds, Copenhagen and Oslo to provide joint training for PhD students in the Arts & Humanities. Its first iteration in Leeds in 2009 provided a 3-day programme offering talks, workshops and poster presentations, as well as Q&A sessions with members of academic staff from all three institutions. One of the stand-out sessions was – and has in subsequent iterations remained – a panel presentation on “Academic Mobility in a Global World”, which focuses on academic mobility and finding academic jobs abroad. The session includes short presentations by staff from Denmark, Norway, the UK and the USA about the academic structures, application and assessment processes and current jobs markets within their own countries. This session always received particularly effusive praise from PhD participants. In 2010 the course was hosted in Copenhagen; although it followed a similar programme of training sessions, workshops and talks, it had an even stronger focus on global research contexts, with the session on international academic careers expanded to include Germany.

Heather concluded her presentation of the programme by noting Vitae’s findings that, although researchers often attend programmes such as this for their academic elements alone, they are ultimately pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoy and value the skills training they receive alongside those more exclusively academic components. This is, she reported, particularly true for research students from non UK institutions, many of whom do not have opportunities to undertake comparable skills training at home.

Emily McIntosh & Claire Stocks (University of Manchester) - International placements: A View from the Ground

Emily and Claire reported that a recent survey at the University of Manchester of its own provision of placements – and particularly of international placements – for students found that these were mainly targeted at undergraduate students and tended to be undertaken as a built-in component of those students’ courses of study. Although the University provides some support for postgraduates who want to take part in international placements, the onus is generally on the student to initiate those placements for themselves.

Among the schools or courses that do incorporate placements into their provision for PGRs, Manchester’s Institute of Cultural Practices (ICP) leads the way; its Art Gallery & Museum Studies MA also includes an optional international element, offering a 20-day placement with a partner organization to those interested. This opportunity was opened up in 2010 to students elsewhere in the school of Arts, but placements with partners are not an accredited part of their course of study, and the students must submit a written justification of the time they take out of their studies. In 2012, however, the ICP has developed 15 industrial placements and 15 research to business placements for PGRs as part of an AHRC-funded project; although these placements will initially be offered on a regional basis, this is to be expanded to provide national and later

international opportunities. Additional schemes intended to provide enhanced access to both national and international placement opportunities for PGRs at Manchester include its “Venture Uganda” programme, which recruits both UG and PG students, and “Unlimited”, a new industrial placement scheme focusing on social enterprise. As part of this, PhD students at Manchester have recently set up the “Weave” project; whilst this is still very much a work in progress at present, it is hoped that it will be up and running before the end of 2012.

Some Challenges

Several important challenges were recognized, including around the vocabulary used to describe placements: should students be described as ‘interns’, ‘consultants’ or ‘on placement’, and how does their description in each of these ways shape both the experience they have with their hosts and students’ enthusiasm for placements in the first place? The need to manage the various expectations of both students, supervisors and partner organisations was also explored in this session. Emily and Claire acknowledged that there are at least two different approaches to organizing placements for researchers. The first of these is the student-led approach favoured by the Enterprise Centre at Manchester, which encourages students to come to them with ideas about the sorts of placement they want to do and then works on matching them with an appropriate host organization. The second, which is favoured by the ICP, is a more business-led model. Herein, partner organisations are asked to think about the ways in which a student intern or placement-holder could benefit them and to produce a fairly specific project brief and / or person specification that Universities then use to recruit suitable students.

Both approaches bring challenges as well as opportunities. The student-led model relies on students taking responsibility for and showing initiative in recognizing their own training needs, and requires HEIs to identify and form relationships with as many different external partners as are required to provide students with placements that meet their very particular needs. In its provision of a specific brief, the business-led model tends to recruit students who already have the skills that organisations are looking for, rather than allowing those who require more development to improve their skills through placement opportunities. Students also tend to be attracted to placements with large, well-known organisations despite the fact that the majority of them are much more likely to end up working for SMEs. The difficulties of encouraging them to consider placements with smaller companies are only compounded in the context of international placements, since a certain amount of local knowledge is needed to identify suitable hosts from communities of SMEs.

Moving Forward

The group felt strongly that there was a need for better national coordination around placements, especially those developed in collaboration with really big organisations. The current mechanisms for organizing these sorts of placements are chaotic at best; big companies and institutions such as the Tate or the British Library are bombarded with requests from myriad HEIs for them to host students from each individual University. It was suggested that a more collaborative approach – in which a set number of placements are agreed with these host institutions and then offered to PGRs across all (or at least many) HEIs – would be beneficial, particularly to students whose home institutions have, for whatever reason, been less able to form and maintain good working relationships with partner organisations.

Allie Brown (Programme Coordinator, AHRC) - The AHRC's International Placements Scheme

Allie Brown joined us to describe the AHRC's International Placements Scheme (IPS), which was set up as the International Mobility Scheme in 2005 in response to recommendations in the Roberts report. The scheme aims to provide AHRC-funded UK postgraduate students and early career researchers with access to renowned international institutions and resources via short-term fellowships at overseas research institutions. Applicants can apply to spend from three to six months at these institutions, and may apply to another institution in the year(s) following successful placement with their first host. Run annually, the IPS currently offers placements in at four international institutions:

- Library of Congress, Washington DC, USA (partner since 2005)
- National Institutes for the Humanities, Japan (partner since 2008)
- The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, USA (partner since 2012). The AHRC's pilot partnership with the Huntington Library offers 10 applicants an opportunity to spend time here.
- Sarai Research Programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, India (partner since 2012). This media lab in Delhi is a small organisation which in this, its inaugural year as an IPS partner, is offering 5 placements, each capped at a duration of 3 months.

Those supported by the scheme receive a contribution towards the costs of their flights, as well as a monthly allowance additional to the stipend/salary paid as part of their AHRC funding. The average value of an award is £4,300, with £600 of this expected to be spend on flights and the remainder used as a monthly stipend. Take-up for the scheme has grown significantly in recent years, partly as a result of its expansion: a total of 153 awards were made between 2005 and 2011, but the AHRC expects to make 65 awards in 2012 alone. The number of award-holders sent to each institution varies considerably. The six interlinked institutied of the National Institutes for the Humanities, for example, are challenging to recruit to since their selection criteria include good Japanese language skills.

Benefits to Partners

The Library of Congress reports that it has benefitted from the IPS in several ways: in the first instance, the Library is simply keen for its collections to be used and cited as they are by participants in the scheme. More specifically, it has also encouraged IPS participants to organise public engagement events and to advise on gaps in its collections. The Huntingdon Library, one of the AHRC's new partners for 2012, has numerous un-catalogued collections and hopes that placement holders might uncover valuable material in these. More generally, Allie reported that placements sometimes lead to the development of academic collaborations, which not only benefit the host organisation but allow the AHRC itself to fulfil its own remit of furthering research. Home institutions, meanwhile, benefit particularly from the shared wisdom that applicants 'import' back with them from their hosts.

Benefits to Participants

Participants are afforded staff privileges including full access to their hosts' research facilities (in terms of scholarly expertise, as well as material collections), a level of access they could not expect as visitors. They enjoy fantastic opportunities for networking and collaboration – at the Library of Congress, they are invited to give an introductory seminar on their research, as well as a final presentation on the work they have undertaken during their placement, as well as being invited to networking events throughout their stay. Participants also benefit, of course, from their experience of a non-UK research environment. Many of them are seriously considering a career abroad, and find the placement invaluable in helping them make that decision and act on it once they return home.

Challenges

Allie recognised a number of key challenges in running the IPS, among them:

- Awareness. Despite sending out mail-shots to all AHRC award holders and advertising the scheme on their own webpage, the AHRC has traditionally attracted only relatively low numbers of applicants to the scheme. Although this is now increasing the Council is keen to raise the profile of the IPS, especially among Early Career Researchers.
- Administration. The organisation of the scheme is unsurprisingly labour-intensive, occupying some 30-40% of Allie's own full-time role, even with support from an international team and two research officers.
- Accommodation. Not all of the host institutions organise accommodation for placement holders and many struggle to make suitable arrangements on their own.
- Application quality. Although many applicants are excellent they are not universally so, and the Council receives some applications that are not well-researched and sometimes fail to meet even the most basic criteria.

Allie also acknowledged many of the challenges described by previous speakers, particularly in terms of the reliance of the scheme's success on the maintenance of the AHRC's relationships with key contacts within the partner institutions, but would add that having these partnerships is what makes the scheme successful.

The AHRC is now considering the scheme's future expansion. More information about the scheme, including about how to apply, may be found [here](#).

The AHRC's [Research Networking Scheme](#) also facilitates international experiences, with extra budget being available to those proposing projects with an international dimension.

Jessica March (University of Oxford) - Oxford University's International Internship Programme

Oxford's International Internship Programme ([OUIIP](#)) was set up in 2008 to provide the University's students with access to international work experience. It offers summer internships with companies of all shapes and sizes, all over the world. The University has found that the best opportunities are generated where there is an existing relationship with the partner institute. The three key routes for generating internships have been:

1. Oxford alumni (both individually and as representatives of organisations). Most of the programme's partnerships are generated through this route. The fact that so many (up to a third) of Oxford's students are international ensures that it has a rich international community of potential partners upon which to draw.
2. Educational partnerships. The University's admissions team keep a list of international schools with whom they have a relationship, and the programme often partners with these institutions.
3. Business partnerships. Oxford University's Employer Engagement Officer focuses particularly on building and maintaining relationships with various employers, many of whom are, again, key partners for the programme.

Demand for the programme has been extremely high. The programme has doubled in size year on year; in 2012 641 students submitted 1332 applications (each is allowed to submit up to 3 submissions) and the programme provided some 280 placements with 119 partner organisations. Placements are offered in a very wide range of sectors from political think tanks and legal services to luxury travel, and across a wide range of countries.

Employers provide an 8-10 week placement at any point between June and October. Students work on defined projects that must add value to the host organisation, and they submit a report on the work they have done in September or October. Placements are come with an assigned supervisor and either accommodation or a stipend (in some cases, the remuneration is very generous and includes flights) There are also various pockets of funding within the University which some students can apply for. Any UK-based internships in the for-profit sector must pay at least the minimum wage. Beyond ensuring this sort of support, however, the University largely encourages students to be as autonomous as possible in their dealings with partner organisations. Employment agreements are between those partners and the students themselves (rather than the University), and students are expected to make their own arrangements for any necessary immunisations, travel arrangements and visas.

The placements are advertised in January with a firm mid-February deadline. The application process is entirely online, but the University offers some drop-in sessions offering students guidance about the type of placement they might wish to apply for and about how to go about doing so. Most of those who are successful in gaining places are studying ASSH subjects, partly because there is more interest in the placements among that cohort. Although the scheme is open to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and 80% of its most impressive placements

with partners such as the United Nations go to PGTs and PGRs. Whilst partner organisations such as Water Aid may not seem to have any immediate relevance to ASSH students, those placed with them report that their experiences were often all the more valuable for having opened their eyes to the need for their skill sets within this sort of organisation. Student feedback on the programme is, on the whole, very positive. For those who don't make it onto the programme, the University offers alternatives in the form of student consultancies, careers briefings, and work shadowing opportunities.

For more information about the OUIIP please feel free to contact [Fiona Whitehouse](#).

AFTERNOON WORKSHOP

As ever, we asked attendees to spend some time developing potential new resources designed to address the specific issues under review during the day. The following are very brief summaries of some of the ideas that came out of the sixth think tank for resources to facilitate the development of a 'global mindset' among larger cohorts of researchers. It should be noted that we specifically encouraged the group to consider initiatives that did not necessarily involve leaving the country since this is a) difficult for many PGRs / ECRs, especially those with families and b) expensive!

International Summer School

The first group explored the idea of an international summer school hosted in the UK and run by UK PGRs / ECRs, but open to new and prospective undergraduates from around the world. This would be designed to introduce international students to UK culture and to UK methods of teaching and learning, with training sessions and 'mock lectures / seminars' intended to help them acclimatise to studying in the UK. Some of those sessions might be similar to the events that Heather Sears had described in the Copenhagen-Leeds-Oslo International PhD Training Course.

Those running the summer school would need a good understanding of the cultural backgrounds from which students had arrived, as well as at least some language skills – although of course a key part of the summer school's objectives would be to allow new students to intensively practice their English language skills (especially in terms of familiarising themselves with academic language) before the start of the new term. It was suggested that teams of researchers could be sent out on 'exploratory missions' to HEIs in those countries from which a majority of the summer school students were drawn in order to learn what they could about teaching and learning cultures there. Those exploratory teams should then share their experiences of global HEI practice with other members of the summer school team prior to the students' arrival. This would, in theory, not only allow those who were willing and able to spend a period abroad to enjoy the benefits of doing so, but would 'cascade' at least some of those benefits to the much wider group of researchers involved in running the summer school. Those running the school would gain skills in areas such as project management, events organisation, teaching and mentoring, as well as broadening their 'global mindset'.

Student Exchange

The second group proposed a student exchange model of the type exemplified by Erasmus and other schemes, but focussed more around cultural orientation than academic work. The group considered potential funding streams for these sorts of placements and identified alumni and commercial and philanthropic organisations as possible sources of support. They hoped that business leaders from UK and international organisations might be also persuaded to play a more role in this exchange system by leading training sessions or providing on-the-job coaching for participants. The group suggested that one way of engaging employers and encouraging their involvement in this and comparable ways was to emphasise the benefits that it offered to them, rather than just to the students. Those benefits might, for example, include enhanced publicity or promotion of a particular product or service through their sponsorship of events run for participants.

Among the challenges likely to arise during such a project, the group particularly flagged up potential conflicts between HEI's institutional priorities and the objectives of this sort of experience, although they suggested that the incorporation of an exchange programme into the writing-up year(s) of a PhD might mitigate this to some extent.

Home-grown International Mindset

The final group discussed a joint home- and overseas-approach to the development of a 'global mindset'. Their 'home-grown' approach included the use of webinars and Skype sessions and the use of software such as Adobe Connect to allow UK researchers to benefit from virtual attendance at lectures, seminars and training sessions held in overseas universities. They also proposed making more use of visiting professors and recent alumni to provide students with insights into living and working abroad, and suggested the development of a large online database of podcasts and video interviews with these and other appropriate personnel. HEIs would be able to 'brand' any individual contribution made to that centralised resource, and the group suggested that it would be useful to include a forum where people could text or email in specific questions for experts on a particular sector / academic field / country etc. They also suggested that this or a similar forum could be used to stage a comprehensive debate about the benefits of UK/Non-UK and EU/Non-EU research and living, inviting online contributions from those living and working in countries across the world.

As with Group 2, the overseas component of this group's model incorporated an exchange system between universities. They identified language barriers as the most significant potential problem and proposed offering enhanced access to language training for those interested in taking part in an overseas exchange, irrespective of their original course of study.

ASHPIT FUTURE PLANNING

Sarah Kerr reported that Vitae had recently approved the use of any under-spend from their original Innovate funding for ASHPIT to keep the network running at least through the next academic year. Vitae has, furthermore, indicated that it will provide supplementary funding for ASHPIT (reconstituted as a special interest group) to run events up to March 2015. The group will change its name from ASHPIT to the infinitely more elegant SHARE (Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts Researcher Education) network from October 2012.

Both the AHRC and the ESRC have agreed to feed into a steering group for the network, as have representatives of several UK HEIs, including Nottingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford, Southampton, and UCL. However, we are very keen for that steering group to be as representative as possible, and welcome requests for involvement from any member of the mailing list who is interested in playing a role in the future of the network. In particular, **we would be interested in recruiting representative from post-'92 universities to be part of that group**. If you are interested in being a member of it please [send us an email](#). The steering group will be involved in the work of promoting the network and ensuring the development and sharing of its resources, will make suggestions about the focus and format of future think tank events. A smaller management group will retain responsibility for the management and implementation of its annual programme of events. Three events per academic year will continue to be hosted on a rotating basis by different UK HEIs; the host institution will act as the temporary network Chair and will be responsible for conducting its standing policy review, for recruiting speakers, organising the event, and developing and disseminating any resulting resources, including the newsletter.

Having established these basic principles for the continuation of the network, the group proposed the following programme of events for 2012/13:

- Think Tank One: **Methodological Training in the ASH Disciplines** – University of Manchester, November 22nd 2012. (See draft programme below)
- Think Tank Two: **Public Engagement & Impact** – University of Southampton, February 2013
- Think Tank Three: **Research Staff** – to be led by Vitae; location and date TBC.
- Think Tank Four: **Impacts on Policy: Ensuring a Role for Research** – location and date TBC.

If you are interested in contributing to or hosting and chairing an event, please do [get in touch](#).

The group also discussed the need to develop the network's online presence, especially as a means of enhancing and sharing resources arising from or discussed at think tank events. It was proposed that the network might play a particular role in facilitating the sharing of any 'spare' resources developed as part of BGP2, especially in terms of its use to identify and advertise unfilled places at training sessions run in collaborations between HEIs working in new consortia.

We look forward to being involved in these and other new and exciting ventures over the next couple of years!

Draft Programme for First SHARE Think Tank: Thursday 22nd November, University of Manchester

09.30	Arrival with Coffee
10.00	Welcome & Overview
10.10 – 10.45	Presentation – “The Case for Methods Training” an introduction and overview of the case for launching methods programmes for PGRs & ECRs looking at policies, rationale, models and approaches and looking at future models for methods training within consortia (DTCs and BGPII)
10.45 – 11.00	Q&A session
11.00 – 11.45	Case Studies – methods@manchester and artsmethods@manchester as models of good practice in methods training
11.45	Coffee Break
12.00 – 12.40	Group Exercise – integrating the “methods” model – how does the methods training model fit in with researcher development models currently operating in different HEIs, how might these models adapt to take into account methods training? Should they be separate?
12.40 – 13.00	Group Feedback
13.00 – 13.45	Lunch
13.45 – 14.15	Case Study – Methods NW, artsmethods NW and engage@liverpool as methods programmes and working within consortia
14.15 – 14.45	Methods vs Approaches – discussion session on identifying relevant methods training in an interdisciplinary context with input from the research councils (AHRC & ESRC)
14.45 – 15.00	Coffee Break
15.00-16.00	Group Exercise – Engaging ASH researchers in discussions about methods and approaches to research. Identify strategies for engaging PGRs, ECRs & academics. How might this be different from discipline-specific training?
16.00-16.50	Group Feedback
16.15	Summary, Q&A
16.30	Close

SIGN UP NOW!