



Mapping of existing intercultural preparation and debriefing measures in HEIs across Europe

Comprehensive report on good
practices about content & formats

Dr Jan Borm, Dr Joanna Kodzik, Yassine Tmimi
Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

CHAPTER 1 : HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION SURVEY..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

 SUMMARY OF RESULTS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

CHAPTER 2: STUDENT SURVEY ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

 SUMMARY OF RESULTS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

CONCLUSION..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPARATION AND DEBRIEFING MODULES OF MOBILITY..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

Based on observations by HEI staff members **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Based on observations by students **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

 GENERAL CONCLUSION **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

APPENDIX..... ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

 DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REPLIES TO THE HEI SURVEY QUESTIONS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

 DETAILED ANALYSIS OF REPLIES TO STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

Introduction

The value of mobility lies not merely in experiencing different cultures firsthand but in fostering true intercultural competencies through meaningful immersion, reflection, and analysis. While studying abroad provides students with opportunities to enhance academic knowledge, employability, language skills, and personal growth, research shows that it does not automatically lead to the development of intercultural competencies or the reduction of prejudices.

Students often return with unchanged biases and struggle to effectively interact with locals or navigate intercultural challenges. To address these issues, higher education institutions need to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for better intercultural learning.

The PADMICA project (Scalable and Low-resource Preparation and Debriefing Module for Students' Intercultural Competence Development Abroad) aims to bridge this gap by developing comprehensive blended intercultural preparation and debriefing modules.

These modules, grounded in intercultural education theory, are designed to be effective across various institutional settings and cultural contexts, thus enhancing the overall quality of international mobility experiences for students.

This report, a component of the PADMICA project, maps the existing measures for intercultural preparation before mobility, initiatives during, and debriefs after mobility, collectively referred to as 'intercultural interventions'. It identifies good practices and common pitfalls, leading to recommendations for the development of the project modules. The findings are based on two surveys conducted among European higher education institutions (HEIs) and students, developed and implemented as a preparatory task for the intercultural and debriefing module development, resp. work package 2 and 3, within the PADMICA project.

In the literature review of the PADMICA project, provided by Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest, it is highlighted that the “correlation between study abroad experiences and the advancement of intercultural competence” needs to be studied in view of improving study abroad experiences for all stakeholders concerned, be they students, sending HEIs or hosting HEIs. Skrefsrud (2022) has notably pointed out the need for “developing targeted support for pre- and post-mobility that enhances students' understanding of intercultural learning” (p.72).

The purpose of the present report consists in presenting the results of two surveys conducted by the PADMICA team amongst administrative and academic staff of HEIs and outgoing mobility students to better understand stakeholders' perceptions and needs in view of study abroad experiences and the role of interculturality in this context. The aim of the report is to discuss good practices as emerging from the two surveys, to deliver a certain number of recommendations

destined to facilitate the targeting and developing of intercultural modules by the project before (preparation module) and after (debriefing module) mobility.

Chapter 1 is dedicated to the analysis of the results of the HEI survey, Chapter 2 to those of the student survey. The concluding chapter provides several key takeaways and recommendations.

References:

Skrefsrud, T. A. (2022). Why student mobility does not automatically lead to better understanding: Reflections on the concept of intercultural learning. In *The Palgrave handbook of youth mobility and educational migration* (pp. 63-73). Cham: Springer International Publishing

Chapter 1: Higher Education Institution Survey

Summary of results

The HEI survey contained 73 questions. The questions firstly concern general information about the characteristics of the HEIs replying. Further on, details about pre-mobility, during mobility or post-mobility intercultural interventions as provided by the HEIs (if any) is enquired upon.

The replies of 48 participants were received. The number of replies received per question, or set of questions, varies considerably. The questions were not marked as compulsory so that HEIs could answer them according to their level of experience and expertise in the topic. Only 5 questions were answered by all participants in the survey. They concern mostly general information about HEIs. For 5 questions there were no answers at all. 29 questions received 10 or less replies.

General information

This survey represents 17 European countries, including 4 from Central Europe, 6 from Western Europe, 3 from Northern Europe and 4 from Southern Europe.

38 HEIs participated in the survey for a total of 48 survey participants.

The largest group of replies indicates that their institution enrolls annually 1000-5000 students.

20 survey participants indicate that their institutions employ less than 500 staff members.

4 universities send more than 1000 students abroad. 21 participants indicate their institution sends between 100 and 1000 students per year on a study abroad

experience in Europe. The largest group of participants replying indicated that they send up to 10 students abroad outside Europe per year.

The largest group of participants is of the opinion that “when students travel to and are immersed in a place different from home, they learn many interesting and useful things on their own and do so rather effortlessly.”

The largest group of participants is of the opinion that “intercultural interventions before, during or after the study abroad experience [can] enhance a student’s intercultural competence development.”

Participants across different HEIs have provided us with the names of several modules to support students before, during and after their mobility experiences:

- [“Preparation is Half the Battle”](#)
- Cultural Sessions
- Cultural Shock WorkShop
- Intercultural Competence for Studies Abroad – i2MoVe
- [Ich bin dann mal weg: préparer sa mobilité dans un pays germanophone](#)
- Intercultural Fluency
- Interculturele Voorbereiding
- “Vorbereitung auf den Studienaufenthalt an einer ausländischen Hochschule” (“Preparation for a Study Visit to a Foreign University”)
- Ready, Steady, GO !
- EU Co-financed Program COSTABEX
- [Interkulturelles Begleitprogramm: Intercultural accompanying program](#)

Pre-mobility intercultural interventions

53% of the participants indicate that their institution's internationalization policy plan/papers do not include provisions for preparing students for dealing with cultural difference during international mobility, but an almost as large group indicates that it does.

Almost 60% of participants state that their institutions do not offer any intercultural interventions before mobility because of:

- lack of resources, material or human
- lack of students' interest
- lack of students' participation
- lack of main managing support.

67% of participants specify that their institutions offer such interventions at central/institutional level, 22% of the participants note that the interventions are offered at the faculty level and the rest note that their institutions organize such interventions at multiple levels.

28% of the participants state that their institutions offer such interventions online and the same percentage of participants indicated the presence of the intervention on-site as well. 39% of the participants indicated that their institutions offer such interventions both online and on-site.

The largest group of participants at 67% indicated that their institution offers such interventions, notes that they are provided by central or faculty administrative staff. The second largest group standing at 22% indicates that they are provided by academics. The hiring of teaching assistants or outsourcing is only rarely indicated.

More than 66% of the participants state that the IRO (International Relations Office) of their institution oversees such intercultural interventions.

Concerning instructors of such interventions, the largest group of participants at 55% replied that their instructors received prior training.

The duration of intercultural interventions appears to vary according to replies. An almost identical number of responses was collected for the following three duration indications: less than 3 hours, 3-7 hours and beyond 7 hours.

94% of the participants replied indicates that the interventions are not credit-bearing.

Concerning the reasons for not offering credit-bearing interventions, participants replied notably: "It's not mandatory."

Most participants state that intercultural interventions for outgoing students are voluntary.

Some of the institutions attract students to such programmes with goodies or other means (coffee etc.) or try to convince students with arguments as to how such programmes can be of benefit for their future development.

Most of the intercultural intervention programmes focus on culture in general rather than focusing on specific cultures/destinations.

The number of students participating in such programmes varies from 15 to 250 per session.

In total, the number of students reached varies from 30 to 1500.

Some of the HEIs offer such training up to 6 months before the study abroad experience, others 3 months before.

The main learning goals/outcomes of pre-mobility intercultural interventions indicated are providing understanding of culture, dealing with intercultural conflict, racism reduction, preparing for the study abroad experience, study abroad experiences as a life-changing moment, preparation for intercultural shock and preparation for academic success.

The main themes participants wish to be dealt with in intercultural inventions are the theory of culture, culture shock, adaptation techniques, stereotypes,

prejudice, different communication styles, safety issues, practical issues, intercultural competencies, cultural diversity and inclusion, financial management of mobility as well as classical language courses.

The teaching formats of the intercultural interventions indicated are workshops, webinars, group discussions, videos, questionnaires, role plays, online resources, lectures, case studies, language courses, group projects and exercises.

88% of the participants state that their institutions do not employ any specific measuring tools or methods to evaluate students' intercultural competencies. The reasons provided are that their institution does not have the required resources or that such skills are difficult to measure. Only 2 participants indicate that they use specific tools and methods like the final report and Erasmus Skills student questionnaires.

Intercultural interventions during the mobility

78% of the participants state that they do not offer any intercultural interventions during their students' study abroad experience. Those indicating that they do offer such interventions during their students' mobility listed the following aspects: sending a check-in e-mail, connecting students to their mentors by a buddy programme, providing online resources for students abroad, inviting students to share blogs and posts, providing intercultural events, quizzes and lectures.

Those who do not offer interventions stated as reasons lacking staff or resources or that such interventions are not necessary.

Post-mobility intercultural interventions

28% of the participants specified that their institution's internationalization policy plan/papers did not include provisions for post-mobility intercultural interventions, focusing on aspects beyond the immediate logistical, health, safety, and academic concerns related to studying abroad. Nevertheless 11% of the participants mentioned the fact that they have a post-mobility policy for intercultural interventions even though they do not organise any of it during the post mobility period.

Those who do not offer interventions stated as reasons lacking staff or resources or that such interventions are not necessary. Some also indicate lack of time and no interest from students.

22% of the participants in the survey indicate that the post-mobility intercultural intervention should cover such items as self-reflection, sharing of experience and motivating others, recommendations to future candidates, reversal of

culture shock, learning styles in different countries and reflection on positive and negative aspects.

28% of the participants stated that the intercultural interventions before and after the study abroad experience are conceptually linked. They have also mentioned the fact that they are conceptually linked because it is one programme or contents are built on each other.

28% of the participants also noted that the intercultural interventions are provided in their institutions at central/institutional level and on-site by central and faculty administrative staff. The duration of such interventions indicated is mostly 3h up to 10h. In most cases indicated, these interventions are not credit-bearing and attendance is voluntary.

The main teaching formats and assignments for these interventions indicated are lectures, group work, discussions, interactive workshops and e-mails.

To answer the question regarding specific tools and methods in the assessment of the intercultural competencies, certain participants replied that their institutions did not employ any specific measuring tools or methods. Reasons indicated are time issues and the difficulty to measure intercultural competences.

Chapter 2: Student Survey

Summary of results

General information

This survey contains replies from 168 students about their study abroad experience as well as pre-mobility/during study abroad experience and post-mobility programmes. The largest group of students replying to the survey comes from Portugal and Germany. Only 1 student from France, Lithuania, Slovenia and Turkey, respectively, responded.

4-6 months is the most common duration indicated for the study abroad experience. An experience of over 1 year abroad is rare based on the survey results.

Most of the students went on a study abroad experience to a country the culture of which was slightly or moderately different. Going to countries with a significantly different culture is very rare.

Pre-mobility intercultural interventions

The majority agrees or strongly agrees that HEIs should provide courses or trainings to ensure students are well prepared for navigating cultural differences and adapting effectively in their study abroad environments.

64% of the universities that the students enrolled in, did not offer any orientation courses or preparation sessions before study abroad experience, but a large group of HEIs does offer such programmes.

Those students who participated in such courses applied the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during their orientation courses or preparation sessions during their study abroad experience.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes that, according to the students, should be covered in the HEIs pre-departure intercultural preparation include health and safety considerations, differences in academic cultures, cultural knowledge about specific destinations, understanding in general how culture works, problem-solving in unfamiliar situations, communicating effectively across different cultures, fostering connections and relationships in diverse settings, empathy towards and respect for different viewpoints and ways-of-life, resilience and flexibility in the face of challenges and changes, curiosity and willingness to learn from different cultural perspectives.

The students indicate that the following topics should be included in pre-mobility courses: communication with people from other cultures, information about universities, cultural differences, cultural shock, practical information for finding accommodation, colonialism and power relations determined thereby, conflict resolution, budgeting and practical matters, dealing with emotions like alienation or sensory overload in crowded places, dealing with weather, different ways of teaching, practical information how the semester works, language courses, sessions about the history of the host country, social dynamics sessions, provide contact to others who have already been in that country, as well as safety and health.

The students suggested the following topics for intercultural preparation: trainings should include practical cases, trainings should be continued during the international study programme, better connections with students who have already been abroad, list of cultural differences for every country, the host institution should offer help and assistance for incoming students, create alumni networks, provide information about partner institutions, prepare students for different health and safety issues, lectures of psychology (possible depression), well-functioning international office, learning the language of the host institution and preparation of written guides for different host institutions.

Post-mobility intercultural interventions

The largest group of students replying agree or strongly agree with the idea that HEIs should provide post-mobility courses or debriefing sessions for students to reflect upon and make sense of their intercultural experiences after returning from a study abroad programme.

Most HEIs the students are enrolled in do not offer any post-mobility courses. Only very few HEIs offer such post-mobility programmes or sessions.

The majority of students who have participated in post-mobility sessions consider them to be slightly or moderately useful.

The students indicate that the following topics should be included in post-mobility sessions: career development, alumni networking, review of lessons learned, exchange with students planning to go to the same destination, general check-up, cultural differences and reintegration.

Conclusion

Recommendations for preparation and debriefing modules of mobility

Based on observations by HEI staff members:

The survey highlighted the necessity for intercultural interventions both before and after study-abroad experiences. Such actions enhance students' intercultural competence development.

Roughly half of the participating HEIs indicated that their internationalization policy plan or paper includes provisions for such preparation of students, the others do not.

Recommendation: those HEIs who still do not have such provisions are encouraged to include them in their strategy. Those who have made such provisions could perhaps be encouraged to prepare a tutorial, flyer or video for other HEIs.

Pre-mobility

Since those HEIs that explain the absence of pre-mobility intercultural interventions in their institution by lack of resources, the need for an open access pre-mobility module/pack on intercultural issues is clearly demonstrated.

Recommendation: at local and regional level, HEIs might team up to develop such modules or at least joint on-site and/or online sessions to share costs.

Concerning the apparent lack of interest of students in several cases – recommendations:

- to develop dynamic communication (via social media notably) and innovative pedagogy to raise student numbers,
- or to render the module mandatory, or at least offer the option to take it as a credit-bearing course, include the module in the diploma supplement without credits, or integrate it into Europass

Replies show that online and on-site preparation both works well.

Training for teachers of such programmes would have to be offered at a larger scale as lack of resources is an issue with a certain number of HEIs.

The duration of this preparation varies considerably. It would be useful to have a reference grid of knowledge to be transferred/skills to be developed to determine the duration.

Discussions should be held in each HEI if such modules should be mandatory or optional, or not (perhaps introducing the same principles in each partner of a European University Alliance).

It might be an idea to develop together goodies to be offered to students to attract more attention.

Concerning the benefit to students of such programmes, one could develop communication material, flyers, a short video to tell students more about the benefits of participating in such modules.

Some HEIs indicate that they offer such modules 6 months ahead, some 3; 6 months appear useful if language training is involved; 3 months might be sufficient to transmit information and provide some basic skills training.

Some indications concerning wished-for content of modules:

- some would like the module to focus on: understanding of culture/cultural differences/intercultural conflict/cultural diversity
- some wish for general preparation for study abroad experience (including as a life-changing moment)
- culture shock
- preparation for academic success during the experience
- adaptation techniques
- practical issues including safety, financial management of mobility and language preparation

Format: the formats indicated are workshops, webinars, group discussions, videos, questionnaires, role plays, online sources, lectures, case studies, language courses, group projects and exercises.

Recommendation concerning format: depending on available resources, one could imagine a common set of actions in the module for all students going abroad, or, for instance, all Erasmus+ students (about practicalities concerning the programme and preparing/organizing one's stay); culture-specific sessions, for instance one class/online lecture or workshop, for certain cultural areas that are represented among the staff or for which resources can be brought in from outside; colleagues in English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese studies could for instance be fairly easily mobilized; some universities have Scandinavian

and other European area studies (Finnish, Slav languages etc.) If such language studies do not cover most areas, it might be possible to mobilize international staff in the HEI or colleagues who have spent some time abroad.

Perhaps a recommendation for the EU could be formulated, to accompany such efforts financially as they clearly contribute to greater inclusion and cohesion in Europe.

Two HEIs indicated that they have methods to evaluate the knowledge/skills students have after the intercultural intervention.

During mobility

Most indicate that they do not have such interventions which might reflect the idea that there is no urgent need for such offers/ Those who do mainly focus on contacts with students, sending

- online resources
- providing online mentoring
- inviting students to write blogs and posters
- sending a check-in e-mail

Post-mobility

Most HEIs do not appear to offer post-mobility interventions and either consider them unnecessary (lack of interest and time of students), or lacking resources to provide such offers.

Some indicate that such post-mobility interventions might be useful to share experience with future student-candidates that aim for an experience abroad and to motivate them.

Indications of duration vary between 3 and 10 hours. Objectives of such interventions should be clearly defined to determine the adequate duration of such sessions.

Those offering such interventions use methods like lectures, group work, discussions, interactive workshops and e-mails. Face-to-face interventions between returning and outgoing students appear to be the ideal method to apply.

One would have to develop methods to motivate returning students to participate in such interventions.

Recommendation: a minimal method might consist in providing one or two contacts of Erasmus+ alumni for outgoing students to allow the latter to ask a few questions. This could be done via social media, perhaps.

Based on observations by students:

The recommendations are based mostly on replies from German and Portuguese students who together represent by far the largest group participating in the survey.

These students spent 4-6 months abroad on average during their mobility experience. The difference between their home culture and the culture of the country they spent their mobility was indicated as slight or moderate. Most of these student state that they had not benefited from pre-mobility intercultural interventions since their home institution did not offer any. They all clearly state that there is a need for pre-mobility intercultural interventions, especially:

- courses dedicated to negotiating cultural differences
- adapting effectively in the study-abroad environment.

Students having participated in pre-mobility intercultural interventions are of the opinion that the latter were beneficial for them.

Pre-mobility recommendations

The students suggested the following topics for intercultural preparation:

- trainings should include practical cases,
- better connections with students who have already been abroad,
- list of cultural differences for every country,
- the host institution should offer help and assistance for incoming students,
- create alumni networks,
- provide information about partner institutions,
- prepare students for different health and safety issues,
- lectures of psychology (possible depression)
- learning the language of the host institution and preparation of written guides for different host institutions.

Post-mobility recommendations

The largest number of students indicate that they would like to receive post-mobility debriefing sessions on their intercultural experience.

However, those having participated in post-mobility debriefs consider them to have been only slightly or moderately useful.

The need for more efficient post-mobility debriefs is thus apparent from the students' point-of-view. Those having participated in such debriefs indicate that the latter should notably be focused on:

- career development,
- alumni networking,
- review of lessons learned,
- exchange with students planning to go to the same destination,
- general check-up,
- cultural differences and reintegration.

The students therefore manifest their interest in such post-mobility debriefs but would like these to be more career oriented.

General conclusion

The need for pre-mobility modules on intercultural issues is manifest, but this is far from being the most common practice. Similarly, interest in post-mobility training is voiced, but the effectiveness is questioned if offers are not clearly career oriented.

Open access online modules are no doubt an efficient way to help HEIs to develop such pre-mobility offers.

The EU might consider offering financial incentives, at least as far as training on the cultures of Europe is concerned, since a better understanding of these cultures is conducive to greater inclusion and cohesion of the EU.

The effectiveness of such trainings can be enhanced by:

- developing such offers as part of the university's internationalization policy/plan
- developing common offers at the level of European University Alliances
- drawing on adapted communication to reach students
- developing a network of Erasmus+ alumni at each HEI in view of buddy programmes, sharing of experience etc.
- optimizing career-oriented aspects in post-mobility offers.

Despite the small sample size, these survey results may already outline a potential trend and confirm expectations on the offering of intercultural interventions by HEIs in Europe. The survey could be further refined and scaled up to build a larger dataset with a view to deriving more detailed and generalizable conclusions on the topic that may further feed into outgoing mobility policy processes.

APPENDIX

Detailed analysis of replies to the HEI survey questions

Question 1. What is the name of your higher education institution?

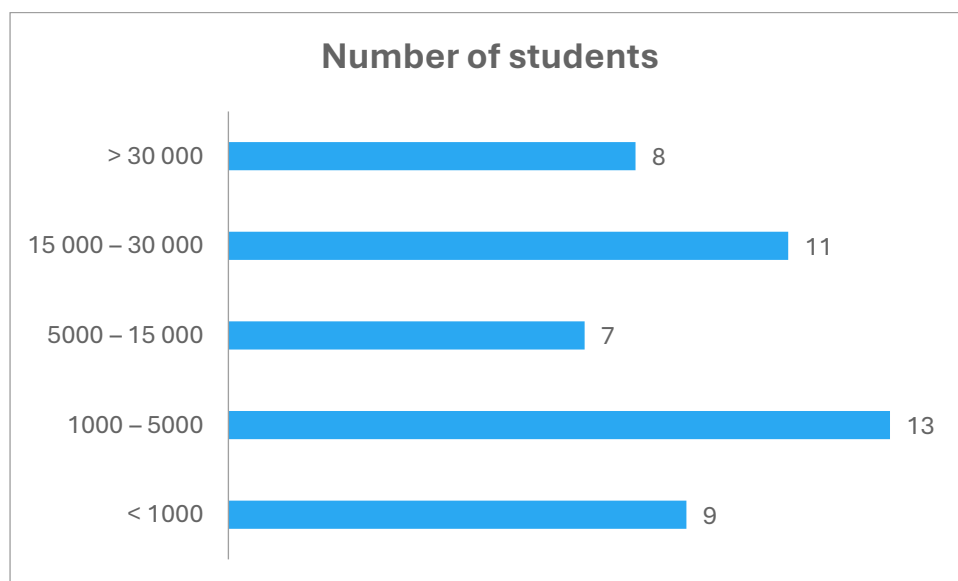
44 replies indicated the name of their institution.

Question 2. In which country is your institution located?

44 respondents indicated their university, 4 did not. The highest number of replies – seven - came from Germany. The lowest number, i.e. – one – came from Belgium, Denmark, Ireland and Serbia. The survey contains replies from 17 countries, 4 from Central Europe (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), 6 from Western Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland), 3 from Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and 4 from Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Serbia). The most largely represented group of replies comes from Western Europe.

Question 3. On average, how many students are enrolled at your institution each academic year?

Among the participants in the survey (i.e. 48), the largest number of replies – 14 – concern universities enrolling annually 1000-4999 students. 8 universities represent the largest number of enrolled students, i.e. more than 30 000 students. 9 universities enroll less than 1000 students each per annum, representing the smallest number of students.



Question 4. How many staff members are employed at your institution?

Among the participants in the survey (i.e. 48 HEIs), the largest group – 20 – indicates less than 500 staff members of their institution. The smallest group – i.e. 3 participants – refer to more than 10000 staff members in their institution.



Question 5. On average, how many students from your institution study abroad each academic year?

Regarding the question of how many students each institution sends abroad in Europe to study each year different ranges were indicated either at faculty or institutional level. The ranges can be summed up as follows:

1-10 students per year: 3

11-49: 7

50 to 99: 8

100 – 499: 13

500-999: 9

1000 and beyond: 4

No indications : 4

This means that 18 participants out of 44 (i.e. just over 1/3) indicate figures of less than 100 students and 21 participants (almost half of all replies) between 100 and 1000 students, with four participants stating that their HEI sends over 1000 (the latter coming from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain).

Question 6. On average, how many students from your institution go to study abroad destinations outside of Europe each academic year?

The average numbers of students sent to study abroad outside Europe each year is the following:

0-10 students per year: 17

11-49: 5

50 to 99: 5

100 – 499: 11

500-999: 3

1000 and beyond: 0

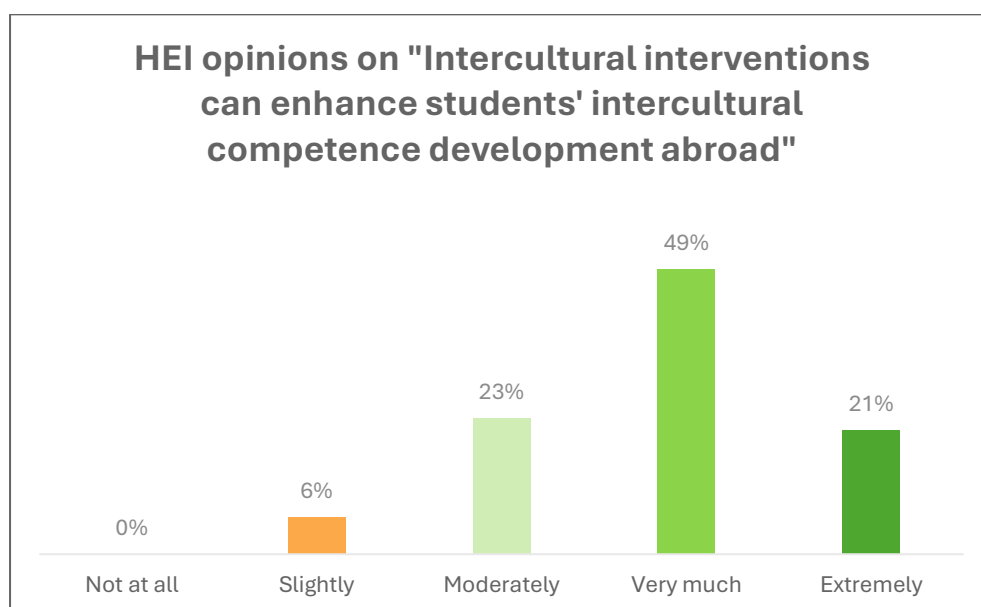
No indications : 5 Out of a total of 41 participants indicating figures, more than a third state that their institutions send between 0 and 10 students abroad outside Europe, the next larger group, representing roughly ¼, being the 100 to 499 group.

Question 7. To what extent do you agree with this assumption: 'When students travel to and are immersed in a place different from home, they learn many interesting and useful things on their own, and do so rather effortlessly.'

Due to technical difficulties with the platform, which made one of the answer options unselectable, the responses to this question could not be processed correctly.

Question 8. In your opinion, to what extent can intercultural interventions before, during or after the study abroad experience enhance a student’s intercultural competence development?

Most universities – i.e. 23 (out of 47 in this question) – are of the opinion that “intercultural interventions before, during or after the study abroad experience enhance a student’s intercultural competence development” very much. Only 3 universities – the smallest group of replies - are of the opinion that “intercultural interventions before, during or after the study abroad experience enhance a student’s intercultural competence development” slightly. The majority of HEIs – i.e. 33 – are of the opinion that “intercultural interventions before, during or after the study abroad experience enhance a student’s intercultural competence development”.



Question 9. Does your institution's internationalization policy plan/papers include provisions for preparing students for international mobility, addressing not only logistical, health, safety, and academic aspects but also broader intercultural preparation for studying abroad?

The majority of HEIs – 25 (out of 47), i.e. 53% - state that their institution’s internationalization policy plan/papers does not include provisions for preparing students for international mobility, notably broader intercultural preparation for studying abroad. 22 HEIs (out of 47), i.e. 47% - state that they do.

Question 10. Does your institution offer any intercultural interventions (courses, trainings, seminars...) for students before their study abroad experience?

The majority of HEIs – 28, i.e. 60% – do not offer any intercultural inventions for students before their study abroad experiences:

Intercultural interventions offered by HEIs before student mobility



Question 10A. Why not?

19 replies were provided to the question why your institution does not “offer any intercultural interventions (courses, trainings, seminars...) for students before their study abroad experience”. The principal reasons indicated are:

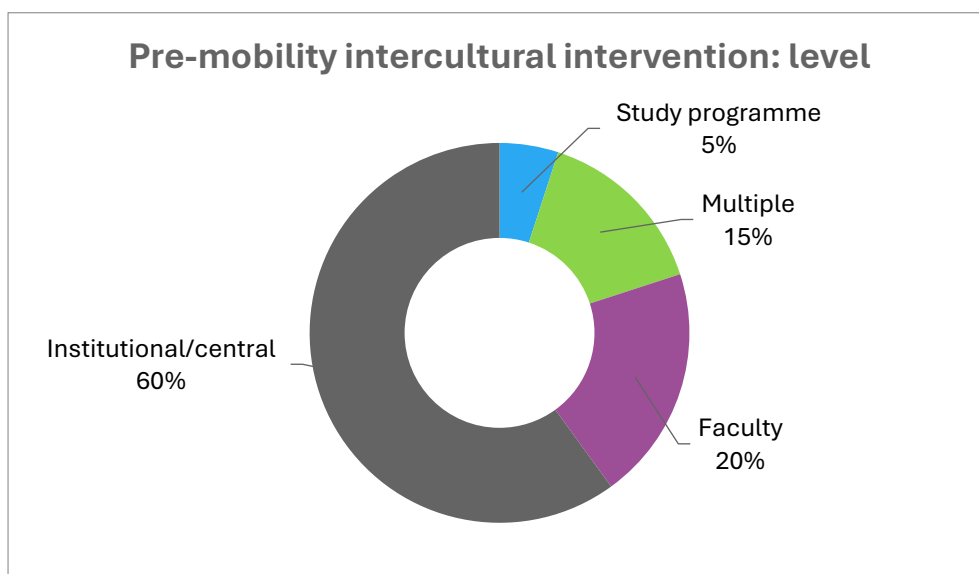
- Lack of resources (material or human)
- Lack of students' interest
- Lack of students' participation
- Lack of managing support

Question 11. What is the title of the intercultural intervention? Also please provide any relevant links to webpages concerning the intercultural intervention, if available?

19 HEIs have replied to the question “What is the title of the intercultural intervention?” 1 replied “don't know”, 18 either copied the relevant title and/or website.

Question 12. At what level is the intercultural intervention provided? Please specify if offered at multiple levels.

20 HEIs replied to the question. The majority – i.e. 12 – replied that intercultural intervention is provided by them at central/institutional level. 1 HEI indicated that it is provided at study programme level, 3 at multiple levels and 4 at faculty level:



Question 12A. Please specify if offered at multiple levels.

The intellectual intervention provided at multiple levels in 3 HEIs is organised respectively:

- 1) for specific degree programmes and for all students in key competences
- 2) by the Dept of International Relations
- 3) both at central/institutional and faculty levels

Question 13. What is the mode of delivery of the intercultural intervention?

Concerning the mode of delivery of such interventions, 18 HEIs replied. 6 HEIs – i.e. – 33% - provide such interventions entirely online, while 5 HEIs – 28% - offer only on-site interventions. 7 HEIs – i.e. 39 % - provide both on site and online interventions (blended). The online mode of delivery thus represents the majority of replies.

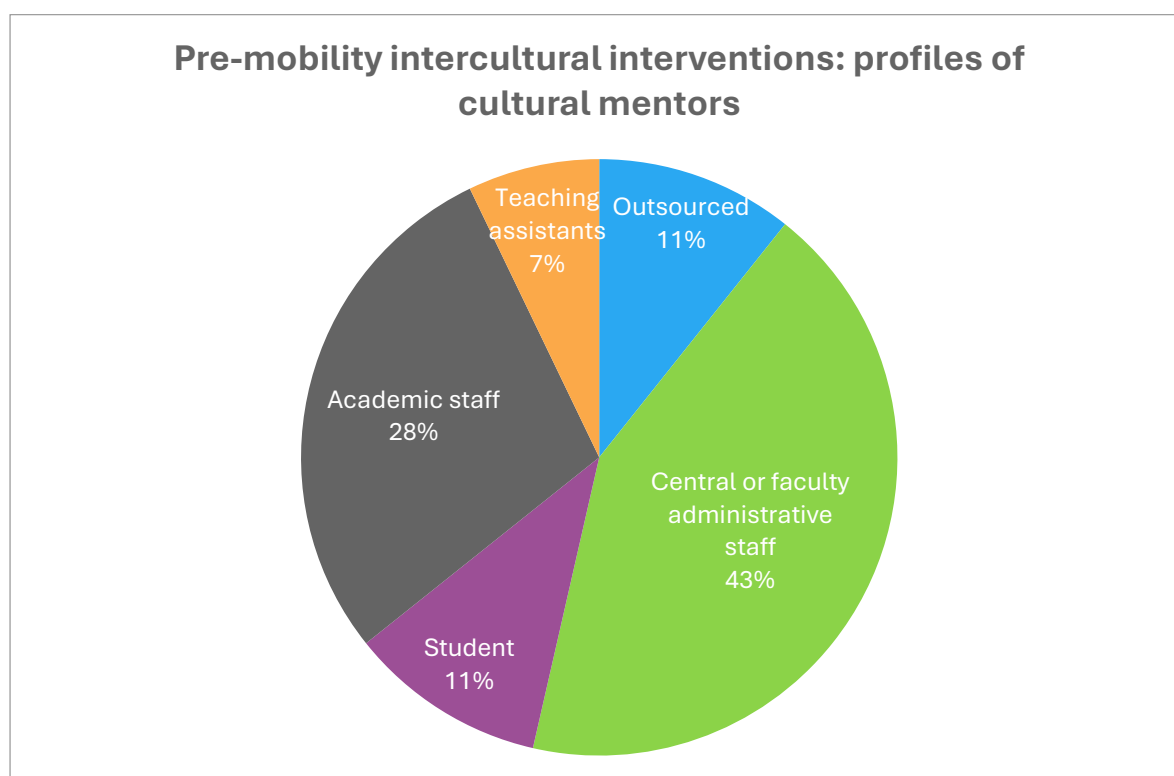
Question 13A. Please specify how the online and on-site components relate if blended

5 replies were provided:

The workshop is held on site, but streamed also online for those not able to participate.
central level: on-site, faculty level: varies
As specified, we offer online trainings and discuss cultural preparations during pre-departure events.
As specified above in answer No. 11.
An interrelated program

Question 14. What is the profile of the instructor/mentor/trainer/teacher responsible for delivering the intercultural intervention?

28 HEIs replied to this question. The largest group of HEIs replying, that-is-to-say 12 HEIs (or 43%) the intercultural interventions are provided by central or faculty administrative staff. In the second largest group (8 HEIs = 28%) such interventions are provided by academic staff. In the smallest group such interventions are either outsourced (3 replies= 11%) or provided by students 3 replies= 11%) or teaching assistants (2 replies= 7%):



Question 14A. Please specify the responsible department, unit, office...

14 HEIs responded to the question. 6 HEIs replied that their International office is the responsible unit. The other replies are as follows:

We are all trainers of the professional skills team in the Faculty. The team works in close coordination with the academic director 'Career Services & Corporate Relations
Vice-dean for Quality and International Affairs
Linguistic Center
la Direction des Relations Internationales (DRI)
It is the Department of Medical Sciences that offer a bit more to their outgoing students, but their students are not away on an exchange, it is more like an traineeship.
International office + students talking about their own experiences with e.g. culture shock and how to prepare

International Center
Faculty of Education, Department of English Language and Literature
Department of International Affairs, Faculties, Department of Academic Affairs
Department for International Relations
Intercultural Learning Lab

Question 14B. Did they receive any training?

17 replies to the question were collected. 67% replied "YES", 33% "NO". 4 HEIs specified:

yes, some are trained intercultural trainers
Yes, in a previous job
The professor is a researched in the area of culture shock during student mobility abroad.
Some of faculty staff has been trained

Question 15. What is the duration of the intercultural intervention? Also, please specify if students course work and how many hours this approximately takes.

16 HEIs responded to the question "What is the duration of the intercultural intervention?". The following categories were indicated:

- less than 3 hours: 5 HEIs
- 3-7 hours: 5 HEIs
- More than 7 hours: 4 HEIs

Question 16. Is the intercultural intervention credit-bearing?

18 HEIs replied to the question. In 2 HEIs the intercultural intervention is credit-bearing and in 16 it is not. The majority of HEI's, i.e. 89%, is thus not attributing credits for this kind of intervention, while 11% do.

Question 16A. Please specify the number of ECTS credits

Only one reply was provided: "In case of incoming students as part of the subject Career Orientation (2 ECTS for Intercultural Fluency, the whole subject 5 ECTS), for outgoing students - recognized only for those who have Career Orientation as elective subject."

Question 16B. Please specify if other forms of formal recognition are used.

Only one reply was provided: "Certificate of Attendance".

Question 16C. Please specify any consequences for not succeeding.

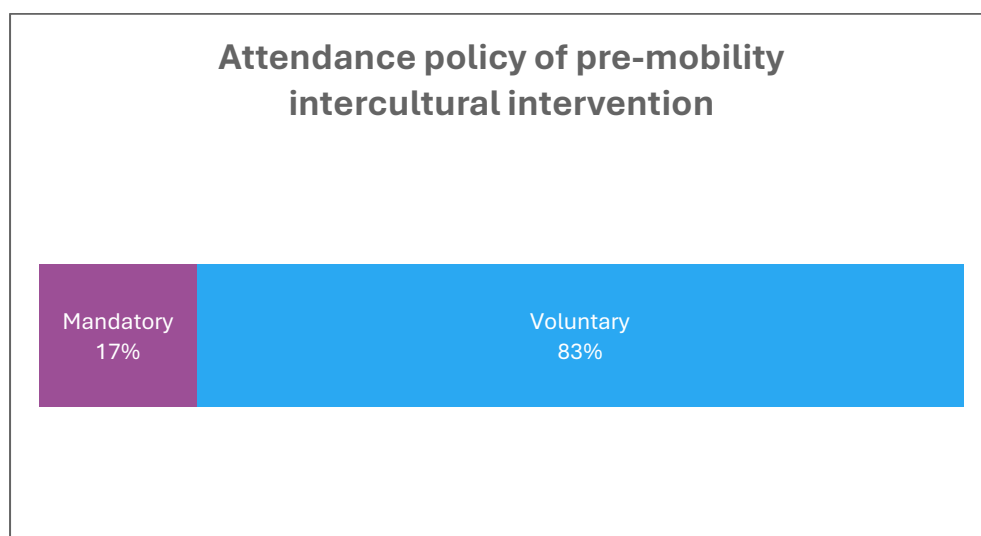
No reply provided.

Question 16D. Please specify why your intercultural intervention does not have any form of recognition.

10 HEIs provided answers. The reasons are different in each case.

Question 17. What is the attendance policy of the intercultural intervention for outgoing students?

18 HEIs replied to the question. The majority of replies – 15 – indicates that attendance policy of the intercultural intervention for outgoing students is voluntary. In 3 HEIs only it is mandatory. In the majority of HEIs having answered the question – i.e. 83% - student participation in intercultural interventions for outgoing students is voluntary. In 17% of HEIs having replied to the question, it is mandatory.



Question 17A. Please specify how participation is enforced if it is mandatory/how not attending is punished.

The 3 HEIs which practice mandatory attendance policies have explained how they implement this mandatory policy and the replies are as follows:

It's mandatory for students participating in LMUexchange outside of Europe and voluntary for students taking part in the Erasmus program. We do not punish if they don't attend. We have a very high attendance rate (95% or higher).
It is a before mobility procedure the students must do according the mobility call

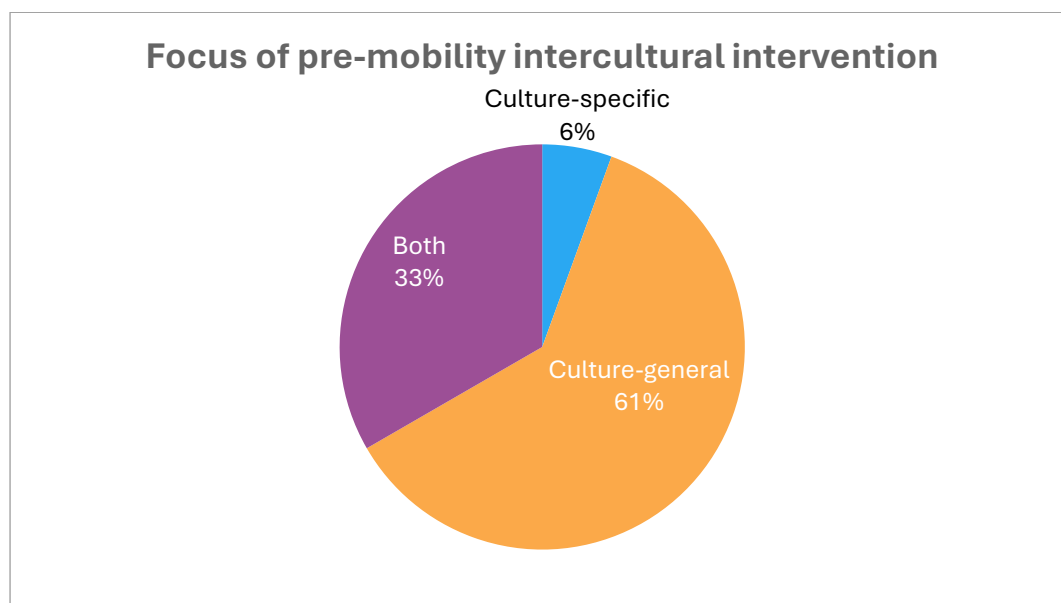
Before having all the documentation signed, they have to participate in the training. If there are not many outgoing students, the training is shortened and sometimes held online. For incoming students it is always onsite and obligatory.

Question 17B. Please specify how you motivate students to attend if voluntary.

12 replies to the question were received. 3 out of 12 of the HEIs concerned try to attract students with goodies and/or other items (T-Shirts, coffee etc.). 5 are trying to convince students with arguments that these interventions are of benefit for their future professional orientation and development.

Question 18. Is the intercultural intervention focused on specific cultures/destinations or focused on culture(s) in general?

18 HEIs replied to the question. The majority of HEIs, 11, i.e. 61%, state that their interventions are focused on culture in general. Only 1 HEI, i.e. 6%, states that the intervention is dedicated to a specific culture. 6 HEIs, i.e. 33%, reply that they offer interventions which deal both with the culture in general and specific cultures/destinations:



Question 18A. Please specify if both.

4 HEIs out of the 6 which offer both a general and a specific focus replied to this question as follows:

The training is culture general, but we offer assignments/literature to explore culture specific

Lecturer talks about culture shock and its stages in general, and there are students present who have participated in a mobility abroad, who provide their experiences with specific countries.

Incoming E+ students have to prepare some tasks regarding the countries where their Erasmus colleagues come from. Outgoing students have to prepare short general presentation about cultural specifics of the country of their E+ destination. Other topics are more general ...

Depending if there are enough students for a certain destination; then we can offer culture-specific workshops.

Question 19. What is the approximate number of students who participate in each session of the intercultural intervention? Is the number of participants per session of the intercultural intervention intentionally set? If so, please explain the rationale behind this choice.

16 replies were received to this set of three of questions. 11 replies provide a figure, varying from 15 to 250. 5 replies do not provide any numbers. No replies were provided for the second and third question.

Question 19A. What is the approximate total number of students reached?

14 replies were received in relation to this question. The approximate number of students reached varies from 30 to 1500.

Question 20. How much time (on average) is there between the intercultural intervention and the students' departure? Is the timing of the intercultural intervention intentionally set? If so, please explain the rationale behind this choice.

15 replies were provided to this set of questions. In response to the first question, the earliest possibility to participate indicated is 6 months before departure. 5 replies indicate 3 months. No replies were given to the second and third question.

Question 21. What are the main learning goals/outcomes of your pre-mobility intercultural intervention?

14 replies were received. One reply lists 16 outcomes. The others list 1-6 outcomes. The main items listed are:

- Providing understanding of culture
- Dealing with intercultural conflict
- Racism reduction
- Prepare for the study abroad experience
- Study abroad experience is a life-changing moment
- Preparation for intercultural shock
- Preparation for academic success

Only one reply distinguishes between pre-departure/in country/re-entry items.

Question 22. Briefly describe the main themes/topics/theory covered in your pre-mobility intercultural intervention.

The 14 replies received provide the following indications about pre-mobility interventions:

Theory of culture, culture shock, adaption techniques, exchange of coping mechanisms with returnees
Stereotypes, prejudices, cultural dimensions (Hofstede), cultural metaphors, culture shock, different communicatin styles etc.
see the learning outcomes above.
See above
Safety issues, practical issues, culture shock etc.
Intercultural competence, intercultural communication, cultural diversity and inclusion, managing the difference, cultural shock, moving abroad, coil
interdependent-independent, biasies, prejudice, different teaching styles
Financial Management of Mobility / Administrative process of Mobility
Culture shock rollercoaster, iceberg model of culture, 'the onion model'
Cultural shock after arrival to the destination, and then after arrival back home
Classical language course
application, home, LA
(reverse) culture shock, frames of reference, what is culture and how is it constructed, dealing with culture differences (culture relativism, culture universalism, ethnocentrism). This theory is delivered with lots of personal examples/experiences from the trainer.
The up and down of cultural change
Changing routines, roles, relationships, etc.
What to do in the event of "culture shock"?
Strategies for successful orientation in the host country

Question 23. Briefly describe the main teaching formats and student assignments used in your pre-mobility intercultural intervention. For example lecture, case studies, group projects, role-plays, writing a paper, readings...

The teaching formats described are the following:

- Workshop
- Webinar
- Group discussions
- Videos
- Questionaries
- Role plays
- Using online resources
- Lectures

- Case studies
- Language courses
- Group projects
- Exercises

Question 24. Do you employ any specific measuring tools or assessment methods to evaluate students' intercultural competencies prior to their study abroad experience?

16 replies. The majority – 14, i.e. 88% - does not employ any specific measuring tools or methods to evaluate students' intercultural competencies. Only 2 HEIs – i.e. 12% - employ specific tools or methods.

Question 24A. Specify the measuring tool/assessment method.

The 2 HEIs using specific tools or methods have indicated which ones they use:

- Final report
- Erasmus student skills questionnaire (not mandatory)

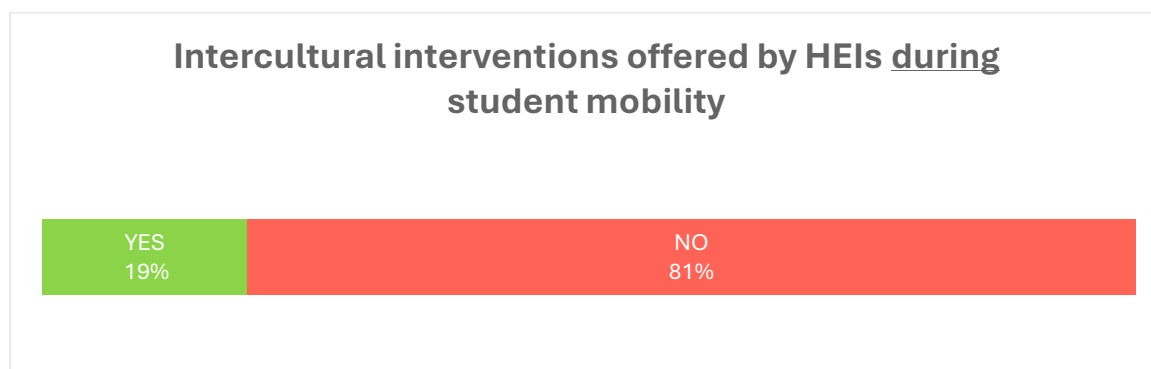
Question 24B. Why not?

10 of the 14 HEIs which do not use specific tools or methods have indicated the following reasons:

yes and no - those students that have Intercultural Fluency as part of the subject have this course assesst but as complete/not complete
we have just started with this kind of workshops
We do a reflection test before, but because of time not a mesuring afterwards
This is not possible due to the current resources.
That would be very difficult to measure!
no capacities
It is voluntary component of the preparation of the student
it is difficult to have a quick assessment tool embbeded in the virtual campus and the most interesting of that would be the student can see own results brefore and after
I'm in charge of incoming students
Classical ones

Question 25. Does your higher education institution offer any intercultural interventions (e.g. service-learning projects with host culture counterparts) for students during their study abroad experience?

48 replies were received. The majority – 39, i.e. 81% - states that they do not offer any intercultural interventions during the students' study abroad experience. 9 replies – i.e. 19% - state that they do.



Question 25A. Please specify the main features of your intercultural invention(s).

Those indicating that they do offer interventions during mobility list the following main features of such interventions:

We only send 'checking in' emails to our students when abroad.
We have Buddy Program, where international students are connected to their mentors, there are a lot of integration events, including trips to different polish cities
Speaking workshop about French culture are proposed for incoming student. But I'm not the one who drives these ones
See above learning goals
Online resources, invitation to share blog posts in answer to two separately uploaded self-reflection questions.
Intercultural events, quiz, lectures.
Incoming students - first 2-3 weeks and if neede additional meetings with individuals; outgoing students up to 1 week during stay abroad and aditional meetings if needed
changing Ia, simply talk
acculturative stress management

Question 25B. Please specify why not.

21 replies out of 39 that indicate that their HEI does not offer interventions during the mobility list reasons. The principal items listed are:

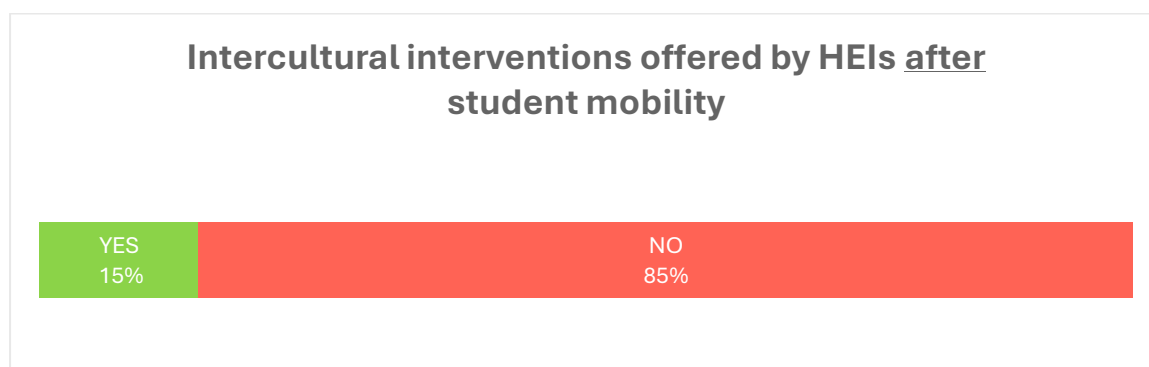
- Lack of staff or resources
- Idea that this is not necessary

Question 26. Does your institution's internationalization policy plan/papers include provisions for post-mobility intercultural interventions, focusing on aspects beyond the immediate logistical, health, safety, and academic concerns related to studying abroad?

47 replies to the question were received. A significant majority, 36 responses (77%), reported that their Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) do not include provisions for post-mobility interventions in their internationalization policy plans. Conversely, 11 responses (23%) indicated that their HEIs do have such provisions.

Question 27. Does your institution provide any intercultural interventions (courses, trainings, seminars...) for students after their study abroad experience?

48 replies were received. The majority of replies, that-is-to-say 41, i.e. 85% - indicate that their HEI does not provide any post-mobility offers. 7, i.e. 15%, say it does.



Question 27A. Why not?

Out of the 41 replies, 25 state the reasons why they do not offer post-mobility interventions:

- some indicate that they consider such offers pointless
- lack of staff
- time issues
- no interest from the students
- no funds available

Question 27B. What topics/issues would you like to cover in an intercultural intervention after the study abroad experience?

19 replies indicate which topics they would like to see covered by post-mobility intercultural interventions. The principal items are:

- self-reflection
- sharing experience and motivating others
- recommend to future candidates

- reverse culture shock
- learning styles in different countries
- reflection on negative and positive experience

Question 28. Are the intercultural interventions before and after the study abroad experience conceptually linked? Is material introduced in the pre-mobility intervention revisited in the post-mobility intervention?

7 replies were received. 6 replies - i.e. 86% - state "yes", 1 - i.e. 14% - "no". A conceptual link between the pre- and post-mobility intercultural interventions is evidently preferred.

Question 28A. Please briefly explain why they are conceptually linked.

The 8 replies to the question received indicated the following items:

Yes
We discuss about same topics.
There will be reflections on the culture shock rollercoaster and how the students experienced this.
No
It is one program
E.g. We pick up on the expectations (also in terms of stereotypes and prejudices) the students had before they went abroad and reflect those together with the experiences they made. We also look at the W-curve of cultural adjustment.
Contents build upon one another
A debriefing and reflection

Question 29. What is the title of the intercultural intervention? Also please provide any relevant links to webpages concerning the intercultural intervention, if available.

7 replies to this question were provided. 6 replies specified the title of their intercultural intervention. One provided a link. The answers are as follows:

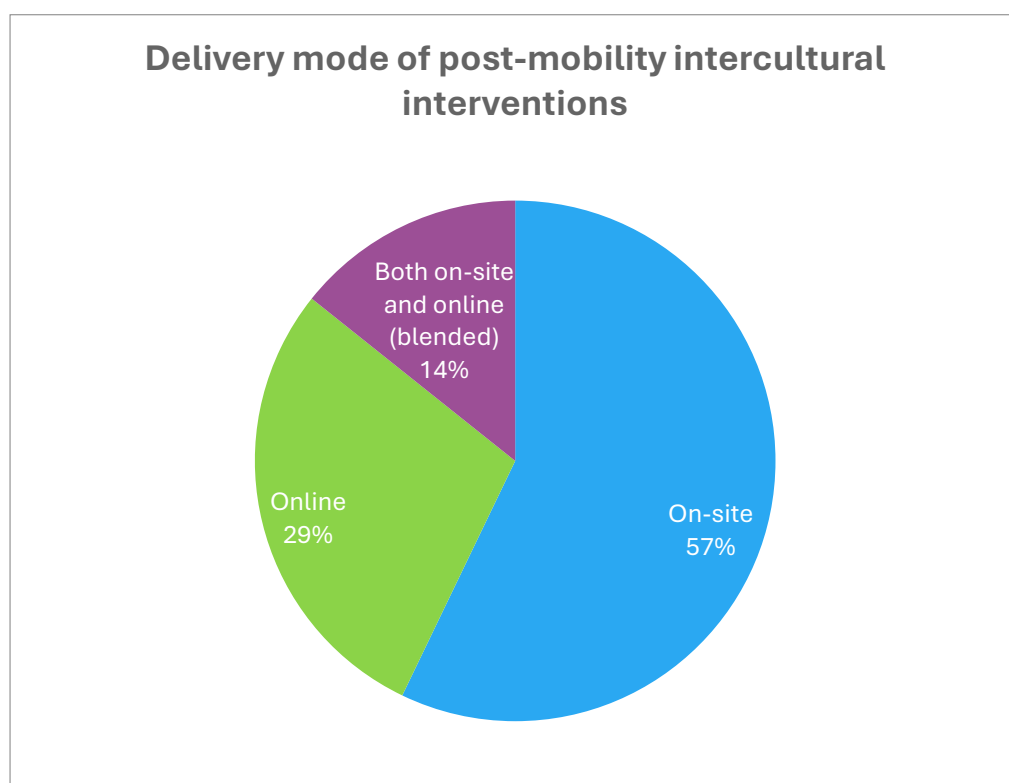
www.lmu.de/international/interkulturelles
'Welcome back event'
using your international experience when searching for a job
See above
same as before the mobility
Post-mobility orientatin
Intercultural Navigator - Debriefing Workshop

Question 30. At what level is the intercultural intervention provided?

7 replies were received. 6 replies – i.e. 86 % - indicate that these interventions are provided at central/institutional level, 1 - i.e. 14% - at faculty level.

Question 31. What is the mode of delivery of the intercultural intervention?

7 replies were received. 4 replies – i.e. 57% - indicate that the mode of delivery is on-site, 2 – i.e. 29% - online and 1 – 14% - both on-site and online.



Question 32. What is the profile of the instructor/mentor/trainer/teacher responsible for delivering the intercultural intervention?

7 replies were received. 4 replies – i.e. 57% - indicate that the profile of the instructor is from central or faculty or administrative staff, 2 – i.e. 29% - academic staff and 1 – i.e. 14% - outsourced.

Questions 32A.; 32B.; 32C : no answer

Question 33. What is the duration of the intercultural intervention? Also please specify if students course work and how many hours this approximately takes.

6 replies were received in response to this set of three questions. The answers are as follows:

one afternoon
i don't know the specifics
3 hours in person
3 hours
2
10 hours in total although students may do more exercises if they want and spent more time

Question 34. Is the intercultural intervention credit-bearing?

7 replies were received. 1 reply indicates that the intervention is credit-bearing, 6 that it is not. This is largely in line with the pre-mobility interventions.

Question 34A. Please specify the number of ECTS credits if credit-bearing?

1 reply was received:

- one module before and after are all together

Question 34B. Please specify if other forms of formal recognition are used?

1 reply was received:

- Certificate of Attendance

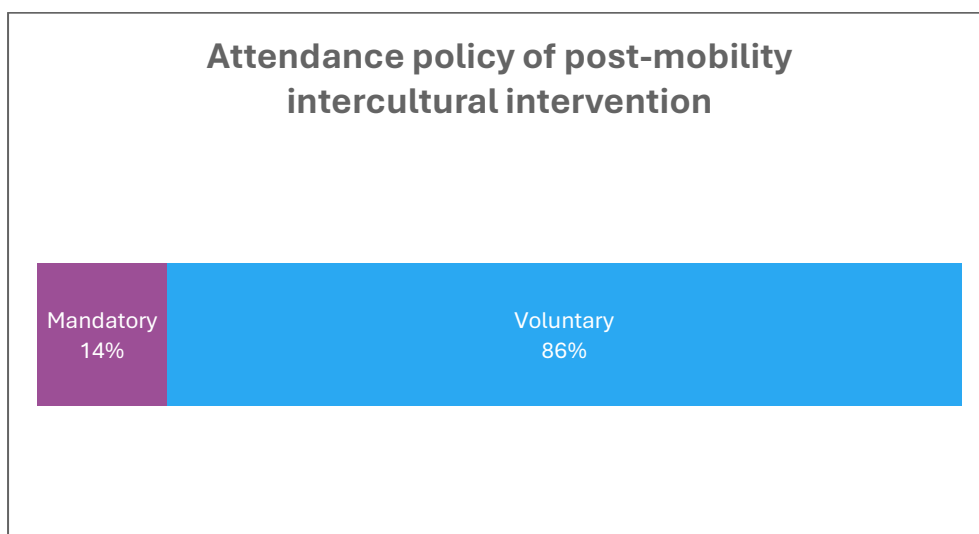
Question 34C. Please specify why the intercultural intervention is not recognized?

3 replies were provided. The answers are as follows:

See previous answer
It is not mandatory
i don't know

Question 35. What is the attendance policy of the intercultural intervention for outgoing student?

7 replies were received. 6 state that the attendance policy of the intercultural intervention for outgoing students is voluntary, 1 that it is mandatory. This is in line with the pre-mobility intercultural interventions.



Question 35A. Please specify how participation is enforced if it is mandatory/how not attending is punished?

1 reply received:

- It's the same as the before the mobility section.

Question 35B. Please specify how you motivate students to attend if voluntary?

5 replies specified how their HEI motivates students to attend on an voluntary basis. The replies are as follows:

See above
Quite
i don't know, this is conducted by the career centre
Communication
A chance to reflect with fellow students on their study abroad experience

Question 36. What is the approximate number of students who participate in each session of the intercultural intervention?

6 replies. 3 indicate the number of students, varying from very few to 100.

Question 36A. What is the approximate total number of students reached? Is the number of participants per session of the intercultural intervention intentionally set? If so, please explain the rationale behind this choice.

19 replies to this set of questions were received. 7 indicate the approximate total number of students reached, which varies from 7 to 600 students.

Question 37. How much time (on average) is there between the intercultural intervention and the students' return home? Is the timing of the intercultural intervention intentionally set? If so, please explain the rationale behind this choice.

6 replies to this set of questions were received. 4 indicate between 1 and 2 months, which is significantly shorter than the time reported between the pre-mobility intercultural measure and the students' departure (3-6 months).

Question 38. What are the main learning goals/outcomes of your post-mobility intercultural intervention?

The following 6 replies were received:

to learn how to use your international experience when looking for a job
Students understand how they can use the things learned during their mobility period in the future (hidden competencies).
Self-reflection, transferability of skills gained abroad
See above
Reflection
Prepare them for re-entry shock, reflect on the soft and hard skills learned while abroad, get them involved in the preparation of the new generation and in the integration of international students at LMU, show them how to use their new skills in a job interview and how to present it on their resumé.

Question 39. Briefly describe the main themes/topics/theory covered in your post-mobility intercultural intervention.

The following 4 replies were received:

See above
S. 38
job search
Describe initiatives that would allow students to build on their study abroad experience e.g. cultural exchange ambassador

Question 40. Briefly describe the main teaching formats and student assignments used in your post-mobility intercultural intervention. For example lecture, case studies, group projects, role-plays, writing a paper, readings...

6 replies were received, indicating the following items:

See3 above
lecture, group work & discussions
lecture

It's the same as the before the mobility section.
Interactive workshop
Emails, lectures

Question 41. Do you employ any specific measuring tools or assessment methods to evaluate students' intercultural competencies after their study abroad experience?

6 replies were received, all answering "no" to the question.

Question 41A. Please specify the measuring tool/assessment method?

No answer submitted.

Question 41B. Why not?

The following 5 replies were provided:

We suggest our students to use Skill Mill (project) App
Time issue
Students are asked to reflect on their own experiences during the 'welcome back event' and emails. This is not deemed necessary to be assessed.
not conducted by my office
Again, that would be very difficult to measure.

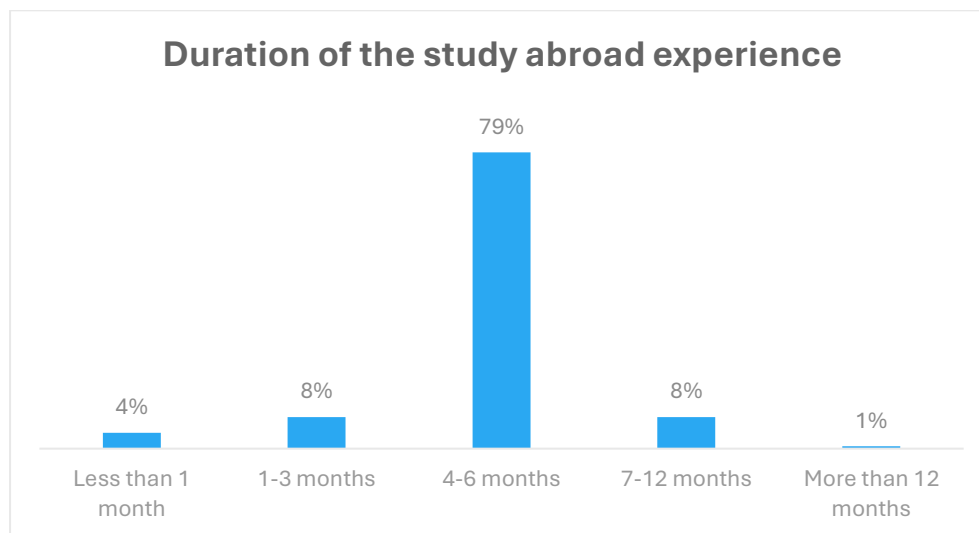
Detailed analysis of replies to student survey questions

Question 1. Which higher education institution are you currently enrolled at?

Out of 168 replies, the largest number – 75 – came from Portugal. The second largest group – 29 – comes from Germany. 14 replies were from Belgian HEIs. Only one reply came from France, Finland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Turkey. 5 replies did not indicate any country.

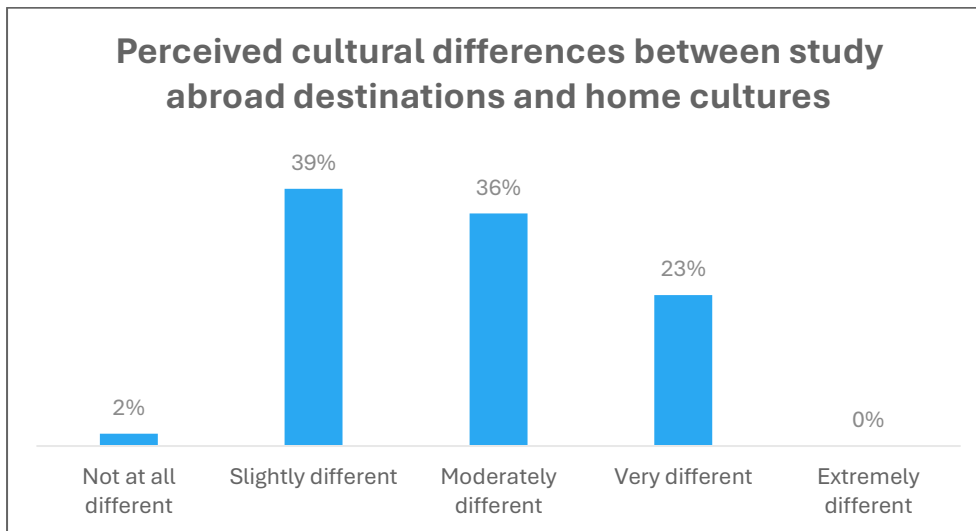
Question 2. What was the duration of your (most recent) study abroad experience?

The largest number of replies – 132 – indicate that the duration of their most recent study abroad experience was 4-6 months, equivalent to an academic semester. 1 reply indicated more than 12 months.



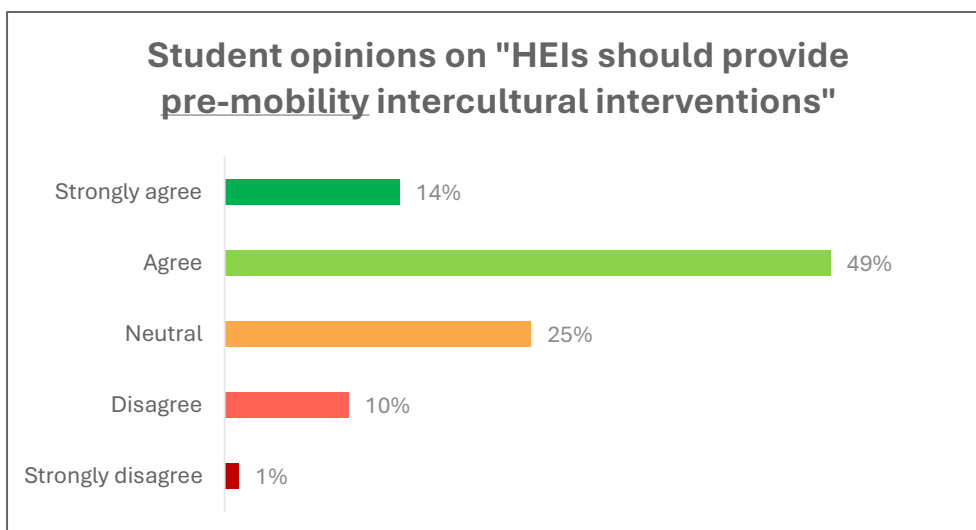
Question 3. To what extent did you find the culture of your study abroad destination different from your home culture?

The largest number of replies – 120 – indicate that the culture of their study abroad destination was slightly or moderately different from their home culture. Only 8 replies state that the culture was extremely different.



Question 4. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement? “Higher education institutions should provide courses or trainings to ensure students are well-prepared for navigating cultural differences and adapting effectively in their study abroad environments.”

Almost two thirds of the students agree or strongly agree with the statement that “Higher education institutions should provide courses or trainings to ensure students are well-prepared for navigating cultural differences and adapting effectively in their study abroad environments.” Only 2 replies strongly disagree.

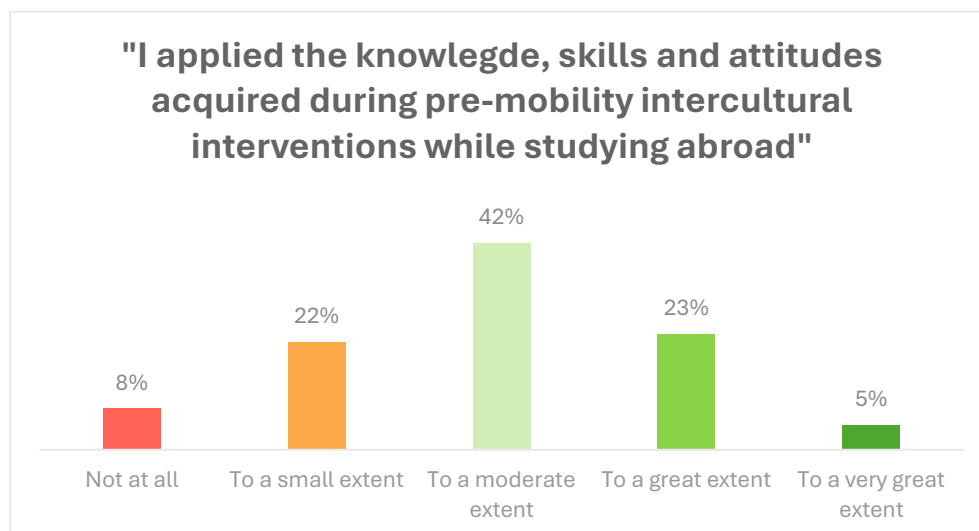


Question 5. Did your home institution offer any orientation courses or preparation sessions on navigating cultural differences and adapting to new cultural environments before your study abroad experience?

The largest number of replies – 107 replies, i.e. 64% – indicate that their home institution did not offer any orientation courses or preparation sessions on navigating cultural differences and adapting to new cultural environments before their study abroad experience. However, the other large group – 60 replies, i.e. 36% - say their institution does offer such programmes. This corresponds with the findings of the HEI survey.

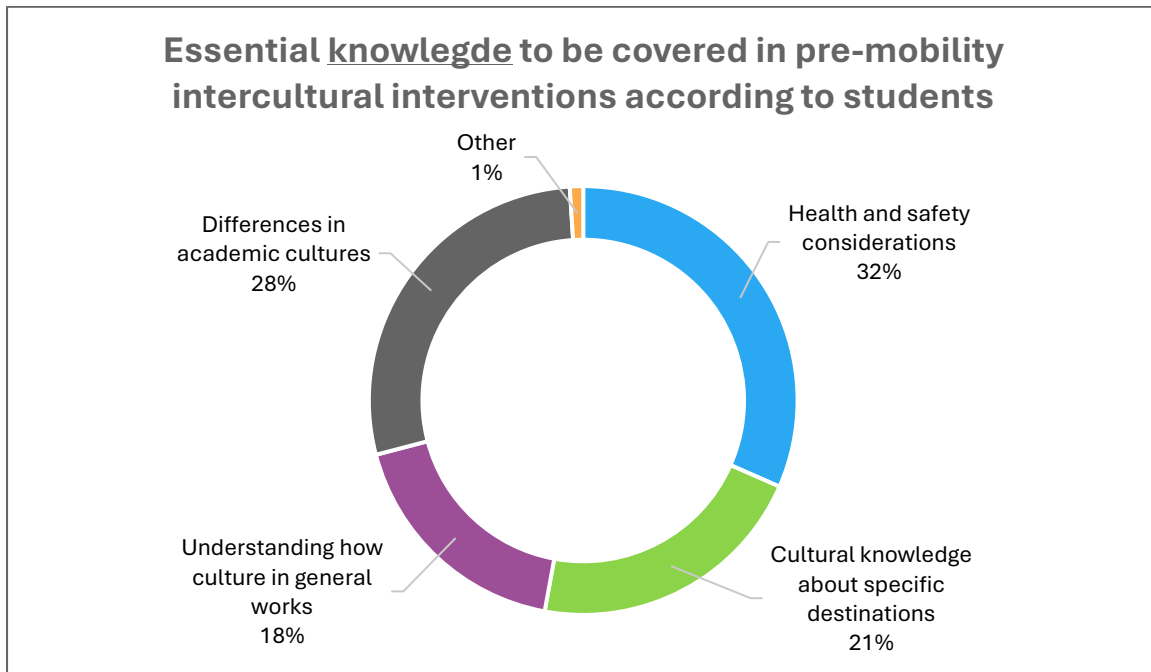
Question 6. To what extent did you apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during the orientation course or preparation session in your experience abroad?

Surprisingly, a significant number of respondents did not answer this question. Among those who did respond (n = 60), a substantial majority (92%) reported applying the competencies acquired during their pre-mobility intercultural training to some extent while abroad.

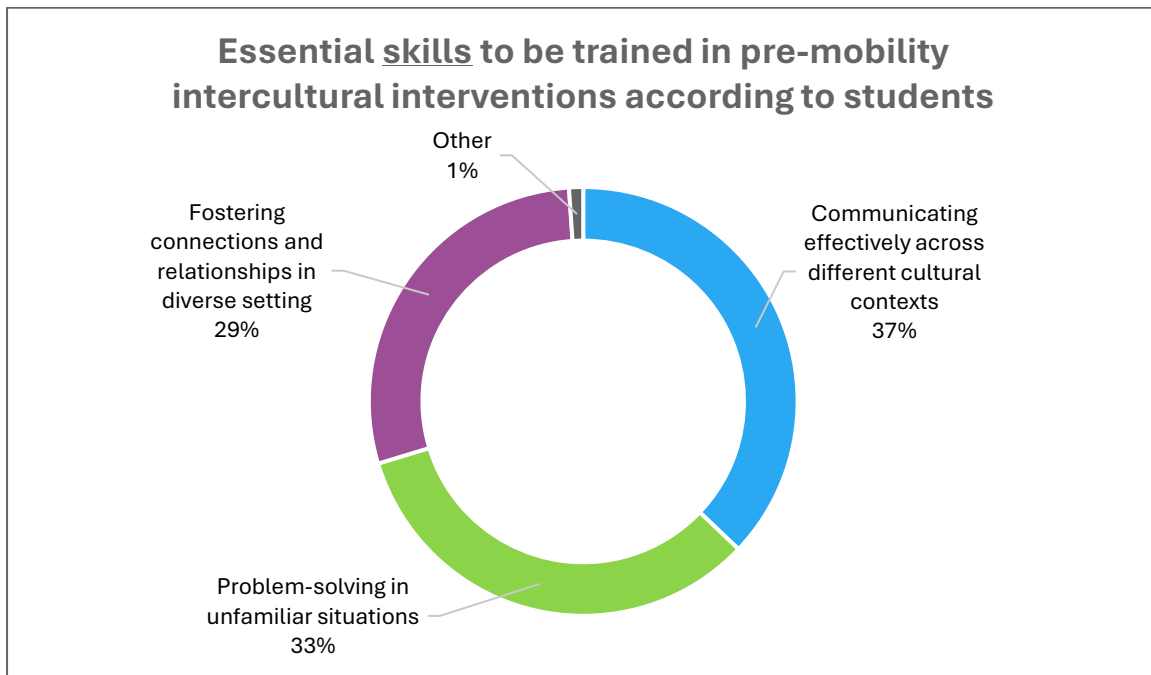


Question 7. What are the crucial knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that according to you should be covered in your institution's pre-departure intercultural preparation course for students studying abroad? (Select all that apply)

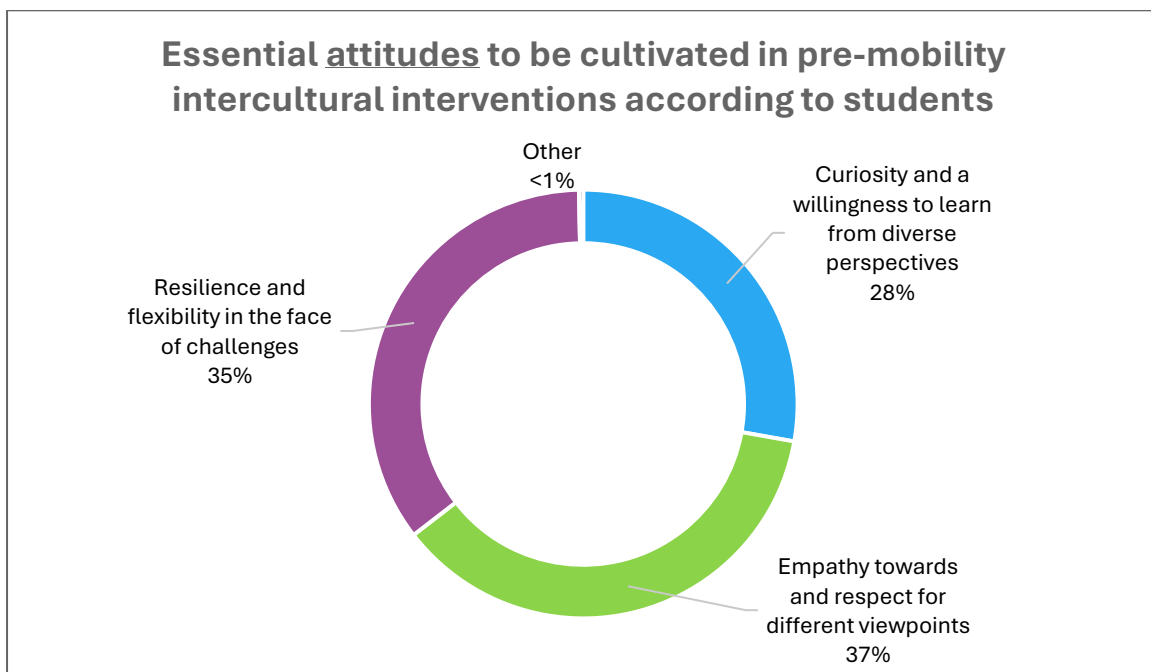
A. Knowledge: the largest number of replies – 127 – state that the crucial knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that according to them should be covered in their institution's pre-departure intercultural preparation course for students studying abroad are health and safety considerations. The second largest number of replies – 112 – indicated differences in academic cultures. The third group – 86 – indicated cultural knowledge about specific destinations. The fourth group – 74 – understanding in general how culture works.



B. Skills: the largest number of replies – 104, i.e. 37% - state that the preparation courses should cover the skill of communicating effectively across different cultures. The second largest group – 94, i.e. 33% - indicate the skill of problem-solving in unfamiliar situations. The thirs largest group – 81, i.e. 29% - indicate the skill of fostering connections and relationships in diverse settings.



C. Attitudes: the largest group – 116 - state that the most important attitude to be covered by the courses is empathy towards/and respect for different viewpoints and ways of life. The second largest group – 110 – indicate resilience and flexibility in the face of challenges and changes. The third largest group – 88 – indicate curiosity and willingness to learn from diverse cultural perspectives.



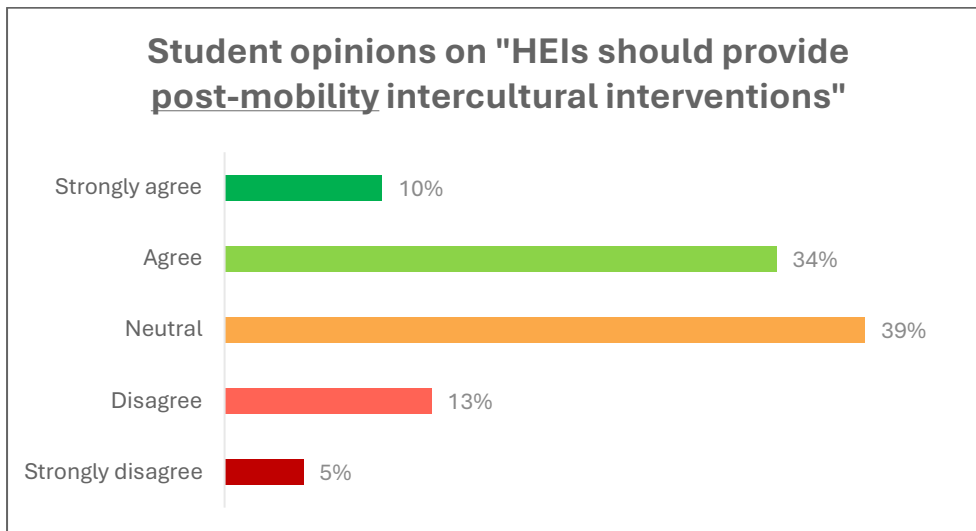
Question 7A. What topics or aspects of your study abroad experience do you think should be included in the pre-study abroad courses or briefing sessions offered by your institution to ensure comprehensive reflection and intercultural learning?

The following topics were notably indicated:

- communication with people from other cultures
- information about universities
- cultural differences
- cultural shock
- practical information for finding accommodation
- colonialism and power relations determined thereby
- conflict resolution
- budgeting and practical matters
- dealing with emotions like alienation or sensory overload in crowded places
- dealing with weather
- different ways of teaching
- practical information how the semester works
- language courses
- sessions about the history of the host country
- social dynamics session
- provide contact to others who have already been in that country
- safety and health

Question 8. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Higher education institutions should provide post-mobility courses or debriefing sessions for students to reflect on and make sense of their intercultural experiences after returning from a study abroad programme."

The largest number of replies – 72 – indicate that they agree or strongly agree with the statement. Another large group of 65 replies indicates neutral. Only 8 replies indicate "strongly disagree". Students show less consensus on the need for post-mobility intercultural interventions compared to pre-mobility ones.

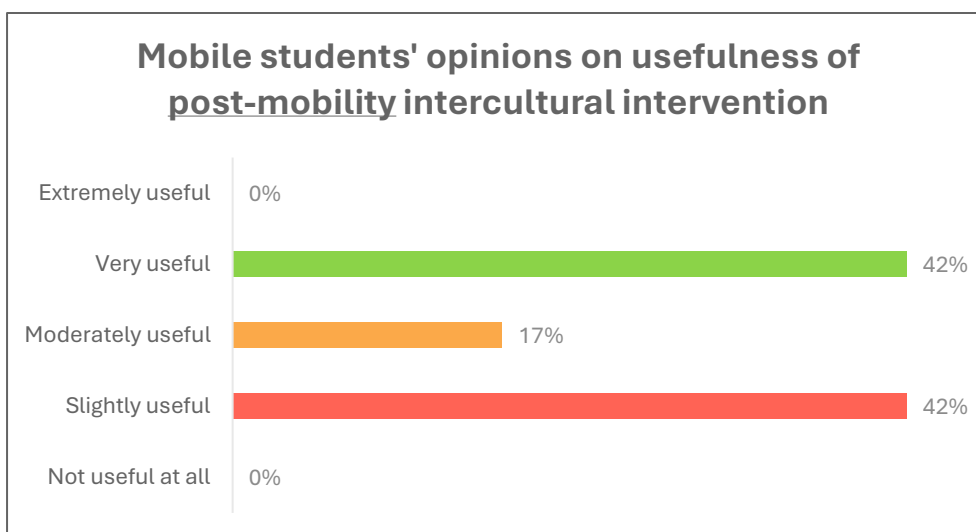


Question 9. Upon your return from the study abroad programme, did your home institution offer any post-mobility course or debriefing session to discuss and reflect on your intercultural experiences?

The largest number of replies – 151, i.e. 90% – indicate that their home institution did not offer any post-mobility courses. Only 12 indicate that they do.

Question 10. How useful did you find the post-mobility course or debriefing session in terms of reflecting on your (inter)cultural experiences and gaining new (inter)cultural insights after returning home?

All students that participated in post-mobility intercultural interventions (n = 12) indicated that they found them useful, although to varying degrees.



Question 11. What topics or aspects of your study abroad experience do you think should be included in the post-study abroad courses or debriefing sessions offered by your institution to ensure comprehensive reflection and intercultural learning?

The replies indicate that the following topics should be included in post-mobility programmes:

- career development
- alumni networking
- review of lessons learned
- exchange with students planning to go to the same destination
- general check-up
- cultural differences
- reintegration

Two replies state that such programmes are not necessary.

Question 12. Do you have any suggestions for improving intercultural preparation and debriefing for future study abroad students?

The following suggestions were notably made:

- trainings should include practical cases
- trainings should be continued during the international study programme
- better connections with students who have already been abroad
- list of cultural differences for every country
- the host institution should offer help and assistance for incoming students
- create alumni networks
- provide information about partner institution
- prepare students for different health and safety issues
- lectures of psychology (possible depression)
- well-functioning international office
- learning the language of the host institution
- preparation of written guides for different host institutions.