

Creating a Learning Community for the Internationalization of Higher Education

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Differences and challenges in integration

Academic background

- Full program with a fully/partially fitting BSc
- Lecturer concern: Are academic standards met?
- Academic gaps still common

Communication and behavior (cultural differences)

- Rule perception/acceptance
- Interactivity – e.g. asking questions (during classes, in online course groups)
- Handling deadlines
- "Negotiation culture" with lecturers and staff
- Gender norms differ
- National tension (rare, but present)

Community forming

- MSc students: more individual than group-oriented
- Cultural diversity

Best practices

Clear standards and communication

- Foundation semester: cultural adaptation + academic catch-up
- Admissions: raising the bar (written test + oral interview)
- Focus on academic fit, motivation and English communication
- Proactive information delivery – reducing uncertainty

Support and orientation

- Mentor community: peer support across backgrounds (what makes mentors engage...?)
- Detailed and thorough welcome week, info sessions, curriculum overview before MSc starts
- International Relations Office + Academic Administrations Office work hand in hand

Fostering integration

- Mixed working groups & lab pairs
- Events encouraging cross-cultural interaction (e.g. board game night, folk dance, shared meals etc.)
- Personal attention very important!
- Creating safe spaces for asking questions

Opportunities fostering collaboration

Bringing value to lecturers, international and Hungarian students alike

- Benefitting everyone in the long run
- Also at an institutional level

Academic excellence

- Healthy competition, classroom dynamics
- Novel viewpoints and insights
- English as a "natural" way of communication in science

Fresh perspectives, cultural intelligence

- Enriching interdisciplinary thinking
- Innovative problem-solving
- Improving cultural awareness

Global connections

- Making contacts and establishing an international professional network
- Supporting long-term professional partnerships

Plans and current initiatives

- Dedicated forum for lecturers
 - sharing experiences
 - training lecturers
- Housing (dormitory)
 - more availability
 - social/intercultural programs
- Curriculum refinement
 - foundation semester – based on student and lecturer feedback