Enhancing Dual Hub Collaboration for Global Passport
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Anticipated project deliverables and actions

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<tr>
<td>Compare Global Passport administrative models across colleges</td>
<td>Data collected on a range of global passport models</td>
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<td>Identify initiatives already in place for Business College and examine their current administrative processes</td>
<td>Interviewed Business academic staff who have designed and coordinated Study Tours to Asia, Europe and North America. Interviewed staff involved with the university’s dual hub work integrated learning projects.</td>
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<td>Identify processes for increased shared responsibility and collaboration between the dual hubs</td>
<td>Scoped a range of perspectives from staff at both hubs and identified strategies for increasing understanding and collaboration.</td>
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<td>Outline a range of opportunities for future Global Passport projects</td>
<td>Recommendations for potential Global Passport activities in the Business College.</td>
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<td>Assess required resources addressing costs, and administrative issues</td>
<td>Identified implications for sustaining Global Passport activities.</td>
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<td>Assessment of risk and issues of project sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommend strategies for improved administrative arrangements</td>
<td>A set of recommendations for collaboration for the quality of academic initiatives and increased staff and student mobility is presented.</td>
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Project Sponsor

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Funding

Funds approved $5000 Funds acquitted $3908

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<td>$1500</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City-Melbourne return airfare (Chris Munro)</td>
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<td>$500</td>
<td>Accommodation and expenses Melbourne (Chris Munro)</td>
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Project Participants

In Vietnam:

Kieran Brennan Work Careers and Life Long Learning
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Sarah Cunnian Industry Liaison Officer, RMIT Vietnam
Melvin Fernando Program Manager, B Bus (Marketing)
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In Melbourne:

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Executive Summary

On its Global Passport webpage RMIT University commits itself “to providing students with the learning, teaching, research and training to excel in an open world economy”. Use of the term "open world economy" implies that our graduates will be seeking employment and contributing to projects in a competitive international environment where borders between countries and cultures will be frequently crossed. (Hunter 2006) The elements of what constitutes this capacity to “excel” in this context are somewhat addressed in the university’s seven identified graduate attributes but particularly those relating to being “global in outlook and competence” and “culturally and socially aware”. (RMIT Graduate Attributes Implementation Plan 2009). The Academic Plan proposes that this is achieved by “academic initiatives built on the dual hub” and “the promotion of student and staff mobility”.

Key academic and administrative stakeholders in Global Passport initiatives in both Melbourne and Vietnam have been surveyed for the purposes of this report. Global Passport options canvassed in this report include: Study Tours, Student Exchanges, Work Integrated Learning, Co op placements, intensive courses and Online Projects. The desirability of staff exchanges is also highlighted.

Observations and feedback on opportunities and challenges have informed the principles, issues and recommendations offered by the report for the College of Business in Vietnam and Melbourne. The main finding is the need to shift Business College Global Passport initiatives from a Melbourne centric approach to a more collaborative model in order to increase the mobility of staff and students between the dual hubs and thereby achieve the aims of the academic plan stated above.

A summary of issues and recommendations associated with each Global Passport activity is presented in table form on pp 6-8 of this report.
Crossing National Borders – Report Background

The words ‘Global Passport’ mean different things to different people. The apparent lack of tangible definitions and clear communication of the goals and benefits of Global Passport may be contributing to slow take up of Global Passport activities by Business staff and students at the dual hub. What does it mean to “engage in professions globally” or to have “qualifications capable of crossing national borders”? The Commonwealth Review of Higher Education Report (2008) suggests that “demand from employers for tertiary qualifications with a strong international component” is growing. It defines this “international component” as having both a curriculum and experiential basis to build intercultural and language skills and competencies. (Review of Higher Education Report, 2008: section 3.6.4)

While Global Passport projects in the College of Business are already active across Europe, Asia and North America and some have been conducted for nearly a decade, it is surprising that no major college review has been done to date to assess the alignment between Global Passport goals with college processes and learning outcomes. This report identifies specific issues associated with the provision of a broad range of Global Passport opportunities to students. The focus of this project is a review of current dual hub processes, academic initiatives and issues of student mobility related to Global Passport. It identifies opportunities and implications for their enhancement through collaboration between staff and students in Melbourne and Vietnam.

The Graduate Attributes Implementation Plan (2009) notes that the ability to be “globally competent” and “culturally and socially aware” sit alongside and complement both program capabilities and competencies and align strongly with employability skills. This report suggests that university and college priorities arising from the Graduate Attributes Implementation Plan in the coming five years will result in a “renewed and innovative curricula and approaches to assessment, which equip students with a Global Passport, emphasising WIL, employability and industry engagement.”

RMIT goals to “build sustainable support mechanisms to promote student mobility (virtual and campus-based) and the portability of qualifications” (RMIT Global Passport webpage) are a logical platform on which to enrich the learning experience for both Vietnam and Melbourne students, and to foster shared responsibility in administration of projects between the dual hub academic and teaching staff.

The expertise of Vietnam Business academic and teaching staff as well as their local knowledge of the Vietnam business environment and cultural context offers much potential for the college to develop and offer a comprehensive menu of Global Passport initiatives. Academic and teaching staff at the Melbourne campus could also support coordination of global passport projects for Vietnamese students through online exchanges or the opportunity to be immersed in the Australian classroom or business context.

Data Collection

The study scoped current activity and potential opportunities for increased student mobility between Vietnam and Melbourne. Interviews were conducted with Vietnam and Melbourne based academic staff across the various schools and streams where Global Passport activities are being undertaken, as well as administrative staff responsible for managing processes for student mobility. Interviewees were questioned regarding their knowledge, involvement and views on the value of Global Passport initiatives and processes, and asked to identify issues associated with student and staff mobility between Melbourne and Vietnam. Successful models of delivery from other Colleges and Swinburne University were examined and lessons from these models to the Business College context form the basis of the report’s recommendations.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Principles</strong></th>
<th><strong>Issues</strong></th>
<th><strong>Recommendations</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Study Tours</strong></td>
<td>Most Global Passport activity to date for the Dual Hub has involved the annual study tours on globalisation and business. A solid foundation has been laid for further development of student preparation, authentic learning activities and on-the-ground assessments both for Melbourne students travelling to Vietnam but potentially as a model for Vietnam students to experience Melbourne. Literature suggests that there is an international shift away from student exchanges to the study tour as an alternative international learning experience. Ongoing visa difficulties and misalignment between Dual Hub academic calendars have restricted the flow of Vietnamese students to Melbourne for semester exchanges and therefore the study tour option would be the preferred model for Global Passport to be delivered by schools. Consideration of the study tour as the foundation experience for further Global Passport activities scaffolded into the internship or work integrated learning projects options. The experience of the College of Design and Social Context has lessons for the College of Business in taking an integrative view of study tours, and practical work experiences and leveraging time and resources.</td>
<td>• That a network is developed to support staff across the College who are involved in study tour preparation and coordination. Staff Preparation • That staff coordinating study tours are partnered by another staff member at the receiving Hub in coordinating the tour with an expectation of regular communication leading up to the tour. Student Preparation • That encouragement is given to students in the first year of their programs to consider options for a later year study tour experience.</td>
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<td><strong>Student Exchanges</strong></td>
<td>The issues around different academic calendars may suggest that the College of Business efforts are better focused on shorter term Global Passport options other than semester-long student exchanges.</td>
<td>• That the university remains the single point of contact and coordination to advise students interested in exchanges</td>
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## Work Integrated Learning

| International multidisciplinary Work Integrated Learning opportunities. | College of Business staff and students have been involved in cross-college, multidiscipline work integrated learning projects in both Danang and Ho Chi Minh City. Perceptions of Vietnam staff and of those involved provide a positive picture of the impact on student learning. There are still some challenges to respond to regarding the different academic calendars and costs limiting the number of student participants. The Dual Hub work integrated learning experience then might be better positioned as an add-value option to those who have previously undertaken a study tour to further develop their international skills. | • That continued support is given to the involvement of College of Business staff and students in cross-college multidisciplinary work integrated learning projects coordinated through the Learning and Teaching Unit. |

## Co-op placements

| Opportunities for International co-op placements | There is a perception among academic staff that firms in Australia and Vietnam are reluctant to take students from the opposite Hub on co-op placements. This does not align with the view of administrative staff or consultants experienced in industry engagement who present the view that multinational firms are accustomed to employing foreign employees and internships offer these companies a lost cost and low risk means of testing potential graduate staff. Short-term co-op placements like those offered through the College of Design and Social Context, to be explored. | • That a survey of potential receiving companies is undertaken to ascertain their expectations of short term placements of international students from both Hubs. • That lessons related to design and coordination of work placements developed under work integrated learning and the PSP Coop models are considered in the design of short term international intern placements. |

## Staff exchanges

| A common understanding of the goals of the university’s Global Passport initiative and regular communication to coordinate discipline-specific activity | Enhanced opportunities be provided for staff involved in offshore teaching activities. | • That a network is developed to support staff across the College who are interested in staff exchange opportunities. |
## Intensive courses

| Strategies to overcome the different academic to encourage dual hub initiatives. | The Dual Hubs will never have perfectly aligned semester schedules and this reality should be factored into the design of any Global Passport activities. Short term intensive activities may be embedded in a semester course. Students should be provided lead-up activities to prepare for an authentic experience and reflective activities after the intensive to optimise the value of the insights and skills they have gained. | That Dual Hub student undertake shorter intensive courses rather than semester long exchanges to enable them to transition more easily back into their own semesters. |

## Online Projects

| Online international peer collaboration | Costs may prohibit enabling large numbers of Dual Hub students from participating in on-the-ground Global Passport activities, however international collaboration is possible for all students through the university’s online platform. Trials link Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City students through discussion board assessment projects in the Marketing stream of the B Bus. This may provide a model to pilot at the Dual Hub level. If this pilot is successful consideration should be given to providing opportunities for Dual Hub student online collaboration in all programs. | That a discussion board learning activity and assessment project developed for students at HCMC and Hanoi by B Bus (Marketing) is promoted as an example of online student collaboration between the dual hubs. That opportunities for dual hub student online collaboration for the International Business Plan Competition are explored. A discussion board be adopted to promote interaction between between SLAMS mentors in Vietnam and Melbourne. |
Summary of Participant Feedback

College of Business dual hub teachers and administrators share positive views of the potential for Global Passport initiatives to add value to their programs. All staff interviewed agreed that the concept has value but their views were tempered with concerns about the impact on teaching time and resources and a frustration with current processes, particularly from the perspective of those in Vietnam. Overall there is a sense among Vietnam staff that there is too much variability in the quality of initiatives currently being undertaken and a lack of appreciation for the resource limitations at RMIT Vietnam both in terms of time and materials to support these. Others suggest that the flow of activity has been very Melbourne centric and that the balance between the Hubs needs to be addressed. There is a genuine commitment by Vietnam staff to explore ways of increasing and improving collaboration between Melbourne and a desire for Vietnam students to be offered Global Passport opportunities.

The Global Passport is seen as a strong selling point to attract enrolments at both undergraduate and graduate program levels. At graduate level it is the one initiative that intending applicants in Vietnam more frequently asked questions about at information sessions. Senior staff in Vietnam believe that Global Passport could be a platform to enhance real world learning opportunities in the restructured undergraduate program.

The educational value of Global Passport initiatives, particularly authentic learning experiences offshore, is critical to students attaining competencies to work in an international context. These offshore experiences cannot be simulated or substituted by classroom learning without leaving the country. The Higher Education Review (2008) supports the view that "Australian students need more and better opportunities to go abroad on study programs, or to acquire international experience through internships or volunteering opportunities related to their education programs and their future employability and productivity." There is much scope for collaboration of dual hub course and program leaders to provide these opportunities and to design them so that there is close alignment between learning activities and assessments and the competencies required for graduate international employability. This collaboration can be increased across the current range of options of Global Passport currently being offered through study tours and work integrated learning, and through developing new opportunities for international internships and dual hub student online interactions.

While the presence of RMIT Vietnam offers a well-established platform to achieve this, flows between the dual hubs of both staff and students have been minimal. The three major factors attributed to this low level of dual hub mobility are the different academic calendars, the costs and restrictive visa processes. If the College of Business is to broaden the range of authentic international learning opportunities and the number of staff and students involved, strategies need to be developed to address these challenges.

References


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IDP, Outcomes and Impacts of International Education: from international student to Australian graduate, 2008


RMIT University, Graduate Attributes Implementation Plan, 2009

RMIT University, RMIT 2010: Designing the future, 2005-2010.