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International students' Transition into the UK's Higher Education

International students contribute greatly not only to the UK's economy but also to the cultural and academic richness of UK's universities; however, welcome and induction programs for international students seldom include the cultural and academic information international students need to thrive in their new environment and can impact their international student experience.

While positive experiences contribute to building multicultural competencies, developing resilience, and obtaining a degree from a recognised international institution, negative experiences result in mental and physical health issues, and ultimately in dropping off their courses. International students go through isolation and loneliness when they cannot build support networks quick enough in their personal, societal, and academic transitions. Universities support systems need to focus on this transition through an active program of cultural and academic integration, both staff and peer-led, to ensure all students adjust to their new environment. In the academic area, there is limited time to train students in the new Learning and Teaching (L&T) system, and there is even less time to build trust between staff and international students before the first assessment is due in postgraduate (PG) courses.

Often awarding gaps and EDI initiatives, especially in institutions with diverse communities of students, contribute to a wide range of academic support activities for international students to join in. Still, international students are a driven population focused on the employability advantage that the international experience will provide through enhancing transnational skills such as networking, intercultural competences, and English language.

This paper presents the comprehensive work at Manchester Metropolitan University to support international students in courses within the Department of Life Sciences. Quantitative and qualitative data showed the positive impact of positive interventions that avoid the deficit model and rather focus on the contribution of these students to their course.