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Title	Change, Manage or Meet: understanding and addressing the expectations of Business School Master's students
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Introduction:

A range of factors and stakeholders affect the nature of the student experience in higher education. The diverse and international nature of the student body is one area that consistently attracts attention in the literature (Garson 2016; Arthur 2017; Jones 2017). In this debate, some academics have considered whether distinguishing between students on the basis of nationality would prevent overgeneralisations and stereotyping. Others have argued that the distinction made between domestic and international students may no longer be valid. If this is the case, then the approaches adopted in some institutions to make special provisions to support international students in their orientation and learning process as a whole may need to be reconsidered.

Expectations and student experience

Jones (2017) examines in some detail four groups of factors that impact on the student experience. Although there is a reference to family expectations, this does not include expectations of the students themselves. Based on their own life experiences and individual characteristics students will form expectations that they will bring to the classroom about what they will learn and the gains they will achieve. Expectations have a powerful influence on the gains that students can derive from an education experience as they will reflect students understanding of what study at Master's level involve and what benefits they could derive from postgraduate study. A systematic investigation of student expectations is particularly important as it could reveal whether students' expectations and those of lecturers and other stakeholders are aligned. The QAA's Quality Code makes specific reference to the importance of taking student views into account when designing teaching and learning in order to enable students' development and achievement and to enhance their educational experience. Academics also have expectations of students' initial abilities and of how students will respond to and engage with the taught curriculum. As Redish et al (2000) point out however these very much like student expectations are not articulated and captured in the literature. At the same time, there is evidence that expectations do impact on participation, motivation and clarity of roles in most of the processes (Voss et al. 2007). Like assessment outcomes, an understanding of student expectations provides valuable information about the student body and can contribute significantly to enhancement efforts.

Earlier research has found that some student expectations tend be consistent over time (see for example, Hill 1995). With internationalisation and digitalisation, however, student body has not only become diverse, but also very fluid, with expectations shifting rapidly over time. It is therefore paramount to gain an understanding of these expectations over time and across disciplines. Where expectations are inappropriate, they could have a detrimental impact of student learning and need to be managed before and throughout the study at a programme as a whole and individual courses in particular. Similarly reasonable expectations should be reinforced and steps taken to meet them as a means of motivating and engaging students to enhance the learning and graduate outcomes.

This study focuses on the following questions:

What are students' expectations in areas of autonomy, communication, interpersonal skills, analytical skills and graduate outcomes/employability?

Do these expectations change over time and across disciplines?

The study

The study focuses on student expectations as they relate to two aspects of the student journey. These are academic expectations in terms of benefit and competencies that will be acquired and expectations in relation to post-graduation prospects. Useful definition was provided by Temple et al (2014) who defined the student experience as the totality of the interaction between students and the institution, and identified four components of this experience –application, academic process, campus and graduate. Current study seeks to specifically identify misguided or misinformed expectations that need to be changed and corrected; overly ambitions and unrealistic expectations that need to be managed downwards; low level expectations that could be raised to help students lift their aspirations and achieve their full potential; and realistic and reasonable expectations that are aligned with the institution's and programme's own narratives and standards that need to be met as a fundamental part of service quality.

The methodology adopted for this study was a structured survey designed to collect information on the students' personal characteristics, including nationality, work experience and qualifications; their relationships with others, skills; expectations and wider social engagement. The questionnaire survey approach was particularly suitable to collect information in a standardised way from a diverse population of post-graduate students across three academic departments and cohorts across nine programmes of study in the Business Faculty over a three year period from 2014 to 2016. The disciplines which the degree programmes covered include International Business, Accounting, Finance, Banking and Strategic Marketing Communications. The survey also included students on single and dual award programmes.

Response rate to the questionnaire was 60 percent resulting in 603 usable responses. Additional information on the educational provision was drawn from degree programme documentation, benchmark statements and databases. SPSS enabled statistical tools are used to analyse the survey responses.

Findings highlight that students' understandings of Master's level attributes or *Masterness* can be naive or incomplete and that there is some disconnect between stated programme aims and student expectations in areas such as communication, independent learning requirements and abilities. Students may also either miss or not fully take advantage of opportunities to develop the interpersonal and leadership skills that would enhance their career prospects, especially in managerial roles. It was interesting to note that students' expectations regarding whether a Master's degree would enhance their chances for getting promotion at work seemed to have more motivational power than expectations about just being able to secure work post-graduation. Institutions should recognise the growing importance of undertaking a systematic and granular assessment of students' academic, career and other expectations to understand how they vary across the postgraduate student body. This will enable them to develop and implement appropriate curricular and pastoral interventions to ground and support different groups of Master's students in a targeted and timely manner, especially as the time frame for the Master's student experience in UK is typically limited to one academic year.

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