Ready for take-off:
Preparing students for intercultural learning in Asia

**Final report
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List of acronyms used

DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
EPITOME	Enhancing Programs to Integrate Tertiary Outbound Mobility Experiences
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLT	Office for Learning and Teaching
RMIT	Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WSU	Western Sydney University

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Executive summary

With increasing cultural diversity in our campuses and workplaces, and with the rise of global business, a graduate's intercultural competency combined with an understanding of others' worldviews is becoming increasingly valued. Intercultural sensitivity is crucial to enable people to live, work and study with others from different cultural backgrounds.

Intercultural learning, in a practical sense, involves learning how to engage, interact and communicate with people from different cultures. Training in intercultural learning can include gaining knowledge about culture, history, geography, environment, values, lifestyle, customs, taboos and norms of a society, how to communicate effectively, and how to engage in business endeavours or in the professional realm. Global citizenship is often recognised as a priority in student learning outcomes and mission statements, and study abroad programs are considered to be an important activity in achieving this goal. It is not surprising that across the Australian higher education sector, there is a growing commitment to outbound student mobility.

In light of the focus on globalised higher education, the introduction of the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan, and the corresponding growth in outward-bound student mobility to Asia, universities are seeking to better prepare their students for intercultural learning in Asia. In this context, our research sought to answer the key question: *What are the critical components in preparing students to participate in short-term study tours to Asia?*

The project identified the critical areas of preparation for a short-term study tour to an Asian destination, from the multiple perspectives of those who organise and lead the study tour, and those who participate in the experience. The findings were based on data collected from participants at one Australian university: interviews with eight academic study tour leaders, three administrative staff, and five focus groups with students (n=32), all of whom had recently undertaken a short-term mobility experience to an Asian destination.

The findings emphasized the integral role played by the staff (both academic and administrative), the University and students themselves in this preparation. In general, students were most satisfied when they perceived that the information they received prior to their trip was provided early in the preparation process, was comprehensive, relevant, useful and consistent in terms of what they later experienced on the trip. The findings indicated that much more time and resources need to be devoted to preparation for mobility experiences generally, and short-term study tours specifically. Comprehensive and appropriately facilitated preparation is particularly important when students are travelling to cultures so vastly different to their home country.

While the data indicated a slightly different emphasis between staff members and students, the findings in this study revealed five common areas of preparation for short-term study tours to Asia mentioned by all respondents: (1) logistical and practical; (2) student behaviour and expectation management; (3) culture and language; (4) health, safety and risk; and (5) academic. The key aspects of each of these areas of preparation are summarised below in order of priority:

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1. **Logistical and practical**
- Logistical, administrative and practical aspects of preparing for a trip (e.g. accommodation, visa applications, insurance, travel bookings, what to bring on the trip, and general program administration) were foremost on the minds of both students and staff.
- Preparation was undertaken via attendance at pre-departure workshops/seminars and through resources such as handouts and 'survival booklets', available in both hard copy and online.
- Examples of tasks performed by staff included: designing the study tours, administration, providing information seminars, liaising with tour partners, organising accommodation and travel, creating assessment items and preparing program materials.
- University staff expressed the desire for students to demonstrate greater initiative in undertaking independent preparation.
- Staff felt that the logistical and administrative aspects of trip preparation constituted the most important and also most labour intensive aspects of trip organisation.
- Staff members recognised the value in having relevant experience to be able to manage such programs.
- Nearly all staff members interviewed mentioned the burden of heavy workload and responsibility, particularly in relation to the logistical and practical aspects of preparation.

2. **Student behaviour and expectation management**
- For staff, this area of preparation involved articulating expectations relating to student behaviour, socialising and demonstrating appropriate cultural awareness of the host culture (e.g. negotiating a set of standard expectations and providing students with relevant information regarding appropriate conduct).
- Students were largely unaware of what was expected of them in terms of preparation. The few examples of independent preparation undertaken by students included researching their intended destinations and speaking with others who had visited the country.
- Students were cognisant of the fact that preparing for a study tour was inherently different to preparing for a holiday, and that travelling to an Asian destination would likely entail different preparation activities. Cited differences between going on a holiday and being part of a study tour included academic requirements, structured format, level of cultural immersion, and opportunities for professional experiences afforded by the study tour.
- Many students commented that an important aspect of their preparation concerned meeting fellow travellers, getting to know each other, attending preparation workshops together and making friends. Preparation in the form of activities that boosted group cohesion was also cited as being helpful.

3. **Culture and language**
- Staff recognised that a crucial aspect of trip preparation involved making students aware of the history, culture and social norms of the countries they were to visit.
- Students wanted to learn more about the following: language, cultural norms, customs and local foods, and cultural etiquette.

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- Some students opted to conduct their own research by researching the history and culture of their intended destinations, speaking to friends and family who had travelled there before, or connecting with people from the culture.

4. Health, safety and risk Preparation
- Preparation relating to health, safety and risk included providing students with advice relating to vaccinations, food and water safety, hygiene and personal safety.
- This information was provided via information seminars (including presentations by travel doctors), program websites, and support materials.
- Typically, administrative support staff oversaw the provision of health information while academic staff members focussed on in-country safety issues.

5. Academic
- Academic preparation was mentioned least frequently by both staff and students.
- This category involved aspects such as readings, group work and assessments.
- Academic staff members were responsible for this aspect of program preparation.
- Pre-departure information sessions covered most of this information (e.g. course outlines and readings in hard and/or soft copy, clarifying assessment requirements and assigning working groups).

The research conducted in this study was based on data collected from one Australian university. Future research in the area of preparation of short-term study tours to Asia could focus on the following:

1. A national survey of staff and students at all (or a representative sample of) Australian universities to determine best practices in preparing students for mobility experiences in Asia;
2. Interviews with staff and focus groups with students at a range of Australian universities to further explore (and extend) the five categories of preparation identified in the current research;
3. A survey of staff at key Asian partner universities to explore host perspectives on how best to prepare students for a short-term study tour to their country;
4. A survey of third party providers of student mobility experiences in Asia to determine their perspectives on how best to prepare students for a short-term study tour and/or student placement.

This project aimed to build intercultural capacity within Australian higher education by developing an evidence-based model to enhance the preparedness of students participating in short-term study tours to Asia. The model, based on five critical components of preparation, contributed to practical learning resources to assist students to allay pre-departure anxieties, establish shared understandings and develop cultural awareness. These tools are readily available on the project website www.interculturallearningasia.edu.au, and educational institutions are encouraged to use and adapt them to meet the needs of their specific requirements.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Globalisation in the 21st century has resulted in increasing diversity in our campuses, workplaces and society. Businesses seek to recruit employees that demonstrate knowledge, awareness and experience, along with an understanding of other peoples' worldviews. Intercultural sensitivity is a useful trait to possess if one is to live, work and study with those who come from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural learning involves knowing how to engage, interact and communicate with people from different cultures. Training in intercultural learning can include acquiring knowledge about culture, history, geography, environment, values, lifestyle, customs, taboos and norms of a society, how to communicate effectively, and how to engage in business endeavours in a professional context.

Many universities now organise overseas exchange and study aboard opportunities so that students can participate in intercultural experiences as part of their academic programs. There are many benefits to be gained from international educational experiences. These include: students who are more globally minded, interculturally aware and interculturally sensitive (UNESCO, 2013); program participants (including staff) who contribute to the fostering and strengthening of educational, economic, political and cultural ties between their home and host countries; and the enhancement of students' employability (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen & Hubbard, 2006).

For graduates, overseas study experience constitutes a valuable skill on their resume. Lawrence (2006) found that 70% of multinational employers saw this experience as 'a definite positive on a graduate resume' (p. 30) and that an eighth of all employers recruit graduates based on their international experience. Research suggests that students who go abroad to study acquire greater intercultural proficiency, possess increased openness to cultural diversity, and become more globally-minded than students who don't participate in similar sojourns (Clarke, Flaherty, Wright & McMillen, 2009).

Increasing student mobility opportunities

Most student mobility programs typically see students travel to OECD countries such as the United States, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Japan (UNESCO, 2013). In 2009, the federal government spent $3.4 million on student mobility programs (Australian Education International, 2010). More recently, however, there has been a focus on promoting student outbound mobility to neighbouring countries. This stance has arisen from recent efforts to boost domestic ties, and to build business relationships in the Indo Pacific region. Through the New Colombo Plan, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has committed $100 million over a five year period, for Australian students who seek to participate in internships and study opportunities in Asia (DFATa, n.d.). In operation since 2013, the New Colombo Plan supports students by providing them with a one-year scholarship for internships and mentorships to over 38 Asian countries. Grants for shorter programs, research, mentorships, internships and practicums are also provided.

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Aligning with the aims of the New Colombo Plan have been significant changes to the Government's OS-Help scheme. The scheme provides students with funding for short-term, credit-earning programs overseas, enabling students to participate in a wider variety of mobility opportunities. The funding covers aspects of students' mobility program expenses such as airfares, and accommodation (Study Assist, n.d.).

In response to these developments the onus has now shifted to higher education institutions to provide a greater number and wider variety of mobility opportunities for students (Malicki, 2012). The provision of such opportunities serves to underscore institutions' commitment to internationalised education and engagement with Asian neighbours.

The rise of short-term mobility programs

The *Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide for Australian Universities* (*The Guide*) (Malicki, 2012) reported an increase in the number of student mobility programs being offered at Australian higher education institutions. In particular, there has been significant rise in short-term mobility experiences. Short-term study abroad trips usually entail experience in another country from two to four weeks.

Nam (2011) and Bretag and van der Veen (2013) found that students tend to select short-term study opportunities because of perceived benefits over semester-long exchanges. These benefits include reduced financial outlay, the ability to better manage family and work responsibilities, and being able to locate space within a student's program of study (see also Forsey, Broomhall and Davis, 2012). For students with limited or no international travel experience, short-term programs provide them with an opportunity to 'get their feet wet' (Nam, 2011 p.156) and potentially participate in more than one study abroad opportunity in a given year.

As Nam (2011) states:
> Short-term study abroad is playing an increasingly important role in international education. The quality and effective facilitation of the short-term study abroad is even more important because it often plays a role for novice participants. An effective short-term program could open the door and guide these students to eventually become international experts in the future.
> (p. 156)

Despite the boost in funding for student mobility from the Australian government, and increasing opportunities provided by universities, there is limited research on the impact of study abroad programs on participants (Gothard, Downey & Gray, 2012), and on how program preparation and organisation contributes to program outcomes. There is even less research on the impact and specific preparation needs of *short-term* mobility programs of two to four weeks duration. The majority of studies in this area examine the impact of programs that span a semester in duration.

Despite the widely held view that study abroad programs contribute to intercultural learning, there have also been contradictory findings regarding outcomes (see Salisbury, An

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& Pascarella, 2013). Gillespie (2002) suggests that the impact of study abroad programs can be inconsistent and challenging to measure, likely due to the different levels of institutional support provided for such programs (Malicki, 2012).

This report identifies key areas of preparation for short-term study tours to an Asian destination, based on the multiple perspectives of academic and administrative staff who organise and lead the study tour, and student participants. The following sections present the literature review, context of the study, research methodology, findings and discussion. The report concludes with recommendations for how preparation for short-term study tours to Asia may be improved, and suggestions for future research. Information about project dissemination activities and outcomes are outlined in the Appendix C. Project resources intended for use and adaptation by other higher education institutions are presented in Appendix D.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

The provision of appropriate preparation and support is essential for any kind of learning activity. This view is reflected in Orrell's (2011) Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) commissioned report into work-integrated learning, namely that students require adequate induction and preparation *prior* to embarking on their learning experiences. Good preparation involves the active participation of all participants, not merely the organisers. Students also need to take 'ownership' of their study tour program from the outset and be proactive in terms of independent, personal preparation.

Another OLT project specifically examining student mobility program experience, *Bringing the Learning Home*, by Gothard et al. (2012), aimed to improve students' study abroad outcomes through teaching resources and strategies (e.g., reflective learning approaches). The authors recommended creating systematic, holistic, structured learning and teaching support which encompassed pre-trip and post-trip activities, and to appropriately enlist and engage returning students (Gothard et al., 2012)

The *Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide* (*The Guide*) (Malicki, 2012) provides a useful source of information about the different types of student mobility programs in operation at Australian higher education institutions, and the types of resources and approaches they utilise. Examples of resources referenced in the Guide include orientation videos, online modules, checklists and templates (Study Overseas, 2013). Topics covered by preparation resources tend to involve three main areas: Administration and practical information; health and safety; and preparation relating to cultural adjustment.

Guides and checklists typically contain information for students about passports and visas, enrolment and credit transfers, accommodation, finance, communication protocols, culture, and health and safety. *The Guide* reported that despite the increase in the number of opportunities on offer, resourcing, program evaluation, student debriefing and post-trip engagement remained inefficient and inadequate, which is a view also held by Gothard et al. (2012).

Appropriate planning and organisation is vital, if the envisioned positive social and educational outcomes to be garnered from student mobility experiences are to be realised (Clyne & Woock, 1998). Pitman, Broomhall, McEwan and Majocha (2010) stress that with careful planning the positive impact of study abroad programs can offer a meaningful lifelong learning experience for the participants.

Similarly, Nam (2011) found that the factor that most significantly impacted students' perceptions of their mobility experiences was the way the mobility program was organised and facilitated. It is unlikely that intercultural and transformative learning (Cranton, 1994) can occur without appropriately structured intervention and facilitation, including pre-departure preparation and associated activities, debriefing strategies and providing students with the opportunity to critical reflect and consolidate their experiences, after the trip.

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This aligned approach is further supported by Bennett (2008) as follows:

> In the context of study abroad, this preparation does not stand alone, but is part of a systematically constructed sequence of pre-departure preparation, in-country facilitation of critical incidents, and cognitive, affective, and behavioral reintegration upon return. (p. 15)

One factor that influences the organisation of a study abroad program is the destination. For example, Nam's (2011) study on student experiences of short-term mobility programs to the Netherlands and Thailand/Laos, found that factors such as individual readiness, type of activities undertaken in the host country, the degree of difference between the home and host country, and culture, all had an impact on students' experiences and subsequent perception of their intercultural development.

In situations where students are travelling to countries where the host cultures are very different to their own, gaining foundational knowledge of different cultural dimensions (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) can be immensely helpful. Students who learn about culturally specific communication styles and who gain insight into historical and sociocultural aspects of the host culture are more likely to experience improved and more meaningful interactions and experiences (Nam, 2011). It is evident that the preparation for students undertaking programs in an Asian destination is quite different to programs for students going to a Western country, and as such, requires different organisational considerations. These differences include but are not limited to transportation, accommodation, food, hygiene, health, safety, culture and language.

Student perceptions of program experience

Student views regarding their expectations and experiences of mobility programs are essential to incorporate into any discussion of how to improve program preparation. In this report, students' expectation management is highlighted as an important aspect of the pre-departure preparation process, despite a lack of research into how preparation influences program outcomes. In the *Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide* (Malicki, 2012), there was a single example of a university (Griffith University) that addressed this area of preparation, albeit in terms of managing culture shock.

The expectancy value model may be used to explain the relationship between students' expectations and their perceptions regarding the success of the study abroad program (Eccles, 1983). In this context, the model suggests that students' unmet expectations will produce negative perceptions in instances where students have harboured unrealistic expectations about their study abroad programs at the outset. Program organisers may counteract unrealistic expectations by providing relevant and practical information about the intended destination, and the types of experiences and situations students are likely to encounter. More careful consideration of how to manage students' expectations during the preparation stage can assist program staff to facilitate activities and outcomes that are constructively aligned.

A study on student attitudes towards an undergraduate business program by Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2013) found that students' whose expectations had been met or

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exceeded were more likely to report being satisfied with their experience of the program. In terms of the experience of students who have undertaken mobility programs, studies have indicated that students are generally positive about the value of their experience. When there have been unmet expectations, the examples provided tended to concern program organisation. Kreitzer Barlow, Schwartz, Lacroix and Macdonald (2012) found that when study abroad students' expectations had *not* been met, the common issues cited were poor organization and preparation, and inadequate communication between organisers and participants. Program coordinators in the study by Schwartz et al. (2011) mentioned the significant investment of time and energy involved in preparing students for their mobility program. Students in the Schwartz et al. (2011) study perceived informal and formal forms of preparation to be of equal importance. The common concern identified by both program coordinators and participating students was insufficient language skills and cultural familiarity.

Gothard et al. (2012) found that Australian students tended to *over-estimat*e their ability to handle issues and challenges typical of overseas student mobility experiences. Another Australian study by Clyne and Rizvi (1998) reported that the areas of greatest concern for students regarding studying abroad tended to involve practical matters relating to accommodation, transport, making friends, setting up a support network and ensuring personal safety.

Other noteworthy aspects of preparation advice included in *Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide* (Malicki 2012) include the recommendation that students take the initiative to conduct independent research on their intended destination. Kitao's (1993) study involving the short-term study abroad experience of Japanese students in the US provided examples of just such independent preparation. This included reading about their intended destination, watching television programs, movies and news in English, and attending English conversation classes. Learning how to communicate in English and being informed about typical situations that they may encounter was deemed most useful by the students. Kitao (1993) speculated that the information that students perceived to have had a direct, practical benefit was seen to be particularly valuable and useful.

While many studies into student mobility programs have focussed on student preparation, Nam (2011) highlighted the importance of providing appropriate training for program organisers. Program organisers can include academic and administrative staff who tend to take on these roles for the following reasons: they are a native of the host country or have spent a significant amount of time there, they may speak the host country language or they may teach courses related to the host country. While these attributes are advantageous, they are not sufficient in themselves. In-country experience is not a replacement for support and training that can enable program organisers to develop and coordinate quality programs that promote intercultural learning. In addition, such training is essential to ensure that program organisers are adequately prepared for any critical incidents that may arise.

With limited exceptions, most of the research to date has focussed on long-term exchange programs. It could be argued that the preparation needs for short-term mobility experiences differ due to their duration and intensive nature. In addition, given the renewed

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emphasis on engagement with Asia through the New Colombo Plan, and the specific needs of students undertaking a mobility experience in that context, our research sought to answer the key question: *What are the critical components in preparing students to participate in short-term study tours to Asia?*

Links with other OLT projects

The project team developed relationships with other concurrently running, OLT-funded projects on the topic of student mobility. The project leader and project manager communicated with the other teams via email, telephone and Skype to discuss respective project aims, to identify points of congruence between the projects, and to explore future research opportunities and potential collaborations. One of the groups (EPITOME, led by Dr Tim Hall from WSU) attended the roundtable on August 10 and provided valuable input to the discussions.

The following project teams formed a broad, informal network for this seed project:

- *Classroom of many cultures: Co-creating support curriculum with international community partners* (Project Leaders: Professor Greg Downey and Associate Professor Kate Lloyd, Macquarie University)
- *Enhancing Programs to Integrate Tertiary Outbound Mobility Experiences (EPITOME) Project* (Project Leaders: Dr Tim Hall & Associate Professor Tonia Gray, WSU)
- *Global Canopy: Linking international inbound students with domestic outbound students for improved learning and global connections* (Project Leader: Patricia McLaughlin, RMIT)

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Chapter 3: Methodology

The findings from this study are based on data collected from student and staff participants of short-term study tours to Asia from one Australian university. At the time of the study, there was no unified or consistent approach to mobility experiences at this university. Longer term exchanges (of one or more semesters) were managed by an International Office, but short-term study tours were independently organized and managed by individual staff members within faculties, some with administrative support and others solely by the academic leader. Motivations for leading a study tour to an Asian destination varied between the eight study tours under investigation, but the most common impetus was a genuine interest in the particular destination and a clear link between the anticipated intercultural lessons and the learning objectives of the program of study.

The university in question has a diverse student body, comprised of students from a range of Asian countries, in particular China, India and Malaysia. In some faculties such as Business, international students (predominantly from Asia) can represent up to 50% of students in any given class. This university has had a long-standing commitment to engaging with Asia as evidenced by numerous research centres, well-funded research on Asia related topics, and diverse staffing profile. Well in advance of the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan, the academic leaders interviewed for this project had been facilitating short-term study tours to Asia, although the new government emphasis was expected to result in increased student interest in future study tours to Asia.

This research is based on data collected from participants at one Australian university: interviews with eight academic study tour leaders, three administrative staff, and five focus groups with students (n=32), all of whom had recently undertaken a short-term mobility experience to an Asian destination. All of the study tours in question involved trips of approximately two to four weeks duration. Given the nature of seed projects, this study was inherently limited in its scope. Data was only collected from a single institution, in order to meet the OLT's brief in terms of funding and time.

Despite the relatively modest number of staff (n=11) and student participants (n=32), the study tours and disciplines involved were diverse. The Asian countries visited as part of the study tours included Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. A broad range of disciplines were represented by the focus group participants, including business, nursing, midwifery, law, communication, engineering, education, environmental science, civil aviation and international relations. Four of the five focus groups were comprised of undergraduate students, with only one focus group of postgraduate students.

Data were collected in the same year in which the study tour had taken place (2014), and within a month of the participants returning to Australia, to ensure that experiences for both students and staff were fresh in their memory and easy to recall. Participants were asked a standard set of semi-structured questions for all interviews, with some slight variations depending on whether the interviewee was an academic or administrative staff member, with a similar set of semi-structured questions for the student focus groups (see Appendices G and H for outlines of questions). The interviews and focus group discussions

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were audio recorded and professionally transcribed. Data were thematically analysed via a Thematic Analysis process (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011) using NVivo10, with co-authors undertaking an iterative, inductive analysis of themes that emerged over the course of the data coding process. Reliability of the coding framework was addressed via subjective inter-coder agreement among the co-authors (Guest et al., 2011).

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Chapter 4: Findings

Findings in this section are divided into two categories. Data from five student focus groups (n=32) represent the *student experience* of pre-departure preparation, and data from interviews with eight academic study tour leaders and three administrative staff represent the University *staff experience* of pre-departure preparation.

Students

Data were collected from 32 students in five focus groups representing a broad range of disciplines. The overall tenor of student feedback was that preparation was important primarily as a means of allaying anxieties, as in the following excerpt:

> *Because you're going to be feeling anxious, you're going to be feeling a little, you know, nervous about it. So I think making sure that you are feeling as comfortable as possible before leaving. And making the most of that experience so that you're not worried the whole time, you're actually learning and getting involved.*
> (Malaysia Study Tour Participant, 2014)

Pre-departure Preparation

In terms of who was responsible for pre-departure preparation, as shown in Table 1 (below), 120 references from the students in the five focus groups indicated that the bulk of preparation was provided by the academic and/or administrative staff members in charge of the study tours. The data suggests that students expected study tour leaders to fully and adequately prepare them for their upcoming study tour to Asia, as in the following excerpt:

> *Perhaps what [the University] needs to do is prepare students in a way that they're going to feel like they have been there before…so a culture [session] is a good one, a transport one, understanding the public transport, there is a massive difference between public transport over there and over here…show them maps and understand how it works.*(Hong Kong Study Tour Participant, 2014)

Students reported that most of the preparation provided by the University involved logistics and practical matters in relation to visa applications, travel bookings and other practical, travel arrangements (66 references). Students were also provided with information regarding culture, language (23 references) and health, safety and risk (9 references). There were only four references to academic preparation provided by the study tour leaders, suggesting a very low emphasis on this area of pre-departure preparation.

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Table 1: Student responses regarding pre-departure preparation provided by the University

	Logistical and Practical	Culture and Language	Student Behaviour and Expectation Management	Health, Safety and Risk	Academic	Total references
References	66	23	18	9	4	120

Students offered a range of recommendations for future study tours. There were 138 references relating to logistics and planning. These suggestions ranged from improving the administration of the applicant selection process, through to specific details such as timing of workshops, information about vaccinations, the daily itinerary, internet access, flights and in-country travel arrangements. All five focus groups specifically mentioned the importance of an appropriate, well-organized and well-communicated program structure (46 references). It was clear from the feedback that students wanted to have a well-defined itinerary, which provided the details of each day's activities so that they knew what to expect. One group found that when they arrived at their destination, the itinerary was not as it had originally been presented, and this caused some confusion and angst, as in the following excerpt:

> *We were all a bit unsure, they were unsure what we were expecting to do, and so I think that first day we kind of got it under control of what we were doing, but yeah still like making sure the next lot that go over are prepared…like know what they're doing basically.*(Malaysia Study Tour Participant, 2014)

There were 41 references relating to the importance of group dynamics and interpersonal relationships. The following excerpt is indicative of students' feedback:

> *Because when you're over there and if you get homesick or something bad happens, the people that you're with are the only people you can rely on to talk because your family is in Australia and your friends are in Australia, and so you've got to rely on these people and they've got to become your major support when you're over there. So it's good to have a solid relationship and even though your relationship does build because we never knew each other before we went.* (Malaysia Study Tour Participant, 2014)

There were a smaller number of suggestions relating to academic aspects such as the pre-departure academic materials provided and assessment requirements (21 references). As one student noted, it was useful to complete reading assignments and other academic preparation prior to the start of the study tour:

> *I thought those [URL] links were quite useful because I went into them and downloaded from each of them so before I'd gone over there I had a wad of information which I had pre-read. So the moment we walked into the Hong Kong monetary authority, for example, I already had an expectation…of what we were going to be seeing and generally, generally I wasn't disappointed at all. It did set*

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up the framework quite nicely for me but I know that doesn't work for everybody. In my case it did. (Hong Kong Study Tour Participant, 2014)

Some students in the postgraduate study tour were critical about the volume of required reading and the lack of clear instruction about how those readings related to student learning outcomes, as in the following excerpt:

> *[I was] completely overwhelmed and that we had these readings and the confusion whether they were core, they were required, you needed to know these readings whereas my expectations of going to China was to learn something that was important to my studies or important to me from a personal level and then I was required to learn little intricacies of legal things which I'm just going to forget. These readings, I don't remember everything that was in these readings.* (China Postgraduate Study Tour Participant, 2014*)*

Students' Personal Preparation
Students appeared to be unsure about what was expected of them in relation to their independent preparation for the study tours, although they recognized that the preparation requirements for a study tour were markedly different to that of a 'holiday' (94 references). The differences were mainly in terms of academic requirements, the need to adhere to a structured program, the level of cultural immersion, opportunities for professional experience, representing the University and mental preparation such as dealing with anxiety.

In response to Question 9 in the focus group discussions, which asked students, 'Do you believe the preparation for going on a study tour to Asia is different than the preparation for joining a study tour to a Western country such as Canada, Germany or Spain?', the overwhelming response was that the preparation is markedly different. There were no responses to the contrary. The following quotation is indicative of the responses:

> *I strongly believe that depending on where you go, if you're going to a culture or a country that's very similar, the more similar that it is to us the less preparation I think you need. So even though if we were going to say, London, which is an extremely popular tourist destination, you would obviously need a preparation session but it would not need to be nearly as extensive to, say, if we were going to Cambodia. So, if you're going to an undeveloped country or a third world country then you'd need a lot more preparation.*(Hong Kong Study Tour Participant, 2014*)*

In comparison to the large number of references to the University's role in preparing students, there were relatively few references to students taking personal responsibility for their own preparation. Instances of independent preparation included students undertaking their own research regarding the country they were to travel to, speaking with peers who had visited the country, or looking up country information and language resources online (34 references).

Staff
Eleven staff members were interviewed in total. To the researchers' knowledge, there was no collaboration or communication regarding study tour organisation or planning between

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staff members who were involved in different study tour programs. Three staff members provided administrative support prior to, and sometimes during study tours. Only one of the study tours utilised outsourced (external) administrative support. Findings from the staff interviews indicated that the vast majority of the preparation undertaken by staff related to logistics and practical matters (266 references), followed by managing behaviour and student expectations (103 references), academic matters (73 references), culture and language preparation (56 references) and health, safety and risk (51 references). These findings are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Staff responses regarding the main categories of pre-departure preparation provided to students

	Logistical and Practical	Student Behaviour and Expectation Management	Academic	Culture and Language	Health, Safety and Risk	Total References
References	266	103	73	56	51	549

Logistical and Practical
The largest number of references in relation to preparation concerned logistical and practical aspects of preparation for the study tours (266 references by staff). The data from both staff and students indicated that these arrangements are regarded to be the responsibility of the University. The tasks undertaken by staff members included designing the study tours, liaising with partners, administration, organizing accommodation and travel, preparing the in-country program and providing preparation seminars and materials for students. In one study tour, students were even provided with photocopies of local currency in their information handbooks, as well as local maps and places of interest. One of the challenges for some staff was the lack of continuity and sharing of information from one study tour to the next, as in the following excerpt:

> *Yeah it's quite a lot (of work)…(It is important) to write down what I have been doing for this tour because whenever people take over or then someone has a good idea about this, and because when I took it over there was no hand-over and the person had already left as well. So I needed to figure (out) everything for myself.* (Administrative Support Officer China Postgraduate Study Tour, 2014)

When academics were responsible for all logistical aspects of the study tour, as well as the academic components, this caused a sense of work overload and stress. Administrative overload was mentioned in all eleven interviews (96 references). The following excerpt is from a staff member who was both academic leader and responsible for all administrative and logistical aspects of the study tour:

> *Probably dealing with all the question emails from students about what's going to happen. Even though I provide an information sheet because for a lot of students it's the first time of going overseas. The amount of email traffic, which if I had an administrative assistant I could get to them, because I'm running around with my*

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job…because I work long hours… I'm out of my office a lot… I lose a lot of my day in driving and so my email box is always huge and it's full at the moment. I haven't been able to manage to sort things out enough to get enough down so I can actually reply to emails. (Academic Leader Cambodia Study Tour, 2014)

Student Behaviour and Expectation Management
The second highest preparation category for staff in the five university-led study tours related to the importance of setting clear expectations around student behaviour (103 references), both in terms of group dynamics, socialising and showing appropriate cultural respect to members of the host culture. All staff members mentioned the importance of setting expectations from the start, as in the following excerpt:

Now when I inherited this course in 2006, and then going into 2007, it was viewed as a soft option. The students viewed it as a soft option, they viewed it as a great time to have a party, and I put my foot on that from day one. (Academic Leader Malaysia and Vietnam Study Tours, 2014)

A number of different approaches were evident from the data. Some study tour leaders encouraged students to develop and agree on appropriate behaviour as in the following example:

We encourage the students to be open minded and…we ask the students to develop a code of conduct…covering what their expectations are of themselves and each other and of the group. So this is generated by the students, none of this information is coming from [staff members] or the university; it's…student generated…[for example], the students said that if there were any instances of conflict in the group… they would address it [with the] person who they had the conflict with and then if that was not successful, then to go to a study tour leader or staff. By way of an example: considerate, respectfulness, cohesion, respectfulness of culture, staff, all that sort of stuff. So they kind of discussed and then agreed on what they expect of the group and each other. (Administrative Support Officer Indonesia Study Tour, 2014)

Others relied on providing relevant information and allowing students to respond appropriately, as in the following example:

We have a code of conduct. So I give every student – and now I am holding up exhibit A, which is the [University] Code of Good Practice. So I give every student one of these and we talk about what this means. And interestingly for many of the students, and most – some have been here for four years – they've never actually seen this. (Academic Leader Vietnam Study Tour, 2014)

The third approach was to impose a set of standard expectations, assuming that students would be familiar with and abide by them, as follows:

All you can do is send the message of the expectation that we have in the institution, like any lecturer or course coordinator or tutor would do. It's a little different for me because I'm more on the duty of care and occupation health and safety side and it's supporting the academic. But again, I sent out the same message, that we expect this, we want this and you need to be able to do this,

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because at the end of it you're going to be graded for those things. So then it's like anything I suppose, it's like starting a course…they either do or they don't, you can't make them. (Administrative Support Officer Hong Kong Study Tour, 2014).

Academic Preparation

There were 73 references from all eleven staff interviews with regards to academic preparation. This included the provision of appropriate study resources (e.g. hard copies or digital copies of readings), relevant assignment topics and clear assessment outlines. The following comment is indicative of the approach taken by all academic leaders:

> *We also spend a fair bit of time in the very first workshop talking about the academic requirements and what you have to do, and going through each assignments, there's four of them, and explaining what you need to do.* (Academic Leader Indonesia Study Tour, 2014)

Culture and Language

There were 56 references relating to culture and language preparation for students. Staff recognized that an important part of trip preparation was that students become aware of the history, culture and social norms of the places they are visiting. The following excerpt indicates this focus on cultural preparation:

> *And [understanding the culture of the destination country] is particularly important in Indonesia because we visit an Islamic university which has quite strict codes of behaviour including dress and so on. And we're also there during Ramadan which is challenging as well because our colleagues and our buddies, they're not eating or drinking during the day, so our students need to be aware of that.* (Academic Leader Indonesia Study Tour, 2014).

Health and Safety

There were 51 references from staff regarding health safety and risk preparation for students. This included advice about vaccinations, food safety and hygiene, personal safety and being aware of risks. In most cases, the administrative support officer took responsibility for the provision of health information prior to departure, while the academic leader focused on in-country safety issues, as in the following excerpts:

> *We had a one hour travel doctor session…it's not necessarily a mandated policy that we need to do this but if in the instance of there were any illnesses, which actually did occur in this particular tour, we can then report that we did actually take adequate precautions by providing very detailed advice to students on immunisations, food, water, safety etc., so we had that session that was externally facilitated.* (Administrative Support Officer Indonesia Study Tour, 2014)

> *We also spend quite some time really thinking about various different scenarios, things that could go wrong if you like, while we're in-country, and students work together as teams to come up with solutions to problems around homesickness, around getting lost, around losing money, all the sorts of dilemmas that can happen when you're travelling.* (Academic Leader Indonesia Study Tour, 2014).

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Most Important Issues and Suggestions

In terms of issues and suggestions relating to program preparation, staff again most frequently mentioned logistical and practical challenges (320 references), followed by the importance of appropriate staff experience, organization and planning (102 references) (see Table 3 below). Within the category of issues and challenges relating to logistical and practical aspects, specifically, the topic that was most often raised by staff was students' expectation management and group cohesion (134 references). Staff mentioned the steps they had undertaken during preparation to promote greater group cohesion (e.g. a code of conduct), and the various issues they experienced in managing student expectations and conflict during trips.

Table 3: Staff members' most commonly cited issues and suggestions regarding program preparation

	Logistical and Practical Challenges Encountered	Importance of Staff Experience, Organisation and Planning	Heavy Staff Workload and Responsibility	Importance of Students' Personal Preparation
References	320	102	73	44

When exploring the concept of responsibility for preparing students, staff members felt that they had a heavy responsibility and workload in preparing and managing study tours. Workload and responsibility was the third most commonly referenced category under issues and suggestions (96 references across all eleven interviews).

The Importance of Staff Experience, Organisation and Planning

Staff who were well prepared and organized were more likely to be able to provide students with appropriate preparation prior to the study tour and support during the study tour, contributing to a more positive student experience. The following excerpt relates to staff members' perceptions of the importance of experience, preparation and temperament of staff, in their ability to organize successful study tours.

> *You need to recruit the right staff to start with. I think the people that run courses like this have to have the right temperament personally, and I think they have to have the right temperament professionally. And they do have to have the right skill set. They have to understand that because it's very different, you travel intensively.* (Academic Leader Malaysia Study Tour, 2014)

While certain intrinsic qualities of staff members (e.g., travel and administrative experience, and being passionate about their role) were reported to be important for tour program success, staff also recognized that the *support from their institutions* was a key factor in the preparation and running of a study tour. Staff overwhelmingly felt that they were not well supported by the University in their roles as study tour leaders and/or administrators (75 references from all eleven interviews). The main reasons given for this perception was a lack of resources, administrative support, training and guidance provided by the University. The following excerpts are indicative of the feedback provided by staff:

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Seriously I'd recommend that [study tour leaders] need substantial amounts of remissions on teaching time, the actual preparation of the study tour was, was huge. And I'm talking absolutely 'ginormous'…I invested countless hours now…So I said that I was happy to take up a study tour and I thought we could achieve some, some outcomes from that. Would I take it again? I think I'd need to negotiate something with the Head of School as far as the time taken there; you're also on call on the study tour from 7:30am up until at least 10:00pm of a night time, 7 days a week. (Academic Leader Hong Kong Study Tour, 2014)

The Importance of Students' Personal Preparation

There was a large number of references (44 references) made by staff in relation to the importance of students needing to take responsibility for their own preparation, behaviour and welfare. While acknowledging the critical role of the University in preparing students, staff members were sometimes baffled by the lack of responsibility taken by students for their own preparation, as indicated by one academic's reflection:

But as a professional educator I'm fascinated by the way that students want – they want responsibility, they want all the privileges of yes, modularise it, make it flexible, do this, do that, go overseas, I'm committed, I'm dedicated, and yet when it comes to the structural component and delivery they retreat back from it and it becomes a blaming process in some regards. I'm still trying to work that one out. (Academic Leader Vietnam Study Tour, 2014)

Positive perceptions

Despite nearly all staff members mentioning the heavy workload and responsibility, particularly in relation to the logistical and practical aspects of preparation, staff nevertheless highlighted positive aspects of their study tour organisation experience. For some staff, the major successes of the study tour came from the opportunity for both staff and students to form relationships with their country hosts, as shown in the following excerpts:

…each student has a buddy that's allocated to them from [the host institution], and those buddies are with us pretty much all the time; you know, not all of them all the time, but there's always some buddies staying with us, even staying at the hotel. I think that's the…most important ingredient for success for the study tour, that students really get to know a lot about Indonesia through the cultural insider information given by their buddy….so we feel like it's a very immersive and successful cultural program. (Academic leader Indonesia study tour, 2014)

The mentors were wonderful and we learnt a lot, not just about the [program] side of things, I think one of the things the students learnt the most about, was the mentoring system which we've lost in Australia in [name of program]…they were just blown away by how good their mentors were and how much they taught them. (Academic leader Malaysia study tour, 2014)

For other staff, successful study tour programs were not just about what happened while on the study tour, but was also about the sense of satisfaction, and the recognition achieved

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from leveraging the successes of the program and facilitating useful networks once the students were back home, as in the following excerpt:

> *So when we come back we do presentations and we also go to meet the Governor of South Australia…I set up that relationship as well and we go and have morning tea with him and talk about what we've achieved when we get back.* (Academic leader Cambodia study tour, 2014)

Some staff spoke about the unique, life-changing experiences gained through the study tours. In many instances, there was the perception among staff that despite the challenges of organising and managing such programs, the outcomes were worth the effort, as in the following excerpts:

> *But one of the beautiful things that the students said at the end was, being able to communicate with women who couldn't speak the language – and they really felt like they had made a difference to some of these women.* (Academic leader Malaysia study tour, 2014)

> *I have a particular passion for Asia and I'm very committed to Australia not as being a part of Europe. We are part of Asia Pacific, we have a European heritage from a colonial aspect yes, but we are citizens of the Asia Pacific region and I'm one of those individuals…that's very committed to that engagement and being a citizen of this region. And so for me it's an incredible privilege taking students there… I've been teaching now for over 20 years…I have never run a course that is more rewarding, more satisfying, but has a higher workload than this one. This is incredible.* (Academic leader Malaysia and Vietnam study tours, 2014)

Funding was cited by some staff as an important precondition for a successful program, as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

> *Well we can access funding, and the University has always been extremely generous in supporting us. So the mobility grants run by the International Office of up to $1,000… For this year's running of the [program] into Vietnam we had Asiabound funding from the Commonwealth Government, and I'm now in the application process of going through to seek more of that funding. So we've actually been incredibly well resourced – particularly by the University, but also by the government.* (Academic leader Malaysia and Vietnam study tours, 2014)

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Chapter 5: Discussion

While the data indicated a slightly different emphasis between staff members and students, the findings in this study revealed five common areas of preparation mentioned by all respondents: (1) logistical and practical; (2) student behaviour and expectation management; (3) culture and language; (4) health, safety and risk; and (5) academic. The respective distribution of references for these categories are displayed in Figure 1 and discussed in detail in the following section.

Figure 1: Comparison of student and staff responses relating to pre-departure preparation
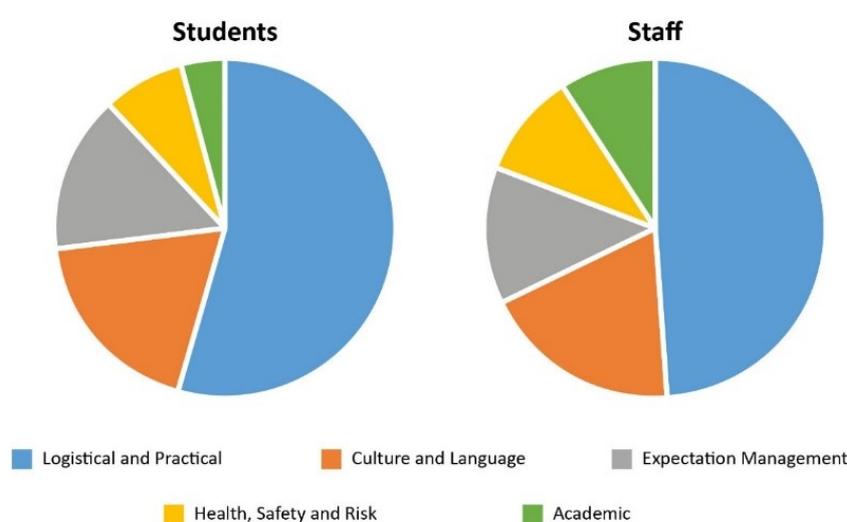
The findings from this study highlight the importance of adequately preparing students in order to improve their study tour experience. The findings have also emphasized the integral role played by the staff (both academic and administrative), the University and students themselves, in this preparation. In general, students were most satisfied when they perceived that the information they received prior to their trip was provided early in the preparation process, was comprehensive, relevant, useful and consistent in terms of what they later experienced on the trip.

Given Gothard et al.'s (2012) finding that students tended to over-estimate their capacity to deal with issues occurring during their trips, coupled with the practice in many of the study tours under examination of a 'minimalist' approach to pre-departure preparation, the findings suggest that much more time and resources need to be devoted to preparation for mobility experiences generally, and short-term study tours specifically. Comprehensive and appropriately facilitated preparation is particularly important when students are travelling to cultures so vastly different to their home country and the following sections will discuss the critical components in preparing students for short-term study tours to Asia.

Logistical and Practical Preparation

In line with findings from past research into student attitudes regarding their mobility trip preparations (e.g., Clyne & Rizvi, 1998; Kreitzer et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011), the

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findings from this study reveal that the logistical, administrative and practical aspects of preparing for a trip are foremost on the minds of both students and staff. *The Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide* (Malicki, 2012) provides exemplary program information resources that tended to include three common areas: administration and practical information, health and safety, and cultural adjustment information. These same categories were evident in the findings from the present study. When asked to recall their experience of the preparation process, students were most readily able to recount logistical and practical preparation (or in some cases, a lack thereof). This included accommodation, visa and other travel arrangements, what to take on the trip, and general program administration. While these aspects of pre-departure preparation may easily be dismissed as trivial or of less consequence to program objectives, the study by Kreitzer et al. (2012) found that such practical considerations are critical to students' satisfaction with their mobility experience. Clyne and Rizvi (1998) also found that students' main concerns tended to revolve around practical matters. The students in this study reiterated the role of practical and logistical preparation as a means of allaying their anxieties so that they could focus on their learning.

In interviewing staff about their experience, it was apparent that the logistical and administrative aspects of trip preparation were the most significant in terms of perceived importance and effort expended. Staff were cognizant of the value of appropriate preparation, planning and experience by program organizers. A related aspect was the importance of program leaders being involved in the design of the program, being able to build external relationships and liaise effectively with in-country program partners. All of the staff interviewed mentioned the heavy workload involved in managing a study tour, while almost all staff members spoke about the burden of responsibility. Suggestions for future improvements from staff in this regard included more administrative support, creating a community of practice to share ideas and resources with each other, specific training related to managing study tours (e.g. counselling skills), more control over the organisation of the program, and remission of teaching time.

One of the shortfalls of the current practice is that staff members (both administrative and academic) are seen to be responsible for preparation of all aspects of the study tour, while students are passively being 'served'. This situation is arguably in conflict with the learning objectives of mobility experiences, where the aim is for students to gain experience, independence and resilience in managing the challenges of the new environment. From the earliest opportunity, students need to take a more active role and be involved in the preparation process as the 'owners' of the study tour. More detailed suggestions will be discussed in the recommendations section.

Student Behaviour and Expectation Management

The findings indicated that one of the key aspects of preparation for both students and staff relate to student behaviour and expectation management. This was the second most referenced category by staff and the third most important category for students, who indicated that they were often unclear about what preparation they had to undertake for themselves. There were only a few instances when students spoke about personal responsibility, in contrast to the greater number of references by staff who felt that students needed to take more personal responsibility. Therefore, a notion based on 'If you

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were going to Asia by yourself, what would you do in terms of preparing for your own trip?' should be implemented in pre-departure preparation programs. The role of the study tour leader should be that of a facilitator/mentor to assist students to implement their plans, rather than as a 'travel agent' or 'parent' who organizes every aspect of the tour. The example presented earlier about the instructors providing a handbook with copies of local currencies and maps demonstrates that some staff members in this study arguably did too much and consequently shifted the responsibility away from the students. This kind of practice has the potential to send mixed messages to students about their responsibility to undertake individual preparation.

The data indicated that when students clearly understood the expectations and parameters of their mobility experience, they were more likely to take on a greater level of responsibility for other aspects of their preparation, such as health and safety (e.g. obtain vaccinations in advance), culture and language (e.g. take the time to read about the country and learn some basic vocabulary), logistical and practical (e.g. apply for visas in time, bring appropriate clothing, arrive at the airport on time), and academic matters (e.g., complete readings in advance, understand assessment requirements).

As many of the excerpts from the data demonstrated, staff may have to deal with student conduct and conflict issues as they arise, while simultaneously managing the cultural and academic aspects of the study tour. In addition to managing behaviour and conduct, expectation management also involves providing students with a clear idea of what the trip will entail and what they are likely to achieve (i.e., avoid 'overselling'). Study tour leaders who make promises about the types of experiences, interactions and impacts that students are likely to have while on their short-term study tour potentially derail opportunities for genuine, if somewhat more limited, intercultural learning. Outrageous claims such as, 'You will change the world' or what Twombly et al. (2012, p. 8) refer to as 'heroic motives', are meaningless marketing slogans best avoided. Realistic expectations, in turn, promote greater alignment between students' expectations pre-departure, their experiences while abroad, and their reflections regarding the outcome of the trip upon return.

Interestingly, there is little in the literature regarding how best to manage students' expectations in relation to short-term student mobility programs. Malicki (2012) provided a rare reference tool for staff to use in managing student expectations (according to student's prior travel experience impacting on their behaviour and trip expectations). It would be prudent for program leaders to undertake a similar, troubleshooting approach to managing student expectations and behaviour, prior to the trip, and better yet, to *involve students* in the process. A related example from one of the participating study tour programs involved the development of a collegially developed 'code of conduct' as part of pre-departure preparation.

Culture and Language

Preparation relating to culture and language was the second most referenced preparation category among students and the third most referenced category for staff, reflecting findings from studies such as Schwartz et al. (2011). Students indicated that they viewed the opportunity to be immersed in different cultures as a valuable and enriching learning experience. Accordingly, in terms of preparation, they wanted to be better informed about

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cultural norms and customs, about what to expect in their new environment and how they may behave and conduct themselves in different situations. Students stated that more language training would also have been beneficial to improve communication with their hosts. It is evident that increased cultural awareness training is essential to reduce culture shock and thus enable students to navigate their new environments with less anxiety during the short time that they are overseas. Such a finding resonates with Nam's (2011) study which emphasized the need for carefully developed and nuanced pre-departure cultural training, particularly for sojourners travelling to destinations where the degree of difference between the *home* (Australia) and *host* country (Asian destination) is so apparent.

In the programs under investigation, introducing students to culture and language was achieved via various means, including presentations at information seminars by staff and returned students, through guidebooks and through social events such as dining at a restaurant to experience the cuisine of the culture that the students were intending to visit. Students studying in multicultural Australia have numerous opportunities to learn about other cultures from international students on campus, exchange students and immigrants (Doerr, 2012), but unfortunately this potential is not adequately realised. The findings indicated that cultural preparation is greatly enhanced when academic and administrative support staff members have the cultural knowledge, understanding, experience and capacity to genuinely lead the group. Data from this study indicated that this was not always the case for the study tours under examination.

Health, Safety and Risk

Another important preparation category relating to pre-departure preparation for short-term study tours to Asia concerned health, safety and risk (e.g., vaccinations, food safety, hygiene and personal safety). The data indicated that this category of preparation was particularly important for students travelling to Asian destinations, where food and water contamination have the potential to greatly impact, not only the individual health of students, but the overall success of the study tour. Every study tour under investigation had involved incidents requiring the need for medical assistance. In some cases, students and/or staff members had been hospitalized, and in one study tour, a student had to be airlifted back to Australia to seek urgent medical care. In another study tour the police had to become involved when a student's personal safety had been compromised.

Much of the information for health and safety was disseminated through pre-departure information seminars (e.g., via the presentations of travel doctors), and through support and reference materials, such as websites, handouts and guidebooks. Students also received advice regarding safety and risk through their culture and language preparation. However, passively receiving information is arguably less effective than students working together as teams to devise solutions to various hypothetical situations or problems and by developing shared guidelines for behaviour to mitigate at least some of the risks.

One the benefits of an international short-term study tour is the spontaneous, unstructured and authentic experiences, which by their very nature are difficult, if not impossible, to manage. These risks and uncertainties put additional stress on the responsible staff member/s, in particular those who were unfamiliar with the country's language, culture and rules. In contrast to longer semester exchanges, the university staff member on a short-term

study tour is both a leader *and* a participant, and ultimately responsible for every eventuality in terms of safety and risk. This dual (and burdensome) role has implications for the organization and management of expectations of both staff and students undertaking short-term study tours.

As Nam (2011) suggested, to ensure that the staff member has the capacity to genuinely lead, they should have opportunities to 'scout out the location', learn from 'cultural insiders' and receive adequate occupational health, safety and risk training. Feedback from the staff participants in this study also indicated that these additional roles and responsibilities need to be taken into account in workload planning, in terms of the staff members' overall responsibilities as per their job description, and in terms of the specific work required to organise a study tour

Academic Preparation

Universities in Australia are under increasing pressure to produce graduates with a global-outlook (Jones, Torezani & Luca, 2012). This has led to a focus on increasing the number of students who include an international component in their degree (Deardorff, 2004); however, all too often the educational quality of these experiences has not improved (Trede, Bowles & Bridges, 2013). Students are motivated to participate in mobility experiences to gain professional and personal development (Nam 2011), and it is evident from the data in this study that students were more focused on the benefits of experiential learning (that is, the experiences in-country), rather than the academic components and assessment requirements of the study tour.

Of the five most commonly mentioned categories of preparation, students were least likely to mention academic preparation (e.g., academic support materials provided pre-departure, assessment requirements, assigning working groups), possibly indicating a lack of emphasis on this particular preparation area, as compared to the practical aspects of the trip. Suggestions to improve academic preparation provided by students included the provision of readings that were more structured, clearer expectations and guidelines relating to assignments and clear instructions relating to group work.

Students' lack of emphasis on academic aspects of the study tour suggests that assessment requirements should be integrated in pre-departure sessions to ensure that students both understand their academic responsibilities and can contribute to the assessment process well in advance of the actual trip. According to Wood (2003), when students are allowed to make choices about aspects of their assigned work or encouraged to provide their own ideas or materials for a project, their level of psychological ownership and involvement in the process will be greater.

Furthermore, providing students with the opportunity to justify the way their learning outcomes and new competencies will be demonstrated, or select the media through which they will present ideas for assessment, increases intrinsic learning motivation (Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004). However, academics need to strike a balance between student autonomy and responsibility and providing adequate support accompanied by feedback (Stefanou et al., 2004).

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Pre-departure workshops

While it is evident that well-structured and organised pre-departure workshops are critical to the success of international short-term study tours, it currently appears that such preparation is a matter of chance and dependent on the attitude and experience of the study tour leader (Trede et al., 2013). This issue needs to be addressed in light of research which warns that exposing students to international experiences without adequately preparing them or supporting them to make sense of their experience has the potential to result in negative learning outcomes (Trede et al., 2013).

The five areas of preparation identified in Figure 1 need to be facilitated via a number of compulsory pre-departure workshops and conducted well in advance of the international experience. This will allow time for students to familiarise themselves with the various logistical, practical and administrative requirements, undertake their own independent preparation and embrace the academic/learning objectives of the study tour. Ideally, assessments should be structured to identify how and whether students are adequately prepared. The design of the workshops should move from 'serving' students' to 'facilitating' students' individual preparation. Students should be encouraged to work in small teams to conduct online research for information such as vaccinations, visa applications, local maps and currency, as well as other relevant cultural and linguistic preparation. Input from different teams could then contribute to a comprehensive package of travel preparation information to be shared and discussed as a group. Short-term international study tours are *group* activities and so preparing the students for group dynamics is essential. This approach also has the potential to reduce the administrative burden on staff members while enabling students to gain confidence and appropriate knowledge prior to leaving the home country.

Selecting Capable Staff and Improving Staff Capacity

One area of preparation that needs to be improved is the selection of study tour leaders and administrative support staff. Given that Australian universities employ a large and culturally diverse talent pool, it would be prudent to select those people with the cultural background, intercultural understanding, and appropriate global experience, to organize and lead international study tours.

Universities could establish peer support groups that bring together academic and professional staff who are responsible for international study tours. This network could consist of interactive workshops supported by a dedicated website or discussion forum where best practices are shared. Alternatively universities could offer and resource 'train the trainer' courses where experienced academic and professional staff could share their experiences in organising international study tours, developing codes of conduct and facilitating problem-based activities. These sessions could facilitate the development of transferable skills and improve the ways in which staff develop, promote and deliver overseas study tours in a range of different contexts. This approach has the potential to help build confidence for those who are interested in taking over existing tours or thinking of developing their own overseas study tours.

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Importantly, the volume of work required to organize and lead an overseas study tour needs to be recognised appropriately, and a degree of remission for other teaching and administrative duties needs to be provided. Furthermore, on-going training and updating of information (e.g. planning, liaising/networking, risk management, occupational health, safety and risk, intercultural training) for staff members are crucial elements in maintaining suitable levels of competency and capability in coordinating successful study tours in Asia.

Manage Student Expectations

Students who immerse themselves in another environment are provided with new opportunities for learning-by-doing, virtually 24 hours a day (Hopkins, 1999, p. 36). This is a key element that makes the study abroad experience distinct from regular onshore classes (Doerr, 2012). A campus course is usually more controllable, easier to plan and more predictable than an international short-term study tour and this requires both staff and students to interpret phenomena that are not always specified in the course curriculum (Miao & Harris, 2012). This unpredictability is what makes expectation management so critical.

There is little advice in the literature on how best to manage student expectations and this is a new area on which to focus for short-term study tours. Given the largely unexplored yet prominent area of student behaviour and expectation management identified in this study as a preparation category for both staff and students, careful planning for this aspect should be undertaken. Expectation management should be discussed at the first preparation workshop and reinforced in later workshops.

Pre-departure expectation management could be supported with context-specific scenarios, videos or case studies to be discussed as a group in the pre-departure workshops. Students who have participated in previous study tours to the same or similar locations are also an invaluable resource who can provide perspectives on both the cultural and academic components of the study tour. Another very simple but effective strategy would be for students to keep a travel journal with a record of key activities or personal reflections relating to learning outcomes and unexpected challenges. Staff would also be expected to keep a travel journal comprised of detailed information and reflections about activities, coupled with observations of students' challenges, learning outcomes and areas requiring staff intervention or input. During the study tour, the travel journals could be used formally or informally as the basis for engaged discussion, debate and collegially developed solutions to on-the-ground problems. At the end of the study tour, all participants would have a comprehensive record of their thoughts and expectations for the entire sojourn, and this could be used for further post-trip reflection.

Post-Return Reflection

Students should be encouraged to set and reflect on meaningful goals for themselves because learning by doing or immersion alone is not sufficient (McAllister, Whiteford, Hill, Thomas, & Fitzgerald, 2006). It is important that a learning environment is created where students are able to reflect critically on their own and other people's behaviours, approaches and assumptions. Self-assessment includes both reflection and evaluation of work and assists students to develop feelings of ownership and responsibility for learning (Paris & Paris, 2001). Therefore, as Gothard et al. (2012) recommends, post-return reflection

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and de-briefing are a critical part of the planning for an international study tour and should be considered to be central to the assessment process.

A number of tools could be used for post-return reflection. First, students could prepare a summary report based on their record from the travel journal. Positive and negative elements of the study tour as well as challenging issues regarding their thought processes and expectations could be demonstrated in this final work. Second, post-return workshops could be organized by students rather than staff members, to once again reiterate the importance of students 'owning' their learning. These workshops should be factored into the overall study tour program *prior* to departure, so that students are aware of the upfront commitment they are undertaking, and the expected date/s during which the workshops will occur, post-return.

Students should be encouraged to conduct these workshops based on their own design, in consultation with the study tour leader. These types of post-return workshops would give students the opportunity to express their views (including any possible 'disappointments') in a supportive environment and it would also enable the study tour leader to evaluate the success of the study tour as a whole. During the post-return workshops, students should be encouraged to reflect on their original motivations, how the study tour assisted them to achieve their objectives, and what they may do differently in similar situations in the future.

Importantly, the post-return workshop should be a celebration of students' achievements, despite any unexpected challenges that may have arisen. To this end, following discussion with the students as to appropriate categories, a number of 'awards' could be presented to students based on some key categories, such as a 'culturally sensitive award', a 'language improvement' award, a 'best observation' award, and a 'best relationship building' award (including both internal and external relationships). These awards would ideally be based on a combination of staff and peer assessment. Such a positive approach has the potential to build students' confidence and willingness to engage with different cultures, and in the context of this study, particularly with Asian cultures, in the future.

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Chapter 7: Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Critical success factors

This project benefited greatly from a team leader with extensive prior experience in leading large strategic priority projects for the OLT, as well as a project manager with similar experience in managing OLT projects. Each of the project team members brought distinct expertise to the project, including research skills in data collection, analysis and strategy. This combined team experience resulted in a feasible and flexible project plan with objectives that were achievable, given the limited time and resources inherent to seed projects. The small project team worked closely together during all stages of the project, contributing to data collection, data analysis, writing and revising of outputs. The allocation of resources to the project manager who worked for two days per week on project tasks meant that work continued at a consistent pace throughout the life cycle of the project, even when the principle team members were experiencing busy periods.

In addition to collegial and productive teamwork, a number of key activities ensured the success of this 12 month project. These included establishing a project website as the first priority to enable immediate dissemination of results. Second, undertaking data collection and completing analysis very early in the project timeline allowed the subsequent application of the findings in project outputs such conference presentations, publications and learning resources. Third, strategic use of opportunities (such as collaborating with Professor Darla Deardorff, internationally recognised expert on intercultural competency, to create a set of videos relevant to the project during her brief visit to Adelaide), resulted in a highly engaging and media-rich website. Fourth, engaging with returned students, both as research respondents, and as resource developers, ensured that this small project included the all-important student voice, so often missing or glossed over in time-poor projects.

The final success factor was the project team's and reference group's network of useful contacts in student mobility within the university and externally. These contacts were invited to participate in the study, attend the roundtable, and approached for feedback regarding the project website and resources.

Further research

This research was based on interviews with academic and administrative staff and focus groups with students at one Australian university. While the respondents represented a wide range of academic disciplines and the countries visited for the study tours included numerous Asian countries, there are opportunities for future research to extend this preliminary work. While the findings from this study reflected that of past research into student experience of study tours, the project team was surprised at the relatively few responses from both groups of respondents relating to academic preparation. This finding is particularly surprising given that all the study tours included assessable, academic components. From the data collected, it appeared that academic preparation was emphasised to a much lesser extent, compared to the logistical aspects of pre-departure preparation. This may be due to a difference in workload when it comes to practical aspects of trip preparation (e.g., enrolment, travel arrangements, health and safety), as compared to academic preparation (e.g., designing assessments, assigning project groups, selecting

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readings). The staff members interviewed in the study indicated that the former category of tasks involved a significant and sometimes daunting amount of time and attention. This raises questions of whether academic preparation and assessment design could be further refined if academic staff are appropriately supported in their roles as study tour leaders and are thus able to place greater focus on this integral aspect of the study tours. Additional research could be undertaken to examine the role of assessment in short-term study tours.

Future research in the area of preparation of short-term study tours to Asia could focus on the following:

- A national survey of staff and students at all (or at least a representative sample of) Australian universities to determine best practices in preparing students for mobility experiences in Asia in the context of the 'New Colombo Plan';
- Interviews with staff and focus groups with students at a range of Australian universities to further explore (and extend) the five categories of preparation identified in the current research;
- A survey of staff at key Asian partner universities to explore host perspectives on how best to prepare students for a short-term study tour to their country; and
- A survey of third party providers of student mobility experiences in Asia to determine their perspectives on how best to prepare students for a short-term study tour and/or student placement.
- Further study to determine the role and fitness of assessment in short-term study tours

Project Contribution

By addressing the less researched area of pre-departure support for student mobility experiences in Asia, this study has extended the contributions of the OLT funded *Bringing the learning home* project, and added to recommendations from the *Outbound Mobility Best Practice Guide for Australian Universities* and other associated literature. The research outcomes have identified five key areas of preparation, including logistical and practical; student behaviour and expectation management; culture and language; health, safety and risk; and academic, although the emphasis accorded to each area differed slightly between university staff and students.

In reviewing the kind of preparation documents provided to students who participate in study abroad programs, the project team found that there was a wide variety of guides in use, with some guides considerably more comprehensive than others, and with varying focus on different aspects of trip preparation. Guides tended to contain a great deal of useful information, but not all of them presented this information in clearly delineated categories that focussed on what the project team determined to be *key areas* of pre-departure preparation. Accordingly, the Generic Preparation Guide for Staff and Students Going on Short-term Study Tours to Asia was created to support short-term student mobility program organisers (academics and administrative staff), as well as program participants (students). The Guide is informed by the project findings, consisting of a comprehensive summary of tips, advice and useful links to resources relating to student mobility program preparation, based on collation and review of existing student mobility program handbooks

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and resources. There are five sections in the Guide, each relating to a different aspect of short-term study tour preparation, as outlined in this report. Individual sections (in PDF and MS Word formats) are available for download from the project website.

A range of recommendations for how Australian universities can better prepare students for short-term study tours to Asia has also been discussed (see Chapter Six). These recommendations are based on the understanding that culturally sensitive, carefully structured and student-centred preparation is essential to ensure that the transformative potential of cultural immersion is realised. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this research, both in terms of findings and recommendations, have the capacity to improve the implementation of the Australian Government's New Colombo Plan and the higher education sector's support for Australian students as they embark on an overseas study tour to Asia.

Appendix A: Certification

Certification by Deputy Vice Chancellor (or equivalent)

I certify that all parts of the final report for this OLT grant provide an accurate representation of the implementation, impact and findings of the project, and that the report is of publishable quality.

Signature: *Allan Evans*

Name: Professor Allan Evans, Provost & Chief Academic Officer   Date: 27 August 2015

Appendix B: References

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Appendix C: Project Dissemination

The project conducted its activities over a 12-month time frame in three phases, once funding was received in 2014. The project was designed to deliver results in sequence, so that each finding could feed into the interpretation of subsequent work.

Figure 2: Project Phases

		Months										
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Phase 1: Ethics application; student focus groups, staff interviews, transcribing and data analysis; website development; briefing with reference group.												
Phase 2: Development of conceptual model and learning resources, following consultation with reference group; trial evaluation & dissemination of resources.												
Phase 3: Finalise deliverables; summative evaluation and submission of the final report for OLT; prepare for larger scale project proposal.												

Regular informal consultation with reference group members was undertaken before the commencement of each Phase. The reference group included both internal and external senior professionals who have relevant expertise to provide guidance on the design, development and ongoing evaluation of the project. The reference group will be instrumental in maximizing the impact of our deliverables within the University of South Australia, La Trobe and Murdoch Universities and with third party providers of student mobility experiences.

Dissemination Platforms
Project Website
The dedicated project website was constructed early on in the project, during the data collection stages of Phase 1. This was to allow for findings summaries, resources and news about dissemination such as publications, presentations and events to be regularly updated on the website as the project progressed, and to ensure engagement with key stakeholders. The Project Leader, Tracey Bretag, also used Twitter to promote resources and findings as they were made available. Please see Appendix E: Project Impact for details on stakeholder engagement with the website.

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Figure 3: Screenshot of project website homepage

Social Media
*Facebook*

The project's [Facebook page](#) was created at the same time as the website to provide updates on project progress and to broadcast news and events published on the project website. The aim of the Facebook page was to reach a broad audience, including students.

Figure 4: Screenshot of project Facebook page

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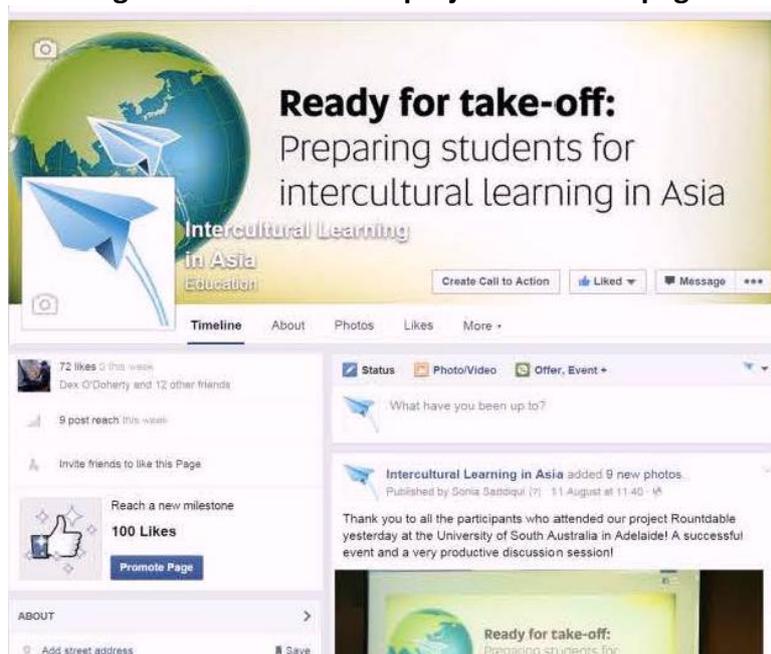
YouTube

Due to the numerous videos embedded on the project website, a project YouTube channel was established to house all the videos. This way, members of the public can choose to browse through the selection of videos without having to search through the entire website. This is especially important given the high international profile of Professor Darla Deardorff who provided five videos for the website.

Figure 5: Screenshot of Project YouTube Channel
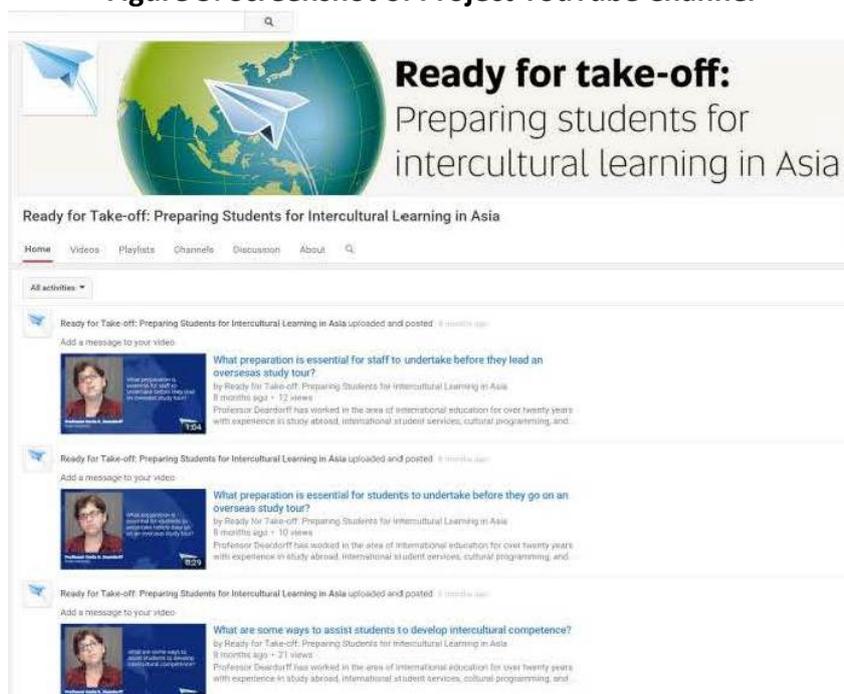
Publications

- A chapter for the *Handbook of Research on Study Abroad Programs and Outbound Mobility*, edited by Donna Velliaris and Deb Coleman-George and published by IGI Global.

Conference Presentations

- Presentation entitled, 'Ready for take-off: Preparing students for intercultural learning in Asia' at the *9th International Convention of Asian Scholars* (ICAS), 5-9 July 2015, Adelaide.
- Presentation entitled 'Critical components in preparing students for short-term study tours to Asia' at the 29th Australian International Education Conference (AIEC), 6-9 October, 2015, Adelaide.

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Roundtable

A project roundtable was held at the University of South Australia on August 10, 2015 with the aim of sharing the project findings with relevant stakeholders. The thirty-five participants included representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), student mobility companies, student mobility officers from other universities, project members from other similar, OLT-funded studies, research participants, stakeholders from the University of South Australia and students. The project team presented research findings and resources developed from the study, and facilitated a lively discussion session regarding future research directions, resources needed and opportunities for collaboration.

Key findings from the roundtable are as follows:

- The project resources presented were deemed useful by staff who work in student mobility and will assist greatly in staff preparedness.
- Student participants were positive about the potential utility of the resources presented.
- Staff participants mentioned that they and their colleagues were often unaware of the existence of useful resources and suggested the establishment of a community of practice, to enable sharing of resources, advice and expertise.
- Staff participants spoke about the heavy responsibility and time commitment inherent to their roles and suggested teaching relief and administrative support as possible suggestions.
- Staff participants wanted to see more training and support provided for study abroad organisers
- Participants were interested in investigating the long-term outcomes of study students who have participated in study abroad programs
- Suggested topics for further research included: longitudinal impact studies, assessment strategies and academic aspects of study tours, and how to embed mobility programs into existing units (e.g., as capstone programs).

Photo 1: At the Roundtable - Dr Tracey Bretag, Project Leader

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Photo 2: At the Roundtable - Ms Samantha Keech-Marx, New Colombo Plan Secretariat, DFAT

Photo 3: At the Roundtable – Associate Professor Stephen Boyle, Dean: Academic, UniSA Business School opens the event

Photo 4: At the Roundtable – from left to right: Dr Tim Hall (UWS, OLT Project Leader), Professor Ying Zhu (Project Team Member), Ms Samantha Keech-Marx (DFAT), Dr Tracey Bretag (Project Leader), Ms Sonia Saddiqui (Project Manager), and Mr Rob Malicki (Reference Group Member)

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Appendix D: Project Resources

Generic Preparation Guide for Staff and Students

The ***Generic Preparation Guide for Staff and Students Going on Short-term Study Tours to Asia*** was created to support short-term student mobility program organisers (academics and administrative staff), as well as program participants (students). The Guide is informed by the findings from the *Ready for Take-Off: Preparing Students for Intercultural Learning in Asia* project. It consists of a comprehensive summary of tips, advice and useful links to resources relating to student mobility program preparation, based on collation and review of existing student mobility program handbooks and resources

There are five sections in the Guide, each relating to a different aspect of short-term study tour preparation. Individual sections (in PDF and MS Word formats) are available for download below. Additional resources such as templates and case studies, are also available.

Available for download from the [project website](#).

SECTION 1: LOGISTICAL & PRACTICAL PREPARATION
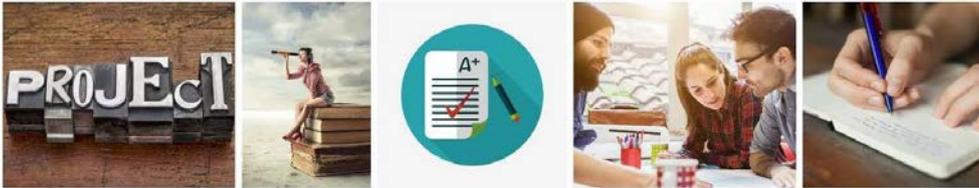

SECTION 2: HEALTH, SAFETY & RISK PREPARATION

SECTION 3: CULTURE & LANGUAGE PREPARATION

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SECTION 4: STUDENT BEHAVIOUR & EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT

SECTION 5: ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Templates

- The **Student Contact Sheet Template** - an editable table listing the various categories relating to students' personal particulars.

- The **'Things to Bring Checklist' Template for Students** is a comprehensive list of items that students may wish to pack for their trip. The checklist can be added to and customised, by students, to assist in their pre-departure organisation.

Case Studies

The project team has also constructed five, ready-to-use case studies, reflecting the five major pre-departure preparation categories identified in this research project. Each of the scenarios presented are based on actual experiences by the research participants who undertook short-term study tours to Asia. Case studies are available for downloadable from the project website.

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Appendix E: Project impact

Determining the immediate impact of this 12 month seed project is arguably more difficult (and less meaningful) than measuring the impact of a longer term project. However, there is evidence that the project has had some identifiable early effects, both in the team members' own contexts and in the broader higher education sector.

1. Team members' own context	• **Senior management:** UniSA has demonstrated support for the project through the involvement of the DVC: International and Advancement on the Reference Group, the PVC: Business and Law and the Head of School: School of Management in the lead up to the Roundtable, and the Business School Dean: Academic at the Roundtable itself. Further networks were forged through project team member Professor Ying Zhu's role as Director of the Australian Centre for Asian Business (a co-host of the Roundtable).
	• **Teaching and learning:** Colleagues at the University of South Australia with experience in leading overseas study tours to Asia participated in focus group discussions and attended the Project Roundtable. All indicated that the project resources will be useful to prepare students for future study tours to Asia.
	• **Review of programs:** During the period of the seed project, there has been a review of short-term mobility experiences in the Business School and a Coordinator of Work Integrated Learning has been appointed to take leadership in relation to overseas placements. Prior to this, overseas study tours were developed on an ad hoc basis.
2. Immediate students	• This project sought to include the student voice in both the research and outcomes phases. Thirty two students participated in focus group discussions; seven students contributed videos to the project website* and six students attended the Project Roundtable where they provided feedback on a recent study tour to Hong Kong. The HK returned students validated and endorsed the findings and resources developed by the project team.
3. Spreading the word	• The project team shared the findings of the project in a chapter for The *Handbook of Research on Study Abroad Programs and Outbound Mobility* (in press); and presentations at two key conferences, *9th International Convention of Asian Scholars*, 5-9 July 2015, Adelaide and *Australian International Education Conference* (AIEC), 6-9 October, 2015, Adelaide.
	• Bretag and van der Veen's paper 'Pushing the Boundaries' has been accepted for publication by *Innovations in Education and Teaching International.*
	• A Project Roundtable was held on 10 August 2015 at UniSA. Thirty five attendees comprised representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), student mobility providers, student mobility

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		officers from other universities, project members from other similar, OLT-funded studies, research participants, stakeholders from the University of South Australia and students. Feedback was very positive, with five participants indicating they would be interested in collaborating on a larger, national project (see Appendix C: Project Dissemination).
4. Connecting across the sector	•	From the start, the project team connected with project leaders of other OLT funded projects on student mobility. Relationships were developed through regular email and telephone contact, as well as conversations held during the Project Roundtable. Opportunities now exist for future collaborations on the topic, and for the sharing of resources*.
5. Connecting across the globe	•	The project team was fortunate to collaborate with internationally recognised expert on intercultural competence, Professor Darla Deardorff, in the creation of five student mobility focussed videos for the project website*. Professor Deardorff's contribution will ensure wider engagement with the project resources beyond the Australian higher education section. The relationship with Professor Deardorff will be important for ongoing research in this area, particularly in the development of a larger, national project.

*Visitors to the Intercultural Learning in Asia Website
September 2014 - August 2015.

Month	Views	Visitors
September 2014	143	26
October 2014	70	18
November 2014	15	8
December 2014	68	19
January 2015	50	17
February 2015	88	20
March 2015	84	12
April 2015	150	31
May 2015	250	40
June 2015	210	46
July 2015	224	52
August 2015	208	51
Average per month	130	28
Total approximate views as at August 1, 2015	**1264**	**269**

It can be seen that the largest number of views and visitors to the project website occurred when the website was first established, and then in the lead up to the roundtable held at the University of South Australia on 10 August 2015. The project team is in the planning stages of an OLT grant application for a national project which extends the work of this seed project. We plan to use the existing website, already familiar to stakeholders in student mobility, to promote future findings and resources.

Appendix F: Evaluation

The project team evaluated the outcomes of the project roundtable by asking participants to fill out an online survey to indicate their perceptions of the event. Ten participants filled out the survey and the responses have been collated in Table 4. Five participants indicated that they wished to collaborate on a potential, national project.

Table 4: Roundtable Feedback responses from online survey

Survey Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral / Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The roundtable provided an opportunity to learn more about the outcomes of the Intercultural Learning in Asia Project	4	6			
The findings and resources presented in the roundtable are useful for my work in, or experience with, student mobility.	4	5		1	
The roundtable provided an opportunity to make contacts and network with other people who work or have experience in student mobility.	3	6	1		
The discussions that arose during the course of the roundtable were useful and relevant.	4	4		2	
The venue was adequate	4	5			
Room set up, audio and visual aids were appropriate.	7	2		1	
I intend to follow up with colleagues (or fellow students) at my own institution regarding the outcomes of the roundtable.	2	6	2		

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Appendix G: Focus group questions for students

- Please tell us about the preparation provided by the university before you went to (country)?
- Did you engage in any other type of preparation (e.g., Facebook discussions, online discussions, informal meetings, Travel Doctor, legal, personal research, talking to peers/family)?
- What was most/least useful? And why?
- What would you have liked to have known before you went? List the top three things.
- Given your experience in (country) what preparation do you think the next group of students need/want before they go on a short-term study tour to Asia?
- Do you think the preparation needed for an academic study tour is different to the preparation needed for a holiday?
- What do you believe is the responsibility of the institution to prepare and what is your responsibility to prepare for an overseas study tour?
- How can we best balance the preparation and not over prepare and allow for surprise?
- Do you believe the preparation for going on a study tour to Asia is different than the preparation for joining a study tour to a Western country such as Canada, Germany or Spain?
- Any other comments or feedback in terms of preparing for a study tour?

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Appendix H: Interview questions for staff

Interview questions for administrative staff
- Please tell us about the preparation you provided for the study tour.
- Did you work with a third party provider to assist you in organizing the study tour?
- Tell us about the main administrative challenges you had in facilitating the study tour?
- What resources would you have liked to have drawn on for preparing the study tour?
- Did you feel adequately supported by your institution in preparing the study tour?
- What sort of feedback regarding preparation have you received from the students on the study tour?
- How do you see the division of the responsibility of the institution and the individual study tour participant?
- How to balance the preparation versus over-preparation?
- Any other comments or feedback in terms of preparation?

Interview questions for academic staff
- Please tell us about the preparation for the study tour.
- Did you work with a third party provider in organizing the study tour and if so, how did they assist you in your academic role?
- What were the main academic or other challenges you had in preparing your students for the study tour to (country)?
- What resources would you have liked to have drawn on for preparing the study tour?
- Do you feel that the administrative support for preparation was adequate?
- How may you do things differently in preparing the students next time?
- Any other comments or feedback in terms of preparation?

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