

Final report for AGCAS PMI2 Project

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Introduction to PMI2 Final Project report

This report outlines the progress and key outcomes of the Salford University pilot project (between January-June 2010) which has served to enhance the work we do with our international alumni and also contributes to the creation of a resource that can be used for a wider audience across AGCAS as a whole.

Aims of the Salford project

As per our original project bid (*see appendix 1*), the proposed stated outcomes of the Salford project were as follows; these are outcomes that have been achieved.

At least 30 high quality case studies	Given geographical distance we anticipate these would be text-based. However we would like to look at other ways of capturing stories through video
100 employer contacts	Detailed information about a wider number of our international graduates (up to 100) in terms of what career they are pursuing and who they are working for that could be added to the HECSU employer contacts database.

These relate to the required outputs originally asked for by AGCAS when project bids were sought:

- An expanded list of employer contacts to be available through the employer database currently under development by HECSU.¹
- An enhanced resource of success stories/ case studies about international student and graduate employment to be available on the AGCAS website international community pages.

¹ Information about what detail is required for this database was not available at time of research/ writing.

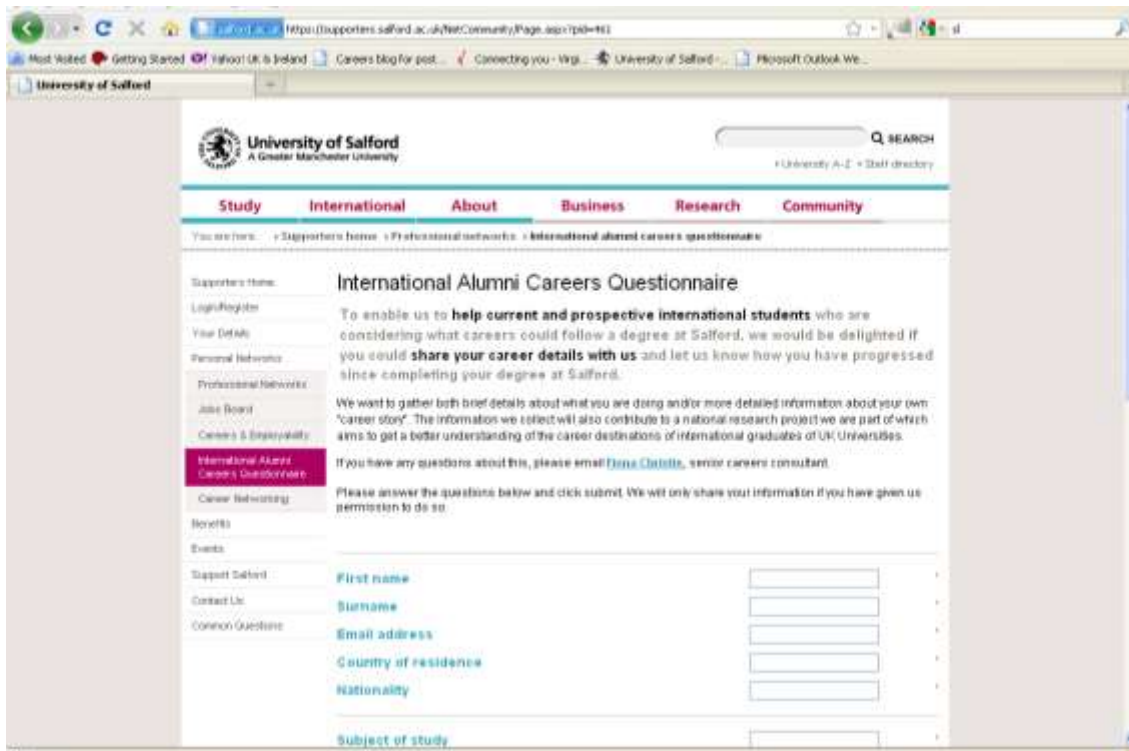
Methodology

Considerable work has resulted in the outcomes of the project. Included here is a very brief summary of activity.

The project entailed close collaboration of the Careers and Employability Service with the University alumni office in particular and was able to capitalise on good relationships already developed with our international alumni as outlined in our project bid (see *appendix 1*).

The key starting point for us was an online questionnaire which was sent to up to 5000 of our international alumni who the alumni office had details for. This questionnaire allowed us to collect brief details and canvassed interest amongst our alumni as to whether they would be willing to be contacted for further information.

Figure 1: Top of online questionnaire



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the University of Salford website. The page title is "International Alumni Careers Questionnaire". The main content area contains the following text:

International Alumni Careers Questionnaire

To enable us to **help current and prospective international students** who are considering what careers could follow a degree at Salford, we would be delighted if you could **share your career details with us** and let us know how you have progressed since completing your degree at Salford.

We want to gather both brief details about what you are doing and/or more detailed information about your own "career story". The information we collect will also contribute to a national research project we are part of which aims to get a better understanding of the career destinations of international graduates of UK Universities.

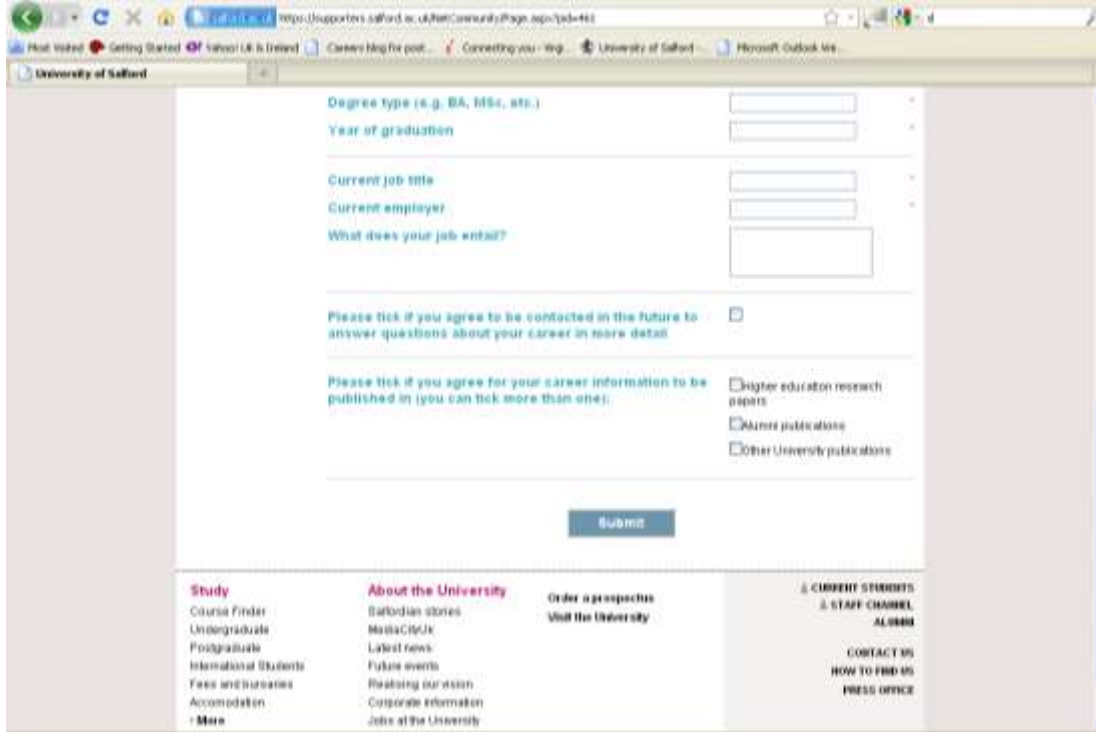
If you have any questions about this, please email [Fiona Christie](mailto:Fiona.Christie), senior careers consultant.

Please answer the questions below and click submit. We will only share your information if you have given us permission to do so.

The form includes the following fields:

- First name
- Surname
- Email address
- Country of residence
- Nationality
- Subject of study

Figure 2 – Bottom on online questionnaire



The online questionnaire resulted in approximately 350 responses and around 200 indicated they would be prepared to answer further questions. The individuals who indicated a willingness to answer further questions were sent a personal email with the following questions:

More detailed questions to which we received approximately 60 replies:

1. Why did you choose Salford University?
2. Please outline the key steps/stages in your career since leaving Salford University.
3. What relevant skills and experiences did you gain during your time living and studying at Salford?
4. Why did you choose your particular career?
5. How easy did you find it to get a job after your studies in UK?
6. How relevant was your subject of study in securing your position?
7. Do you have any tips for getting into the career you are in?
8. Do you have any tips for getting a successful career in the country you live in?
9. What tasks are typical in your job?
10. What are the most favourable and less favourable parts of your job?
11. Is there any other careers advice you would give current international students when they are planning for their future?
12. Any other comments

Both the online questionnaire and the more detailed set of questions resulted in some unexpected outcomes and data that can be useful to us at the University:

- Positive return rate from international alumni who are British nationals who wanted to support the research (unfortunately this data was not usable for this PMI2 project). Positive response from alumni from many years ago (pre-1990); however, in selecting case studies for the project we chose to prioritise more recent graduates.²
- Contact made with recent international alumni who are still in Salford who wanted to share their experiences via video with current students around really practical issues such as getting a part time job. This film footage has not been completed yet.
- Considerable response from postgraduate alumni; this may well be a reflection of high number of internationals who are represented in our postgraduate community which is not dissimilar to other universities where the growth of international participation has been considerable at postgraduate level.

As a result of a slight shortfall in individuals who were our primary target audience, we did make use of personal contacts to generate additional case study material. We have also included international alumni from non-PMI2 countries in our return.

² We do plan to make use of the unexpected data collected via our own publications at Salford but will not use for the PMI2 report.

Outcomes collected

The case studies collected are in *appendix 2* “Career case studies of international alumni of Salford University”. Case studies are from a variety of countries and span graduates from 1990-2010; individuals occupy a range of levels of seniority often associated with how long ago they graduated which gives an insight into short-term as well as longer term career trajectories.

Employer details are given in *appendix 3* for over 100 of our international graduates detailing what they studied at University and what they are currently doing/who they work for.

Conclusion

In relation to the stated aims of the project, the 32 career case studies serve to clearly evidence how international alumni are being successful in the labour market both in the UK and across the globe. The additional brief details also serve to do this and give specific examples of the companies and organisations our international alumni have gone to work for which can be added to the employer database developed by HECSU and University of London. Further information is supplied in terms of the disciplines graduates are coming from.

We are confident that the kind of information we have collected helps to bring alive what international graduates really go on to do and in conducting this research have been heartened by the response we have received and the very positive sense alumni have felt about their studies in the UK and how this has helped their careers.

We plan to create a graduate destinations and profile section of our new website that is open to all and captures all the data collected and in so doing creates a useful picture of what are international alumni are doing.

Appendix 1

PMI2 Project bid

Name of the institution and AGCAS Head of Service:

Claire MacLean, Acting Head of Careers and Employability, University of Salford

Name & contact details for the person making the bid;

***Claire MacLean, Acting Head of Careers and Employability, Student Life,
University of Salford, c.macleans@salford.ac.uk tel: 0161 295 3292***

Introduction

If successful in winning this bid Careers and Employability will work together with our Alumni Office in delivering the objectives set by the project.

There are a number of factors in place that demonstrate our capacity to complete the project, however winning the bid would allow us to give emphasis to the priority countries of PMI2 initiative with a view to creating case studies and generate specific employer and careers information for wider use nationally.

1. Alumni net about to be launched

Salford University is about to launch a new alumni website called Salford Supporters Online, it has many interactive functions which will enable the Development Office to send targeted content to alumni and supporters (Assembly members, MBA alumni and international alumni) of the University. The website will facilitate social and professional networking by allowing users to display their profile to other users either on the directory or by advertising their company on the business card directory. Due to the site linking directly to the alumni and fundraising database, it enables users to instantly receive targeted content depending on the group they fall into, for example international members have their own section of the website which only they have access to, it contains a directory of members and details of relevant news and forthcoming events. The discussion boards have been placed on the main site and within the smaller section built for international alumni, Assembly and MBA alumni.

The website also has the functionality to send emails to large groups of people; the segment can be highly intelligent as all recipients are based on a query within the alumni database. Once the email has been sent we can identify how many people have opened the email, who clicked through onto the site and how long the average user spent looking at pages. Additionally there is an in-depth reporting function which will enable us to understand the type of content users are interested in reading.

2. Events for international alumni



Last year we communicated to all international alumni who are currently living outside the UK and have developed new ways to connect with our overseas alumni. The University is developing a new internationalisation strategy and the Vice-Chancellor will initially be visiting cities where most of our overseas alumni currently live. There will be an evening alumni event in each city as follows:

- Tripoli, Libya – Sunday 4 October 2009
- Beijing, China – Tuesday 27 October 2009
- Shanghai, China – Wednesday 28 October 2009
- Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Friday 30 October 2009
- Brunei – Sunday 1 November 2009

Visits to India and Nigeria are scheduled for early 2010

3. Case studies

The alumni office has for some time been gathering personal data from international alumni. Case study information is collected at this link and sent to relevant academic departments. <http://www.salford.ac.uk/alumni/share/>

4. Career case studies – mini-project in Careers and Employability

In Careers and Employability we have done a mini-project collecting data from PhD alumni and creating case studies, building on the work done by the alumni office in the above links. We have created a more detailed proforma and questions for case studies.

The proforma invites alumni to answer a number of questions.

<http://www.salford.ac.uk/alumni/phd-community/>

The questions ask alumni if they want to:

- Mentor or virtually mentor a PhD student
- Be part of career panel discussions at the University to talk about their career
- Act as a referral point for PhDs interested in the field they are working in
- Provide a case study by answering a series of questions

You can see some of the case studies collected so far from our PhD graduates, both UK and international. Some of these are located on our website.

<http://www.careers.salford.ac.uk/students/phd/blog/?tag=alumni>

There is already evidence collected from these case studies that some of these international alumni see that there are opportunities for UK Universities to link with employers overseas and that there is plenty of scope for the employment of the UK's international graduates.

Gang Cheol Yun - Project Manager - HanmiParsons Co. Ltd - Seoul

“For those who are interested in working in the Construction industry in Korea there is a lot of scope. I also think there is a lot of potential for big name Korean companies such

as Samsung, Hyundai and LG to work more closely with the University of Salford for mutual benefit. I would like to see this happen.”

Careers and Employability has also started Linked in group “Salford PhDs past and present” which has already been successful in reaching international alumni. We have decided to build upon existing social networks such as Linked in to reach alumni who could potentially give a case study and share insights on employment options.

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=2231567&trk=anet_ug_hm

In Careers and Employability our work so far has been small-scale based on developing what we offer to our PhD community.

5. Project Plan

We would use a number of ways to reach international alumni, through the new “alumni net” and other existing social networks such as Linked in as well as meeting people at events internationally. This would allow us to generate leads for case studies as well as information about specific employers recruiting our international alumni. If we were successful in securing £5000 for this project it would allow us to consolidate and develop our work further to be of use to a wider audience.

We would develop the existing case study material and pilot the transfer of the activity across undergraduate groups but with a focus on our postgraduate alumni community. Many of our postgraduates both PGT and PGR come to us with an existing professional career and would have a lot to offer in reflecting on their professional experiences after they have finished their studies.

In scoping the project we would look at existing good practice in the development of “career story” resources. Vitae have developed some good practice for the researcher community in gathering career stories.

<http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/104063/Career-stories-projects.html>

For the project allocation of £5,000 we will deliver the following:

At least 30 high quality case studies	Given geographical distance we anticipate these would be text-based. However we would like to look at other ways of capturing stories through video
100 employer contacts	Detailed information about a wider number of our international graduates (up to 100) in terms of what career they are pursuing and who they are working for that could be added to the HECSU employer contacts database.

6. Priorities

If successful, we would prioritise which international alumni we would target in accordance with the PMI2 priority countries and the University's alumni numbers. Our initial targets would be countries where we have many international alumni – including, China, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Nigeria, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

7. Management of project

Fiona Christie would project manage this work. Fiona has a good track record of securing case study material which can then be utilised by the UK HEI community as a whole. She has also experience of proactively engaging employers in supporting the development of careers resources. The evidence for this is the research project she researched and authored in 2008, "Career Pathways for graduates in the voluntary/community sector".

http://www.hecsu.ac.uk/hecsu.rd/research_reports_273.htm

She received "AGCAS Award for Excellence" Research award Runner up in 2009 for this work.

She has also been responsible for leading on the work we have already done here at Salford for the PhD community.