
Why the post-1992 Welsh universities students aren't engaging with ERASMUS (Study Abroad): A case study on UWIC's Department of Humanities

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Abstract

As universities in Wales seek to demonstrate the extent of their internationalisation both to themselves and the wider academic community the subject of 'student mobility' or 'study abroad' programmes has become an increasingly relevant area of higher education development. In this context, a programme known as the ERASMUS is the largest provider and for most institutions the only provider of student mobility for another European study destination. Engagement in the ERASMUS programme, however, is not evenly spread across all institutions. In Wales there is a stark divide between the pre and post 1992 institutions participating in the ERASMUS programme. Post 1992 institutions, are those former polytechnics and institutes of higher education that gained their university status after 1992, pre-1992 institutions gained their university status beforehand. This article indicates the disparity between Welsh universities and notes that although the Welsh post and pre-1992 institutions represent around 50 per cent of the students each, this same ratio does not project itself into student mobility. The post 1992 institutions send less than three percent of the Welsh ERASMUS student total, whereas the pre 1992 institutions provide a massive 97 per cent of this total. This article therefore, through the use of primary research, and a case study on the Humanities Department of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, seeks to find some of the reasons as to why post 1992 students and institutions do not engage fully with ERASMUS to the same extent of the pre-1992 universities.

The ERASMUS programme

The ERASMUS programme was named after the 15th and 16th century philosopher, Renaissance humanist, Catholic priest and theologian of the same name. Having been named after this theologian it was also later given the backronym *European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS)*. Launched by the European Commission, in 1987 in its thirty three years the programme has had over two million students go through it. As well as providing the student with a new cultural experience ERASMUS is also designed to contribute to their home studies and the awarding of an eventual academic qualification at their home institution.

Although students are able to go on other mobility programmes outside of the European Union (EU) these are much smaller than the ERASMUS programme, which itself represents about 70 per cent of all outward student mobility in the UK (Carbonelle, 2010, p.6). ERASMUS is therefore the most common student mobility programme not only because of its successful track record and extensive exchange network but also because of the financial resource it provides students with. It provides non means tested funding for students to study in another country from three months to one whole academic year. Its popularity has also increased over the last decade. Between 2004-5 and 2008-9, there was a 10.5 per cent increase in those engaging in the ERASMUS programme from the UK (Carbonalle, 2010, p4).

Despite the increase in numbers, with some 23,160 ERASMUS students coming and going both in and out of the UK in 2007/8, an examination of the lack of media coverage of ERASMUS would appear to indicate to the wider world the programme did not exist at all. Although the media does not appear interested there has been at least some academic study on ERASMUS. The most prolific academic writers on ERASMUS are Maiworm and Teichler. Neither, however, specialize specifically on the UK but nevertheless their studies provide important sources of information in respect of ERASMUS student mobility and have both provided us with different models of how ERASMUS can be seen to operate.

Statistical and most factual information on the UK comes directly from the European Commission or the British Council's own figures or from studies they have commissioned. This tends to be mainly quantitative in nature and generally without a large degree of analysis. The most important of these commissioned studies in the last decade has been Sussex Centre for Migration Research (2004) International Student Mobility Study Report. This provides us with the clearest overall picture of the state of ERASMUS in the UK we have to-date and is referred to throughout this study.

Table 1 What exactly is ERASMUS?
The main characteristics of the ERASMUS Teichler's functional model

ERASMUS:

- Supports regional student and staff mobility between European countries
- Promotes temporary study abroad (that is only part of a course leading to a degree)
- Promotes mobility and cooperation within networks of departments that send students abroad and host them
- Expects organized study abroad, i.e. measures on the part of the participating departments and institutions to facilitate study abroad with preparatory provisions, language training, help in accommodation and administrative matters, etc
- Encourages curricular integration, ranging from coordinated curricular activities to study abroad as an integral part of the home curriculum
- Has an inclusive approach to temporary study abroad, with recognition of academic achievements acquired abroad being the key criterion for granting support
- It is a partial and an incentive funding scheme. Students are awarded a grant that covers most of the additional costs of study abroad. Networks or universities receive a moderate subsidy for the cost incurred.

(Teichler 1996)

In 1996 Teichler, Table 1, provided us with a functional model for how the ERASMUS programme operates. Beyond Teichler's functional model of ERASMUS, Maiworm (2001, p.459) writing some five years after Teichler saw that ERASMUS, even from its first notion had particularly political objectives ingrained within it. These objectives amongst other things create would help a 'People's Europe' of graduates experienced in intra-Community co-operation. This ideological model of the operation of ERASMUS was also supported by Corbett (2005), and Dale and Robertson, (2009, p.68) who saw ERASMUS as going beyond a mere educational programme by producing a pool of graduates with experience of regional co-operation thus strengthening the concept of a 'People's Europe'. Dale (2009, p.27) sees ERASMUS as part of the overall European strategy for political integration of the member states through, in part, the introduction of common education policies.

David Hibler, the ERASMUS Contract Manager for the British Council in the UK and one of those most closely connected to the operation of ERASMUS in the UK, sees the current operation of ERASMUS as following the functional rather than the ideological model. He sees its purpose as being to

- provide the students with new opportunities;
- enable students and staff do something different;
- build up the academic perspectives on their discipline
- enable students to study new subjects and new disciplines in a new university system;
- enable staff and students to learn about how other university systems operation. (Hibler to author, 2010):

It is Teichler's more functional model and Hibler's notions, rather than Maiworm's (2001) ideological one that have been endorsed as the current ERASMUS operational model by the practitioners behind ERASMUS within the Welsh universities (pre-1992 university ERASMUS co-ordinators to author). Although the two models could be seen to intertwine, ERASMUS practitioners currently fail to see any real input of the ideological model in the actualities of the ERASMUS programme, in their institutions.

Methodology

Bartram (2007) noted that although European Union (EU) students are the largest group of international students in the UK, little academic research work has been undertaken on them. Pelletier (2003) believed that the reason behind this lack of research is that research resources have been put behind the concerns of the full-fee paying non-EU students, leaving studies of EU students lacking a research design. The methodology of this study has therefore been influenced by the lack of previous studies, with respect to the failure to engage with the programme by UK students. Lacking a clear previous research design to follow this study has therefore sought through questionnaires and interviews to establish as its central research question the reasons behind the uptake of outgoing ERASMUS being so low in post 1992 institutions.

The study was undertaken with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The use of qualitative research with its more open-ended nature allowed the research to cover the possibility of some previously undiscovered research outcomes, which will be detailed later. The form of a departmental case study adopted by this study has been used because it can be seen as a good research method by which to compare theory against practice in an operational academic situation (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.88).

For this case study a structured questionnaire was seen as the most effective method of gathering the data. The weakness of this type of research method in ensuring there were sufficiently comprehensive answers to accommodate all answers was remedied by the piloting of the questionnaire (Bowling, 1997, p.229). As part of the pilot study for the questionnaire there were some direct student interviews with 10 students, as to the appropriateness of the questions. This enabled the questionnaire to be expanded still further with respect to the reasons behind non-engagement with the ERASMUS programme. The pilot study also determined that the questionnaire needed two distinct sections, the first to gather information about the respondents and their knowledge of ERASMUS. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to find the reasons for

non-engagement in ERASMUS. The questionnaire was designed to be concise and elicit responses related to reasons for non engagement with the ERASMUS programmes. The potential reasons for non-engagement provided in the questionnaire were drawn partially from studies undertaken by Klabin and Ratti (2000) and the Sussex Centre for Migration (2004, p.31). To these reasons for non engagement were added additional ones from the Department of Humanities ERASMUS co-ordinator's own records, former student feedback and as has already been noted, the results of the pilot study.

In respect of the quantitative date for the questionnaire the overall response rate was 58 per cent from a total student cohort of 184 students. The 184 students represented the total eligible student population able to go on the ERASMUS exchange over a two year period 2008-2010. This population in turn represented students studying on the Humanities Department's English, Sociology and Modern History based programmes. The questionnaire data was then analysed through the SPSS and Excel programmes.

The decline of the post-1992 institutions ERASMUS numbers

This case study examines the ERASMUS students in the Department of Humanities in University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC). This section seeks to illustrate the extent of participation in ERASMUS across Wales by Welsh universities and the disparities that exist between them. It also draws on examples of practice provided by other Welsh universities. Over the last five years the Department of Humanities has only had a limited number of outgoing ERASMUS students compared to its overall size. Despite this fact, in respect of the university as a whole, their figures still also represented the largest number of the bulk of Department and university's outgoing students, Table 2.

In 2009/10 the Department sent just over three per cent of its students on ERASMUS, the same percentage as the year before. For the European wide ERASMUS programme, at its inception it had been envisaged that it would eventually result in student mobility for around ten percent of all of those in higher education. Over two decades later the reality is that is that it is only undertaken by around one percent of total university students. Although, even this small participation rate, is only present in the UK's pre-1992 institutions (Robertson, 2009, p.68).

The gap between pre- and post 1992 institutions

The Sussex Centre for Migration (2004, p.7) study indicated that mobility is increasingly and disproportionately concentrated in pre-1992 universities. Whereas the post 1992 institutions had represented 40 per cent of ERASMUS students in 1995-96 by 2002-3 this had fallen to a quarter. Carbonell's most recent study on ERASMUS figures, upto 2008-9, indicated that this figure had dropped even lower to 18 per cent (2010, p.6). Although this figure is poor, on a UK level, it is still many times better than the situation in Wales. Here the Welsh post 1992 institutions between them can only manage some 17 per cent of their counterparts in post 1992 English counterparts total (Carbonelle,

2010). The Welsh post 1992 institutions would therefore seem to have a very poor record in ERASMUS.

In Wales, on average, one in every 81 students takes part in ERASMUS in a pre-1992 institution (with the exception of Lampeter University). The pre 1992 institutions represent 97 per cent of the Welsh ERASMUS total, with Cardiff University, by itself, being the highest on 46 per cent of the Welsh figures representing almost half of the Welsh total, Table 2.

Table 2 Number of percentages of Welsh students 2007-8

Institution	Number of outgoing students	Percentage of total Welsh ERASMUS students	Percentage of total Welsh full-time students
Aberystwyth	69	13	9
Bangor	83	15	9
Cardiff	254	46	26
UWIC	4	1	10
Glamorgan	8	1	16
Glyndwr	0	0	4
Lampeter	0	0	2
Newport	8	1	5
Swansea Metropolitan	0	0	4
Swansea	127	23	13
Trinity	0	0	2

(British Council, HEFCW 2007-8 figures)

Of the post-1992 Welsh institutions, only three participate in the programme (UWIC, Glamorgan and Newport). The scale of the lack participation of post-1992 Welsh institutions in ERASMUS is staggering. Here only one in every 1381 full time students takes part in the ERASMUS programme. Thus a student at a pre-1992 institution is 17 times more likely to take up ERASMUS than one in post-1992 institutions. When these figures are viewed on a geographical basis they illustrate the huge divide between neighbouring institutions. Students at Cardiff University, for instance, are more than 20 times more likely to go on an ERASMUS study period than students at UWIC, although both institutions are in the same city, Table 3 below:

Table 3 Ratio of ERASMUS students to total Welsh students 2007-8

Institution	Ratio per total students
Aberystwyth	95
Bangor	81
Cardiff	72
UWIC	1838
Glamorgan	1452
Glyndwr	No ERASMUS students
Lampeter	No ERASMUS students
Newport	854
Swansea Metropolitan	No ERASMUS student
Swansea	74
Trinity	No ERASMUS students

Ratio relates to outgoing students to total fulltime students
(British Council 2007-8 figures, HEFCW 2007-8 figures)

After looking at the disparity between the figures in Tables 2 and 3 we are drawn back once more to the central research question as to why so few students in the post 1992 institutions are taking part in ERASMUS and can this be reversed?

The voluntary – compulsory ERASMUS divide

One of the central explanations given for the divide between pre- and post-1992 students is that ERASMUS is mandatory for around half of their students whereas for post 1992 institutions it is mandatory for less than 10 per cent (Sussex Centre for Migration, 2004, p.22). In Wales the majority of students who go out from the pre-1992 institutions therefore do so because it is a compulsory part of their degree programme (ERASMUS co-ordinators to author). Where it is not compulsory, as in post 1992 Welsh institutions, the numbers going on ERASMUS fell considerably.

When ERASMUS is mandatory in Wales it is mainly on modern foreign language courses (ERASMUS co-ordinators to author). By 2007, 38 out of the 90 institutions offering foreign language degrees in 1998 had closed their courses. Some 31 of these were in post 1992 institutions. In respect of this case study institution (UWIC) foreign language degrees were not dropped totally but ERASMUS has not been mandatory on them since 1998. This was when it was dropped as component on the main language/business studies degree in UWIC. This was in response to a falling number of British students entering that degree programme and the costs of administering student mobility.

History of ERASMUS in the Department of Humanities (UWIC)

ERASMUS in the Humanities Department started in 2001/2 with incoming students. The first outgoing student was not, however, until 2005. The number going out on ERASMUS has never been more than four students per annum from a total student population of between 90 and 130 students. The Department currently has some 18 agreements from 10 different countries mainly the result of a pro-active former Head of School who wished to develop student mobility (Peter Treadwell). This number of partnership in theory provided a lot of choice for outgoing students but in practice resulted in an influx of up to 40 inward ERASMUS student per year. This was clearly far more students than went out, a problem for most UK universities, as well as UWIC. Across the UK the ratio of incoming to outgoing students has been about 2:1. In the Department of Humanities this figure has been as high as 12:1 and as low as 7:1. This contrast between incoming and outgoing student numbers has provided a further rationale for finding out why the Department's students were not going out.

Barriers to UWIC students going out

It has long perplexed the European Commission and national governments as to why the uptake is so low for British students wishing to engage in ERASMUS. In 2008, a year long project funded by the European Commission and run by the Education International Foundation was undertaken into the subject of mobility (European Commission, 2008). The project noted that the common three year degree cycle, introduction of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) and the diploma supplement have now been accepted as the European norm in higher education. This convergence should in theory remove many of the academic barriers to ERASMUS. Yet participation numbers have not increased as a result. The report gave a central reason for this non expansion. It noted that at a national level government international policies have been set not at promoting student mobility but instead on attracting foreign fee paying students into universities (European Commission, 2008).

There have been a number of other studies that have also looked at this lack of engagement. Klabr and Ratti (2000, p.87) found that in their studies on engineering students mobility that a lack of emphasis on foreign languages and world affairs courses, plus stringent curriculum design, students' misconceptions about studying abroad and a general lack of funding to develop and promote mobility, all acted as barriers. These factors could have also acted as barriers to Humanities students but the Department already runs world affairs courses and only has links with universities who teach through the medium of English, so a lack of foreign languages does not act as a comprehensive barrier in engaging in learning. Neither does the factor of 'stringent curriculum design' because the Department, in this case study operates a best match policy of matching with similar, rather than exact modules, between home and host institutions.

The case study sought through the questionnaire to test a number of perceptions about ERASMUS with those students who choose not to participate in ERASMUS. Nearly all students were aware of ERASMUS, Table 4 below, with some 98 per cent of the respondents able to define the ERASMUS programme as being connected to 'study

abroad'. Although they were able to provide a definition of ERASMUS, a quarter of students still believed that it was only for incoming students. Students commented in the study:

'I never knew it was an option for us, I thought was just an opportunity for foreign students to come here'

'I thought that ERASMUS was just for German students coming to study at UWIC'

When asked about the purpose and processes of ERASMUS a quarter of students stated that they felt that they 'did not know enough about the ERASMUS programme' or were 'not aware of enough detail to make a judgement'. The responses concerning 'ERASMUS is only for incoming student' came predominantly from amongst those students studying English Literature courses, a course from whom there had been no outgoing ERASMUS students at the time of this study. It is possible that this lack of outgoing students from their courses led to their belief that no students were eligible from their courses. It is also possible that information needs to be given to the students earlier than it currently is, towards the end of Term 2, to enable misconceptions to be dealt with. Teichler (2004) highlights the importance of learning about ERASMUS early in an academic course. He feels this is important particularly for those students taking this option in their second year, as is currently the case in UWIC, because they need the prior planning time.

Perhaps the most positive factors to come out of the study was the fact that only some 7 per cent of students did not see any value to ERASMUS or relevance for it to their degree. This would seem to indicate that students have been able to identify a clear value to ERASMUS even though they find reasons not to engage in it. Table 4 provides us with these very reasons. In Chart 1 below, the sliding scale of importance given to each reason can be seen:

Table 4 Reasons for not going on ERASMUS study period

Reason for non engagement	%
Did not know enough about the ERASMUS programme to make a judgment	25
Did not wish to study abroad	36
Concerned that I didn't have sufficient language skills	48
Had the following ties to Cardiff:	
All-year rental agreement signed	54
Financial issues, such as not wishing to give up part-time work	32
Did not wish to study abroad for 3-6 months	29
None of the places offered interested me	9
None of the subjects offered were relevant to me	7
Did not see the value of a ERASMUS placement	7
None of my friends were going	26
Concerned about how it would affect my UWIC studies	26
Did not wish to leave my:	
family for a study period	19
partner for a study period	36
Concerned about failing or wishing to return when on my ERASMUS study period	14
Concerned about missing out on a study period at UWIC	15
Was not aware of the ERASMUS grant scheme	26

N= 107

Let us now undertake a more detailed examination of the answers in Table 4 and combine these results with those found in other surveys on ERASMUS and expert opinion on this area. The largest survey on ERASMUS, already referred to, earlier on, is the large-scale Sussex Study (2004, p.31). This came up with four key deterrents to student mobility in its findings. These are:

1. Financial barriers, including a shortage of money, indebtedness, student lifestyles and also the social class of the student. These were cited as the primary reasons for not going on ERASMUS student mobility.
2. Language, which is seen as a key issue to European study, is a determining factor. The decline in the learning of languages in schools and universities is seen as a main factor. In post-1992 institutions the cutting of language departments is seen as a particular issue.

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3. Institutional constraints, such as the more rigid nature of UK degrees and the uneasy relationship over quality assurance of other institutions academic standards were seen as a key factors.
 4. Students' negative attitudes to ERASMUS and Euro-scepticism.

All four of the factors above also came up as reasons for non-engagement amongst UWIC's Humanities students. Points one and two of the Sussex study were also the most significant, in respect of the UWIC study. The Sussex study noted that finance was the highest factor in deterring students from going on ERASMUS indicating that "many students are 'socially excluded' from mobility opportunities because of their financial situation" (p.8). The UWIC results would indicate that although this is not the most common reasons for not going on ERASMUS it is a reason noted by around a third of students.

The other issue linked to financial problems was that concerning UK house rental. Although students are given the option of studying for between one year and three months on ERASMUS, all chose to study for just one semester. They start this study period between January and April depending on which university they go to. Their Cardiff tenancy agreements can normally only be signed for a one year period. It is this lack of flexibility that appears to deter over half of all students going on ERASMUS. This also means that they must have UK accommodation as well as that in their host university in the same academic year. Just over half of those student surveyed stated that accommodation was the main issue in not going on ERASMUS, Chart 1 below. In addition some letting agencies charge a considerable fee of upto £150 for changing the names of tenants on a letting agreement adding extra costs for UK students (Bourne, 2010 to author).

The Sussex study saw the lack of fluency in a foreign language as being one of the central factors behind UK students not going abroad to study. The drop in modern foreign language teaching, particularly in the post-1992 institutions has merely exacerbated this trend. The concern about a lack of language skills was mentioned by around half of students in the UWIC study, even though the ERASMUS programme allowed for learning solely through the medium of English. Some students, however, saw the fact that all their courses in their host institution would be in English as a disincentive, as they saw ERASMUS to be about learning foreign languages. One student stating 'what is the point in studying abroad in English'? Thus not being able to study in the host countries language is also seen as a drawback and a reason for non-engagement.

Some of the other main barriers to ERASMUS were seen as being an unwillingness or inability to leave family, friends and partners. Although the Sussex study indicated that not wishing to leave your partner was 'not significant', this study indicated that it was seen as the third most relevant reason, some 36 per cent citing it as a reason. In addition just over a quarter of students do not wish to engage because none of their friends were going. This is a barrier which would not occur if the ERASMUS programme

was compulsory because the student's friends on the course would also be going on ERASMUS. When it is voluntary this remains a key factor.

Fewer students were concerned about leaving their family than friends, some 19 per cent. This may be due to the factor that many of these students were already living away from home so they had already made this psychological and physical break from home. One student, however, indicated that the fact that they 'had to look after a disabled mother' meant that for them, ERASMUS was not a possibility. It is these physical ties therefore that rule some students out, no matter how much they would like to go.

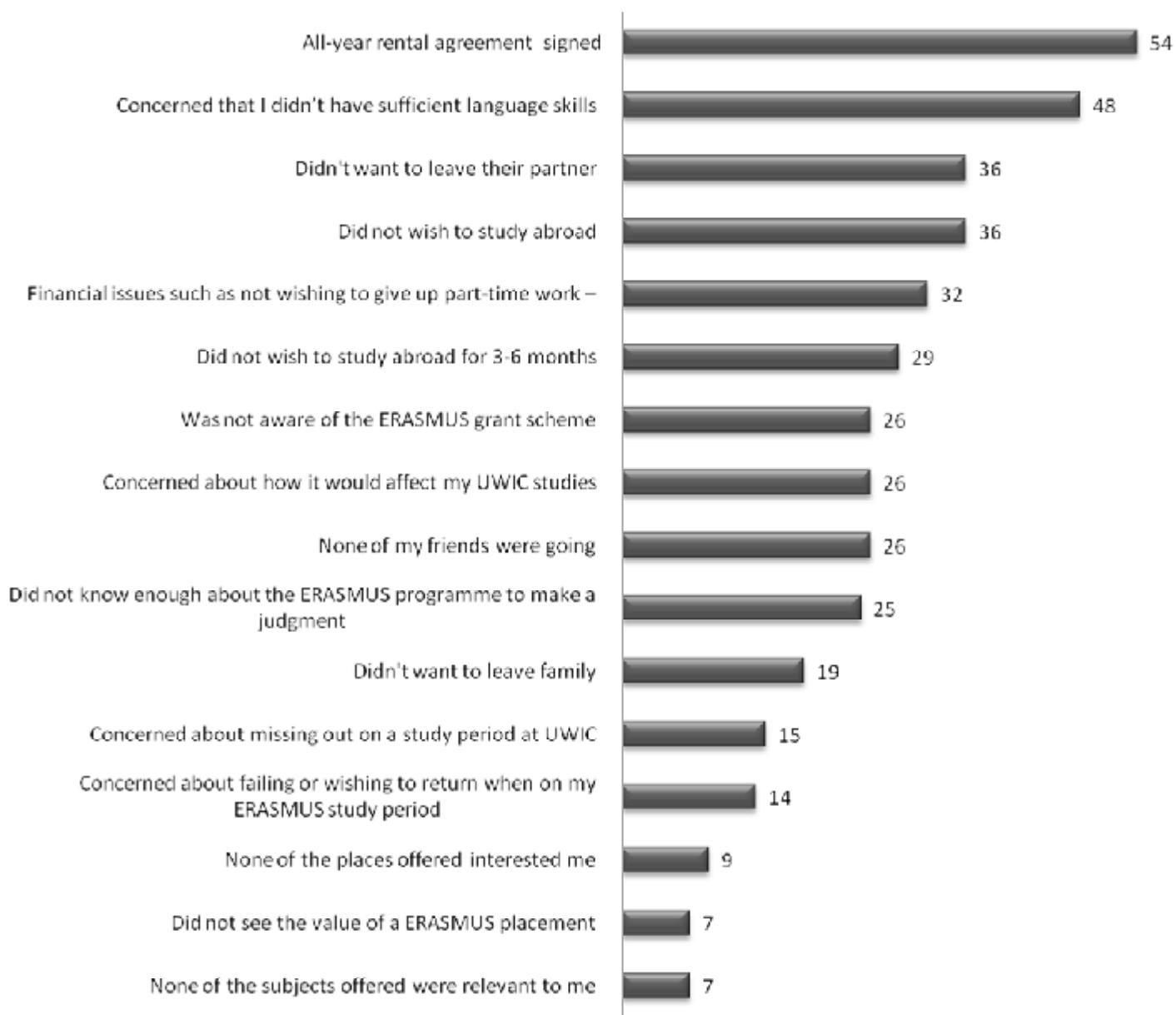
The Sussex study indicated that there were other reasons for non-engagement related to students attitudes namely: 'a nebulous area which covers a variety of explicit or nuanced feelings to do with lack of confidence, attachments to home, fear about the unknown, worries over the academic impact of studying aboard and so on' (2004, p.23). In respect of the UWIC study some 26 per cent of students were concerned about how ERASMUS would affect their studies and some 15 per cent were also concerned about 'missing out on studies in UWIC'. Notably, however, only around 14 per cent of respondents' were concerned about either failing or wishing to return before the end of the ERASMUS period. This would appear to indicate that the ERASMUS programme has a positive projection educationally amongst most students, in that they did not feel it would be a negative experience.

Expert opinion on the subject also reinforces some of the findings of this and other studies. Hibler (2010) has provided through he own experience what he believes are the contemporary barriers to engagement:

1. Lack of an international language;
2. Insufficient finance;
3. Lack of self confidence;
4. Lack of awareness of ERASMUS;
5. Inflexibility in curriculum to allow an exchange to occur;
6. An unwillingness to leave friends and family;
7. Students were locked into housing rental agreements (Hibler to author).

Once again all of these reasons were touched upon in the Humanities study indicating that UWIC students are not dissimilar to those across the rest of the UK in respect of their reasons for non-engagement with ERASMUS, Table 4 above.

Chart 1 The reasons for not wishing to undertake ERASMUS



Can the pre-1992 institutions practices help the post 1992 institutions?

As noted at the start, the four pre-1992 Welsh universities have a much larger percentage of students going out on ERASMUS than do the pre-1992 institutions. Part of this study involved the interviewing of the institutional ERASMUS co-ordinators for the pre-1992 institutions in Wales about their own experiences in running their university's programmes. Their larger numbers seem to be aided by three key factors (ERASMUS co-ordinators to author). The first of which is the fact that each university has a permanent staff dedicated to promoting ERASMUS and students 'mobility in general. This activity helps keep outgoing numbers constant.

The second factor is that around 70-75 per cent of their students go out as a mandatory part of their course and that students have enrolled on these degree programmes knowing that student mobility was a part of the programme. This means that those universities with language courses, with a compulsory period of study abroad, dominate the ERASMUS figures.

The final factor is that pre-1992 institutions also have long established procedures and partnership arrangements integrated into specific degree courses that ensure a regular supply of ERASMUS students. Some universities, such as Aberystwyth, have also heavily promoted ERASMUS amongst their student population which has further increased numbers (Smart to author). With the exception of the promotion activities, all three other factors are not present in post-1992 institutions to anywhere near the same extent. This lack of institutional support is therefore seen by the low ERASMUS take up numbers within post-1992 institutions.

Conclusions

As noted at the start of article there is very little written about ERASMUS and even less on ERASMUS in a British context. Those studies that have been undertaken provide us with an indication as to why British students may be failing to engage with ERASMUS. They are on the whole, however, not specific enough to cover the various subject areas. This case study has helped provide a little bit more information which is subject specific to the Humanities' area. This is an area for which the UK sends out very few students. Despite the lack of engagement by Humanities students it is clear that most students in the case study see the value of an ERASMUS study period and see its relevance to their own studies although they still do not undertake a study period abroad.

In respect of non-participation, overall the UWIC case study reinforces findings from studies elsewhere, such as the large scale Sussex Study. Drawing on these studies we can determine that the key factors for non-engagement are that it is not a compulsory part of the course and that financial issues reduce significantly the number of students engaging in ERASMUS.

We should also note that in respect of this case study although the Department's outgoing ERASMUS figures look poor they are not that far off national averages in respect of Humanities. In UWIC's Humanities Department around three per cent of Humanities students undertake ERASMUS. In the UK, as a whole, Humanities students only represent around two per cent of outgoing ERASMUS students, as opposed to language students who represent about 60 per cent of the total (Carbonelle, 2010, p.10). These statistics indicate that UWIC figures are therefore near the norm but the norm itself demonstrates that there is a widespread weakness in student mobility in the whole Humanities area.

Examining those pre 1992 Welsh universities that have significant outgoing ERASMUS numbers indicated that enjoy a number of support mechanisms and practices not

present in post-1992 institutions. These include dedicated mobility staff, compulsory ERASMUS based language degrees and long standing partnerships built into their degrees.

If the post-1992 institutions in Wales therefore wish to engage in ERASMUS to the same extent as their pre-1992 counterparts they would be recommended to take the following steps:

1. Ensure that there was at least one full-time dedicated member of staff to develop and administer the ERASMUS programme. This person would also be able to develop the required knowledge on ERASMUS necessary to ensure the smooth and effective administration of the programme.
2. Introduce courses for which ERASMUS was a compulsory part of the study. These need not be language courses, as most European universities now offer English language modules. These courses do not require the student to have an academic knowledge of the language of their host country. This removes any linguistic barriers. It also enables universities to build up partnerships to ensure progression through any academic barriers such as curriculum issues. We should note, however, that some basic knowledge of the host countries language is still very useful to engage in the cultural part of the ERASMUS programme.
3. Seek to help students with accommodation issues if this is seen as a barrier to engagement. More flexible terms of residency through university accommodation maybe one area to help this become achievable.
4. Ascertain the curriculum and learning benefits of providing home students with an international learning experience that can increase the students' employability. Then ensure that these are integrated into any internationalisation of the curriculum.

In order to increase their ERASMUS student numbers to the same level post 1992 institutions may well have to copy these methods. In a period of severe budgetary constraint, however, that appears to be most unlikely and it is hard to see numbers significantly increasing in UWIC or in post 1992 institutions elsewhere.

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