

To improve the confidence of new international students to participate in class and succeed in their course at Imperial College London, this literature summary aims to identify the challenges faced by these international students. International students here are defined as students who did not have pre-university education in the UK.

There exist 3 key challenges that international students tend to face (Ecochard, 2017).

Academic Challenge	Linguistic Challenge	Socio-cultural Integration
Becoming aware and accustom themselves to different teaching practices and dynamics in the UK, such as questioning, criticising and debating in the context of education which requires more independent thinking.	Understanding the difference between taught and colloquial English used in the UK, including the unique variety of accents and idioms. Understanding this helps with effective communication.	Culture shock involving learning to navigate a new country with different customs and culture altogether such as weather or food choices.

These 3 challenges are connected. Not being familiar with the local language/accents makes communication challenging for the international student both in and outside the classroom. Majority of international students in the UK are from China (Holliman, 2023), a country with a different education system to the UK. While education in China seems to give teachers the role of bestowing factual knowledge onto students (Wang, 2023), education in the UK encourages students to form their own independent thoughts through debating and questioning knowledge with their teachers (Chen, 2022). This difference in academic culture does not prepare international students from China for education in the UK, resulting in academic struggle. Black African students and students from China have both stated that there is greater emphasis on independence in UK universities compared to their home countries in interviews (Hyams-Ssekasi, 2014). Additionally, there exists financial stress if a student's funding schedule is unreliable and feeling homesick from being separated from loved ones. These are recurrent challenges internationals face (Holliman, 2023). Efforts to ease these challenges would involve targeting the above problems directly or indirectly.

It is not uncommon to see international students of similar culture or background to congregate together for emotional or spiritual support (Hyams-Ssekasi, 2014) instead of mixing with local students. Intermingling of local and international students tends to be viewed positively by the host community. This improves language skills, cognitive skills and cultural awareness of both the local and international community which should be encouraged by universities (H.Merola, 2019). Local students could also guide internationals through local norms and culture (Ecochard, 2017). Differences in moral and cultural values or habits, however, can cause undesired conflict (Bailey, 2006). There exist anecdotes from some internationals experiencing coldness or feeling unwelcome by the local community in and outside the classroom (Bailey, 2006).

There exists an international student support service at Imperial College London (Imperial College London, 2023). Some international students, however, might be hesitant to reach out due to cultural and moral reasons (Hyams-Ssekasi, 2014). It might be more beneficial to provide resources for internationals to help themselves instead or find ways to ease them into the local community such as promoting interactions with locals and internationals.

In conclusion, international students in the UK face challenges not limited to familiarity of language, academic style differences, cultural and social integration, loneliness, and financial matters. Although there is some level of international student support at Imperial College London, it could be improved by facilitating local and international student interactions, or other ways to help international students integrate into the local community.

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