



# Building back better

DMU Global Annual Report 2021-22



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# FOREWORD

The past academic year has been very much one of building back better for the Global Mobility Office at DMU. With two years of activity significantly impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, there were green shoots of hope for our team, in terms of the resumption of travel, and more generally re-engaging with DMU students.

We took all the lessons from the past few years, and combined them with what we already knew about how to run a successful student mobility programme, and I feel that we have come out of the situation wiser, more resilient and prepared to handle present and future challenges.

Whilst this report perhaps doesn't have the large number of students travelling to all corners of the world to boast about, the successes are subtler, but no less meaningful. The work and preparation that has gone into running 20 trips, alongside countless online and on-campus opportunities and the continuation of our student exchange activity has been more significant than even we could have predicted.

We hope that our annual report tells a compelling story of the past year, sharing the successes of students and staff at DMU who have engaged with and benefited from international experiences offered through the DMU Global programme at a time of transition and change.

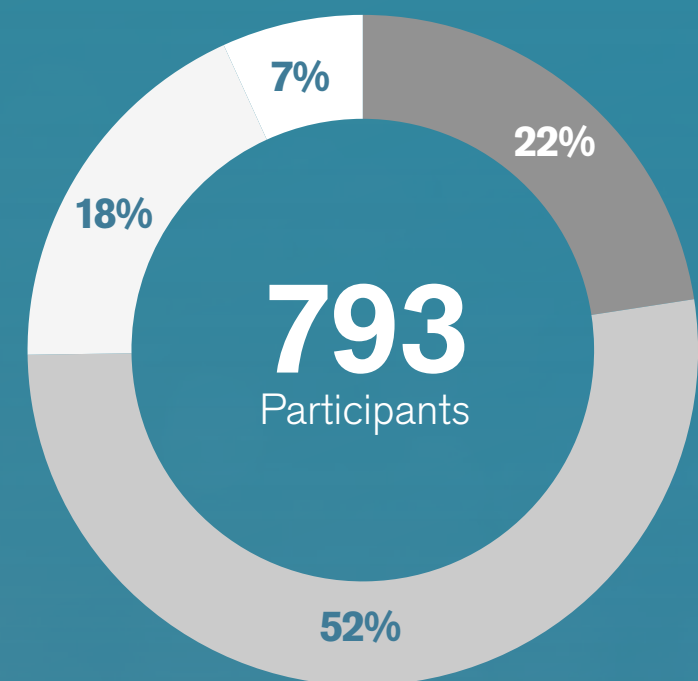
**Leo Smith**  
**Head of Global Mobility**



# SUMMARY

With the return of travel, DMU Global adapted to various challenges and continued to deliver meaningful international experiences for DMU Students. In fact, after taking part **94% of participants cited that they would recommend DMU Global opportunities to other students.**

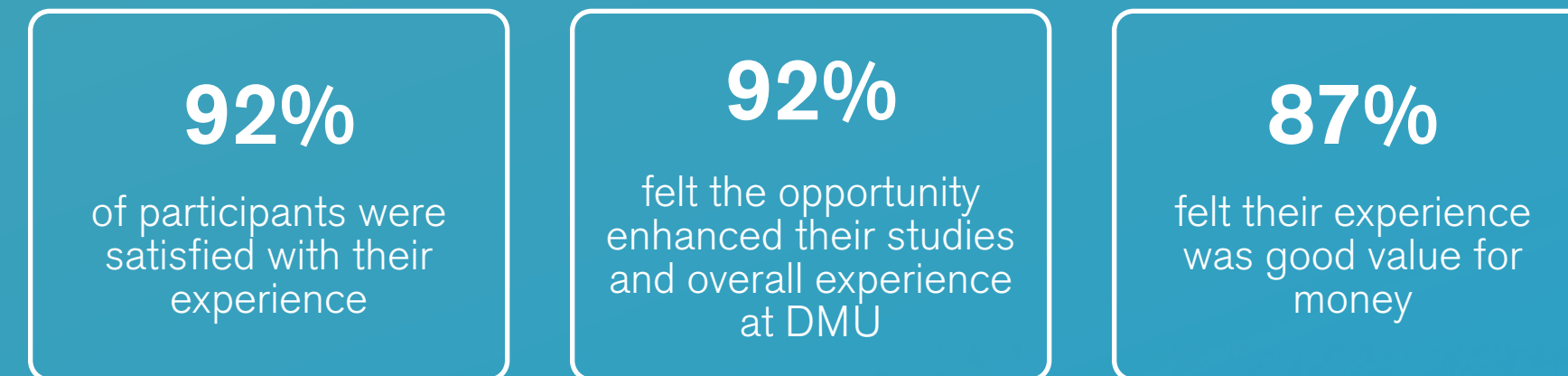
Through increased student and staff support, various changes in relation to COVID-19 and the continued innovation of virtual international experiences, more than **750 students participated in our opportunities in 2021-22.**



■ Overseas Trips (179)
 ■ Virtual Experiences (146)
 ■ On-campus (414)
 ■ Student Exchange (54)

## Student Feedback

International experiences are very important to DMU students. They are interested in new experiences overseas, improving their intercultural awareness and developing networks. Some of the key student feedback included:



As a result of taking part, students developed skills such as their ability to **handle new and unfamiliar situations**, their **understanding of different cultures** as well as their **awareness of global issues**. **82%** are now also more **interested in future international experiences** at DMU.

## Student Exchange

DMU students worked or studied abroad in 14 different countries, with **USA**, **Spain** and the **Netherlands** the most popular destinations. After studying or working abroad for a year:



## Successes

Alongside delivering excellent international experiences for DMU students, we were shortlisted as finalists for two national awards that recognised our efforts in creating a more sustainable student mobility programme.



### Sustainability international impact award finalist

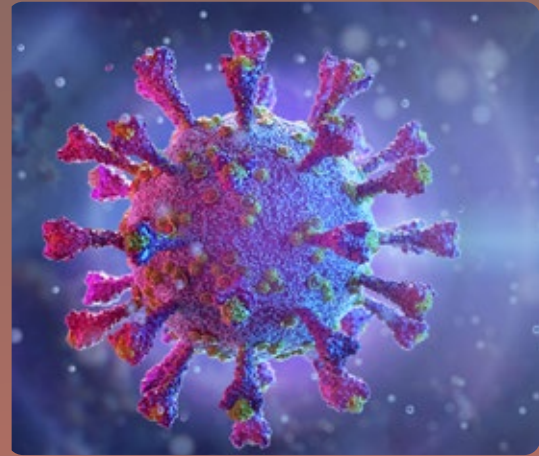
Shortlisted as a finalist by the Professionals in International Education (PIE) for their Sustainability International Impact award as part of The PIEoneer Awards 2022.



### Building back better finalist

Shortlisted as a finalist by the Green Gown Awards for their Building Back Better award.

# CONTEXT



## COVID-19

Student mobility and international travel are amongst the slowest to recover from the Pandemic. Entry, testing and vaccination requirements for countries globally have been fluid and ever-changing, making planning more challenging. Whilst Europe and North America began to open up to us to deliver overseas opportunities from January 2022, other parts of the world such as Asia remained closed.



## Travel industry

A knock-on effect of the Pandemic was disarray and chaos at times in the travel industry. With staffing levels not meeting the demand for travel, expertise in the industry was lost and supply chains were disrupted. Everything that we knew about travel in the past was not the same now. Greater levels of patience and contingency planning were necessary for almost every trip.



## Climate crisis

With a growing sense of global urgency to address the climate crisis, all industries and individuals are taking action to reduce their impact on the environment. In the field of student mobility, universities have taken steps to reduce their carbon emissions and find more sustainable ways of achieving internationalisation.



## Financial challenges

Both at DMU and in wider society there are financial challenges posed by the Pandemic and the cost of living crisis that have affected our activity. Needing to do more with less against a backdrop of increased costs has meant that the DMU Global has needed to adapt.



# OUR RESPONSE

Whilst the aforementioned issues may seem daunting and, in some respects, out of our control, our approach was to adapt and do our best to overcome these, by adapting our activity in a number of ways:



## Developing our virtual international experiences

With the challenges faced, we embraced the concept of virtual international experiences. A greener, more inclusive and accessible model for internationalisation, Virtual opportunities continued to offer us an alternative even when travel was available. For the second year of activity we supported a range of academic projects, virtual courses, and conferences and virtual internships for DMU students to engage in.



## COVID-19 changes

Despite the return of travel, COVID-19 continued to pose challenges. We made a number of changes to our activity to ensure that students and staff were informed and safe when travelling. Changes included insurance coverage, travel guidance for students, changes to group travel bookings and improvements to our incident management policies and processes.



## Student and staff support

Recognising that student and staff travel had been paused for two years, we took steps to educate and prepare our students and staff. We launched new online training modules related to health & safety and risk management, revamped our pre-departure sessions, and also relaunched our widening participation funding for students travelling overseas.



# OVERSEAS TRIPS

The resumption of overseas trips was delayed due to ongoing travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, DMU Global were able to pilot the resumption of trips between April and August 2022.

## Key highlights

# 179

Participants from the  
**350** places available

# 19

Overseas opportunities

# 17

Countries visited



**Architecture at Dubai Expo**  
18 participants



**Startups and Entrepreneurship in Los Angeles**  
14 participants



**Sports History & Heritage in Munich**  
16 participants



**SDG 16 in Action in Berlin**  
18 participants



**Film Studies and International Film Production in Bologna**  
14 participants



**Media Audiences and Fandom in Los Angeles**  
14 participants



**Student Exchange in Bilbao**  
15 participants



**HUFS Summer School in Korean & Asian Studies**  
2 participants



**DMUworks Enterprise: Start-Up Lisbon**  
7 participants



**DMUworks Digital in San Francisco & Silicon Valley**  
8 participants



**Think Pacific Volunteering in Fiji**  
5 participants



**Hong Kong Polyu International Summer School**  
1 participant



**Rennes School of Business Summer Programmes**  
6 participants



**Yonsei International Summer School**  
2 participants



**UN SDG Summer School**  
1 participant



**Volunteering in Tanzania**  
8 participants



**Italian Consumer Protection Summer School**  
3 participants



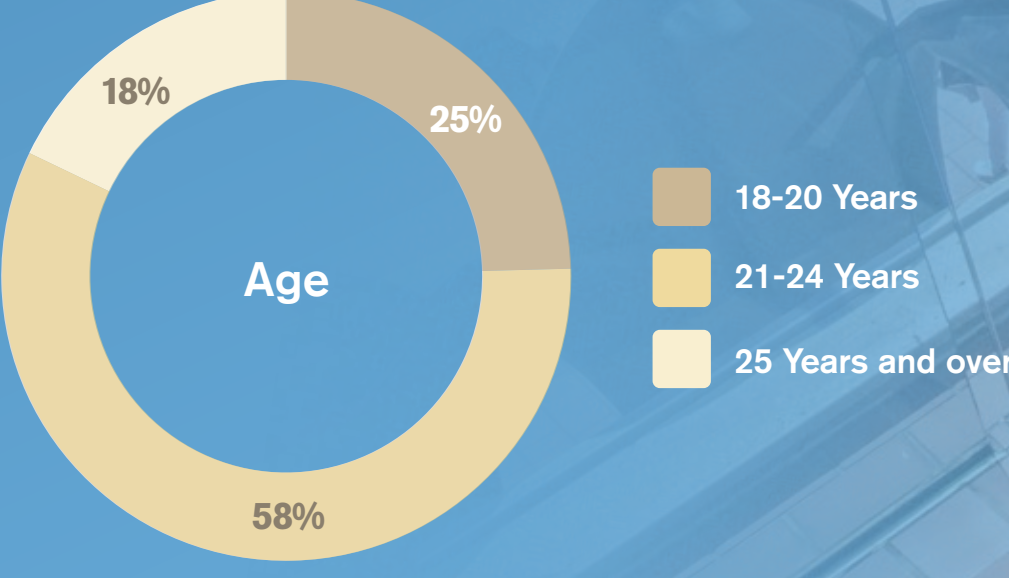
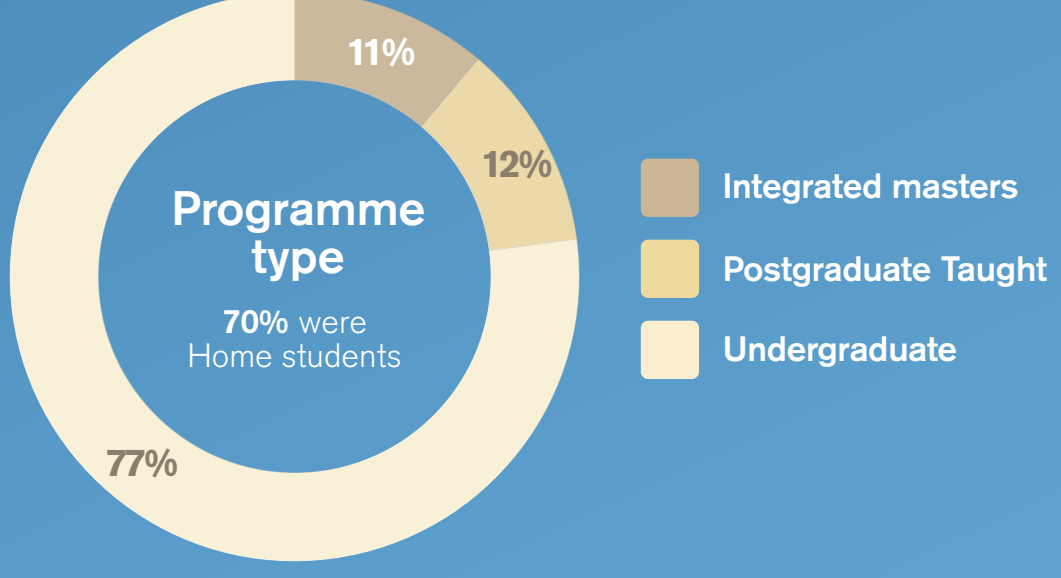
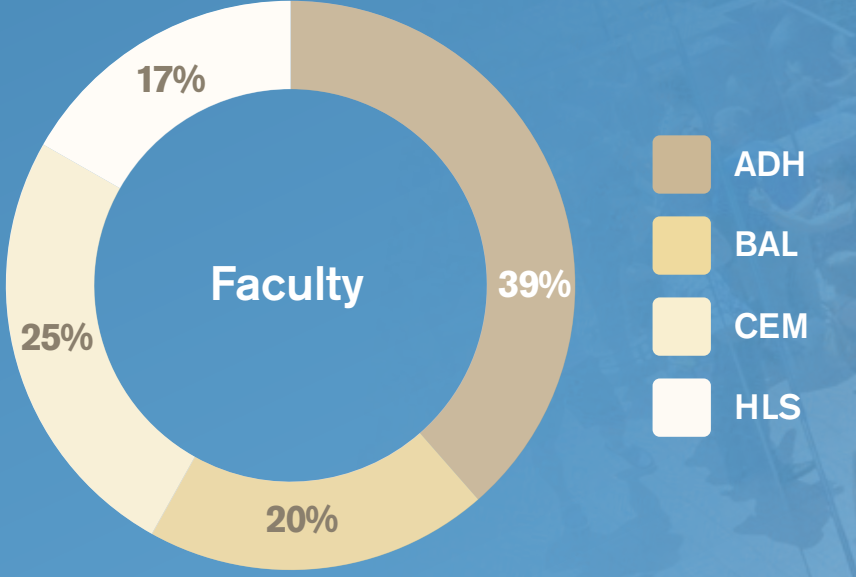
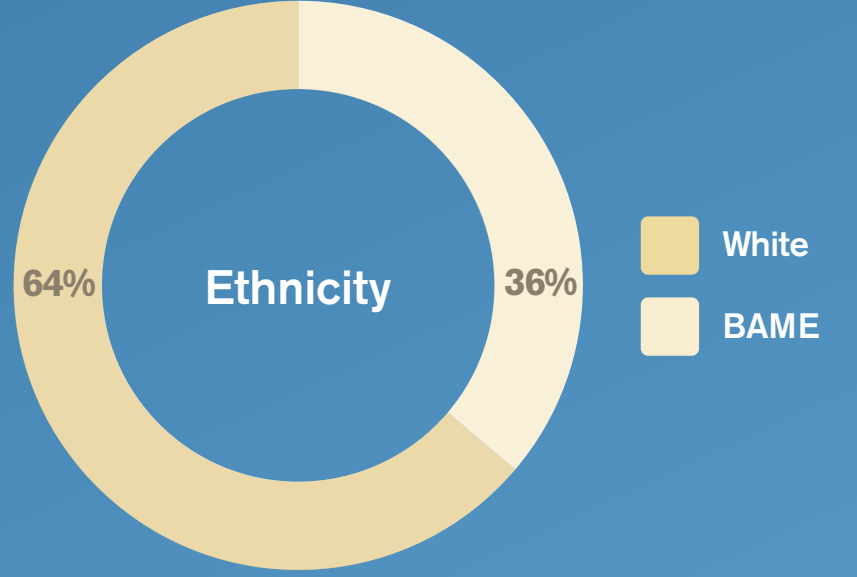
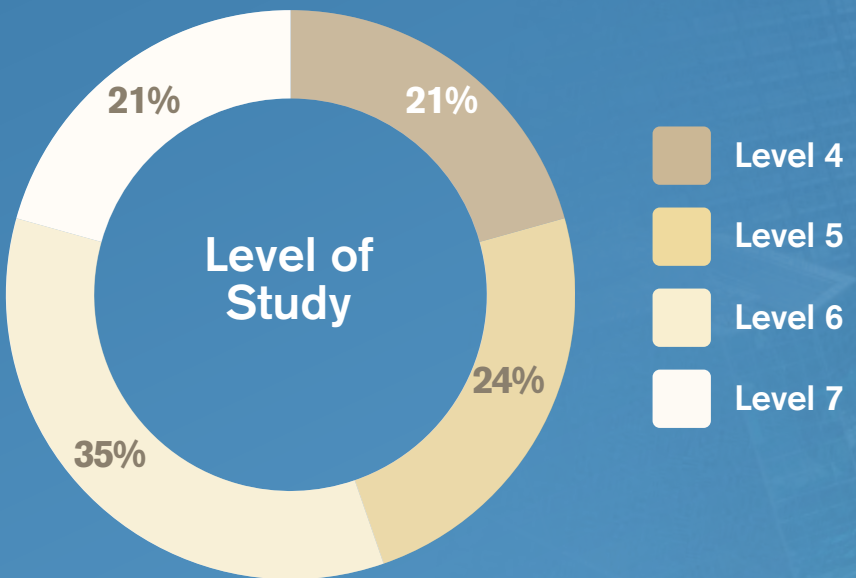
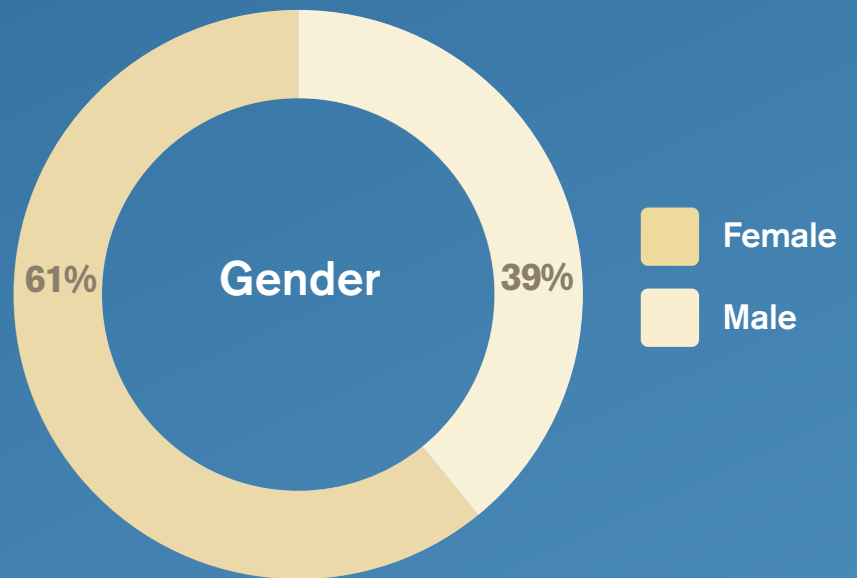
**Volunteering in Guatemala**  
9 participants



**Utrecht Performing Arts Spring Festival**  
18 participants

# PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Below are the demographics of DMU Global participants, showing that a diverse group of DMU students participated in our opportunities.





# STUDENT FEEDBACK

We invited 161 overseas trip participants to share feedback about their experiences, from which **89 responded (56% response rate)**. Here is what they had to say...

## Key highlights

**92%**

of participants were satisfied with their experience

**94%**

would recommend DMU Global opportunities to other students

**92%**

of participants felt the opportunity has enhanced their studies and overall experience at DMU

**87%**

felt the experience was good value for money.

## Why did students take part?

International experiences are important to DMU students, and following the Pandemic students are keen to travel again. Some of the top reasons they chose to take part in our opportunities included:



To experience something new overseas



Improve their intercultural awareness



Meet new people and develop their networks

## How was their experience?

The majority of participants were satisfied with the activities on their trip. Most also said that the funding from DMU Global helped them to take part. Thinking about their experience...

**97%**

understood the purpose and objectives of the trip before going overseas

**93%**

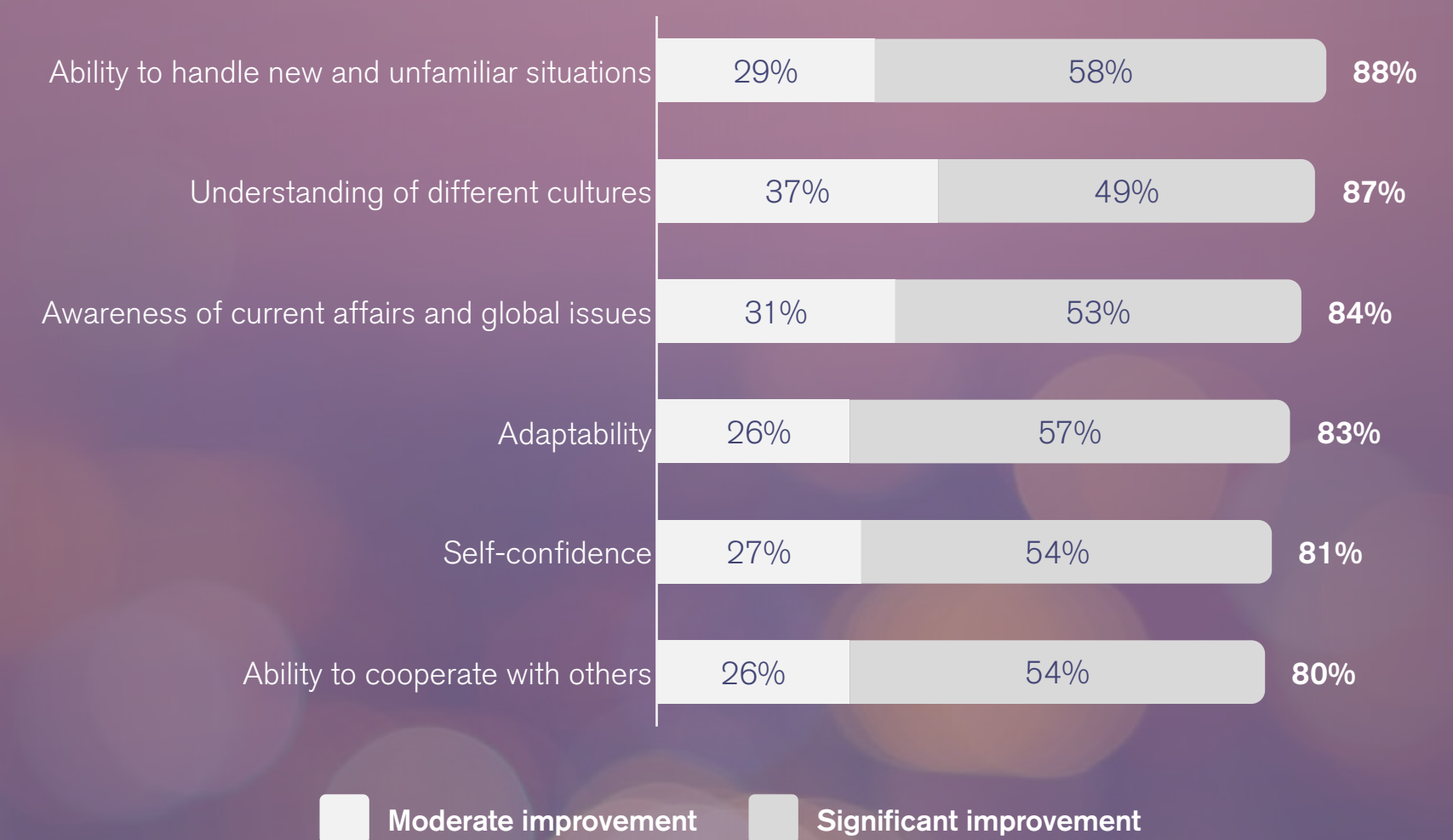
thought the activities and destination linked well with the purpose of the trip

**87%**

of participants felt the trip achieved its objectives and met their expectations

## How did they benefit from the opportunity?

Reflecting on their development, students felt the most improvement in the following skills as a result of taking part in their trip:



# STUDENT FEEDBACK

After taking part in their DMU Global experience...

**89%**

are now more interested in learning about cultures different from their own

**83%**

now feel more confident to travel overseas independently

**82%**

are interested in future international experiences at DMU



**“It is fantastic that there is this amount of support for a disabled person and it makes sure I can enjoy a DMU Global trip and do the same things as everyone else does,”** Umaymah said. **“They have really ensured I can have the best possible student experience. It is the first time I have been overseas without my parents helping me and they are very excited for me.”**

Umaymah Dakri (Speech and Language Therapy) on her SDG 16 in action in Berlin trip



**“This is my first DMU Global experience and it has 100% inspired me to apply for more programs that offer cultural exchanges or anything to do with volunteering and learning about people. I plan on applying for a year abroad as well to build more on my cultural and personal knowledge.”**

Stephanie Muthambulwa, (LLB Law) on volunteering experience in Fiji



**“I decided to travel abroad with DMU Global to improve my Korean language skills. I also love to challenge myself in terms of putting myself out of my comfort zone; when you are in a different country, you are forced to adapt to diverse cultures and mannerisms as well as communicate in a completely different language.”**

Jessie Nsingo (Music, Technology and Performance) on her experience at Yonsei Summer School in South Korea



**“This has proven to be an amazing opportunity to push my boundaries, get out of my comfort zone, and let myself be emerged into the world of new yet to be experienced contemporary performances and practices.”**

Emilija Diczpetryte (Performing Arts) on her academic-led trip to Utrecht, the Netherlands



**“The whole summer school experience was so enriching. My favourite moment was experiencing le fête de le musique with my friends from the course as well as some local French friends.”**

Jade Mhairi Sutherland (International Business) on her summer school experience in Rennes, France



**“Working with incredible children each day, and being part of their educational journey was a very special part of my volunteering experience.”**

Inez Fern Williams (Education Studies) on her volunteering experience in Tanzania



**“The Warner Bros studio tour was terrific part of the trip to Los Angeles, but hiking up to Griffith Observatory was an experience I’ll never forget.”**

Kieran Harvey (Film Studies) on his academic-led trip to Los Angeles, USA

# STUDENT EXCHANGE

Every year DMU Global offers students the chance to spend a year studying or working abroad as part of their degree, with the experience part-funded by the Erasmus+ programme and Turing Scheme.

In 2021-22, **54 DMU students** spent the year **studying (39)** and **working (15)** overseas.

## Key highlights

### 100%

felt the experience enhanced their studies

### 94%

would now like to work in an international environment

### 88%

feel more employable as a result of spending a year abroad.

### 14

destinations visited, with the most popular countries being: Spain, USA and The Netherlands.

## Student feedback demonstrates that studying or working abroad helps develop skills, knowledge and values.

- ▶ **94%** felt that they are now more tolerant towards other values and cultures.
- ▶ **88%** developed a greater awareness of current affairs and global issues.

Here are a few quotes from our exchange students:



**“Travelling to South Korea allowed me to grow my confidence tremendously! As in life there were many ups in my year abroad but also many downs, from these I was able to persevere and I now feel that I can travel anywhere alone and be okay! I was able to make life-long friends from all over the world during my travels, as well as Korean friends which helped me to improve on my language skills. As for my studies, I was able to study my subject (international relations) from a Korean perspective which was definitely eye opening.”**

Ines Wheelicker (International Relations), Sookmyung Women's University, South Korea



**“Studying abroad with DMU Global allowed me to push boundaries I never thought I had. My independence became more evident, and I was able to grab many amazing opportunities throughout my time away. I am proud to say that many achievements were made, involving my academic goals and personal accomplishments. Studying abroad allowed me to make many lifetime friends and amazing memories; I think everyone should grab this opportunity with both hands.”**

Georgia Fiddler (Interior Design), Weber State University, USA



**“I have learnt so much and grown so much as a person and have made lifelong friends from all over the world. I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to participate in it [student exchange] and would highly recommend it. I did an embroidery course at my host institution which led me to consider highly pursuing that as a career path, and I discovered that I desperately want to live and work within the EU in the future.”**

Ewelina Gil (Fashion Design), Escuela de Arte y Diseño Superior, Valencia, Spain

Looking ahead to the upcoming academic year, **DMU secured £239,400 of Turing Scheme funding** to support year-long study and work experiences with a particular focus on removing barriers for students from a widening participation background.

# ON-CAMPUS AND ONLINE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Complementing our overseas activity, DMU Global continued to offer a combination of online and on-campus international activities to students throughout the 2021-22 academic year.

## On-campus

Most activities returned to in-person delivery this year, which was welcomed by students who fed back that in the case of language classes learning as a group was more beneficial. In total we engaged the following the number of students across our campus-based activity...



### Languages

**212 students** studied a language through DMU Global. The breakdown by language was as follows:

- ▶ Arabic: 25
- ▶ French: 48
- ▶ German: 20
- ▶ Japanese: 54
- ▶ Spanish: 65



### TEFL

**32 participated** in a Teach English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course



### Mandarin

**155 studied** Mandarin with the Confucius Institute



### Cultural Awareness

**15 participated** in the DMU Global Intercultural Awareness Certificate

## Online

Continuing our commitment to offer virtual international experiences as an alternative to overseas travel, DMU Global organised a range of opportunities in the 2021-22 academic year. **In total, close to 150 DMU students participated in our virtual experiences, which included:**



### Virtual Internships

**15 DMU students** completed virtual internships with our partner ThinkPacific, supporting a range of projects in Fiji linked to the UN SDGs



### COIL projects

DMU academic staff in Nursing and Criminology delivered COIL/ virtual exchange projects with partner universities in Japan and USA respectively, **engaging 29 students.**



### Online refugee course

In cooperation with DMU Local, **13 students** participated in a 6-week course learning about the refugee crisis in the UK and overseas.



### Employability webinars

Delivered by our partner Pagoda Projects, **12 students** attended a variety of webinars related to employability related topics.



### Global citizenship programmes

Through a range of programmes delivered with partners including Common Purpose, **57 students** benefited from learning activities related to global citizenship and the UN SDGs.



### Cultural exchanges

**20 students** took part in cultural exchange projects with students from universities in Japan and China.

# SECTOR ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESSES

We have always seen DMU Global as a sector lead in the field of internationalisation, and over the past year we have continued to share our expertise with colleagues globally, and we have actively participated participate in networks, evidenced by the following...

- ▶ A DMU Global blog submission for Universities UK International (UUKi) titled 'You can't create virtual exchange overnight: what we have learnt from moving international experiences online' which aimed to share lessons learned in relation to developing virtual mobility opportunities.
- ▶ Delivering a presentation on DMU Global's sustainability initiatives to other UK universities for the IC Global Café and submitting a case study to Climate Action Network for International Educators (CANIE) knowledge hub.
- ▶ Being featured in the UUKi's report 'How the climate crisis affects internationalisation' as the sole case study of good practice from a student mobility perspective.
- ▶ Presenting a session to the international mobility community at the British Universities Transnational Exchange annual conference, focussing on the importance of virtual and on-campus internationalisation as an alternative way of achieving intercultural learning.

**In recognition of our attempts to adapt DMU Global to create a more sustainable student mobility programme we were shortlisted for two national awards...**



## **Sustainability international impact award finalist**

Shortlisted as a finalist by the Professionals in International Education (PIE) for their Sustainability International Impact award as part of The PIEoneer Awards 2022. The PIE has recognised DMU Global as a finalist in this category for the innovation and creativity shown in creating virtual international experiences, in response to the climate crisis and need to reduce carbon emissions globally.



## **Building back better finalist**

Shortlisted as a finalist by the Green Gown Awards for their Building Back Better award. DMU Global has been recognised as a finalist in this category for its innovative response to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis, which includes attempts to reduce our carbon footprint, educate students and staff about sustainability, and the introduction of 'greener' virtual international experiences that encourage meaningful online collaboration with partners and students globally.

# LOOKING AHEAD

Our planning cycles within DMU Global always mean that by the time this annual report is published, work is already well and truly underway to deliver the 2022-23 programme of activity. Our overarching aims for the year are to significantly upscale activity (especially overseas trips), and also to reconnect with our student body in a meaningful way, making them more aware of the benefits of international experiences.

**To achieve our aims of offering more international experiences and re-engaging with students, our key strategic objectives for the upcoming year are to:**

- ▶ Deliver an increased number and range of academic and extra-curricular overseas experiences for DMU students that enhance studies, and support the development of a range of key skills valued by employers
- ▶ Grow and diversify the range and scope of opportunities for students to study or work abroad as part of the Turing Scheme, whilst building meaningful relationships with strategic global partner universities to deliver these experiences.
- ▶ Develop the cultural awareness and language skills of DMU students through the delivery of a range of inclusive and low-cost campus-based international experiences
- ▶ Continue the development and evolution of DMU Global Online Learning, embracing virtual international experiences as a way to offer scalable, inclusive and cost-effective opportunities for DMU students.

**Global Mobility Office**

De Montfort University  
The Gateway  
Leicester  
LE1 9BH  
UK

**T:** +44 (0) 116 257 7613

**E:** [dmuglobal@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:dmuglobal@dmu.ac.uk)

**W:** [dmuglobal.com](http://dmuglobal.com)

**Twitter:** [@DMUglobal](https://twitter.com/DMUglobal)

**Instagram:** [@dmu\\_global](https://www.instagram.com/dmu_global)

