



## Designing and Delivering Cross-Cultural Collaborations: Insights from an Online Collaboration between Sheffield Hallam University and Christ University

David J. Hattersley<sup>1</sup>, Sangeeta Mehroliya<sup>2</sup>, Pallavi Singh<sup>1</sup> and John Woods<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sheffield Hallam University, <sup>2</sup>Christ University

### Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected world, it is important that students develop the knowledge and skills required to work effectively in a global environment. Having an experience abroad during university is often described as enriching and life-changing and is an excellent way to prepare students for success working across borders. However, the proportion of UK students spending an extended period overseas has declined since its peak in 2017/18 (Universities UK International, 2025) and the study-abroad experience in general was only ever enjoyed by a tiny minority of students (Charles, 2022). Virtual exchanges, such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), have the potential to provide a more accessible and inclusive approach to promote internationalization and enable students to develop intercultural competence and citizenship (Rubin, 2017). This study considers an online collaboration between students at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK and Christ University in India. The collaboration involved reciprocal guest lectures delivered by academics from each institution to students at the partner university, followed by a series of online collaborative sessions involving approximately 50 students from each institution. A series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with students from both Sheffield Hallam and Christ to explore the issues and challenges associated with participation in the collaboration, as well as any pedagogical benefits arising from the experience. The findings suggest that students entered the project with a mixture of apprehension and excitement but, despite some logistical challenges, found the collaboration engaging and beneficial, particularly in developing their intercultural knowledge, skills and awareness.

### Keywords

internationalisation, COIL, virtual exchange, global citizenship, intercultural competence

### References

Charles, H. (2023). The limits of international education mobility and the emergence of COIL. In *The Guide to COIL Virtual Exchange* (pp. 19-31). Routledge.  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003447832-3/limits-international-education-mobility-emergence-coil-harvey-charles>

### Citation:

Hattersley, D.J., Mehroliya, S., Singh, P. and Woods, J. (2026). Designing and delivering cross-cultural collaborations: Insights from an online collaboration between Sheffield Hallam University and Christ University. *Journal of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Enquiry*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.7190/jostle.v1i1.636>

Rubin, J. (2017). Embedding collaborative online international learning (COIL) at higher education institutions. *Internationalisation of Higher Education*, 2(27).

<https://studyabroad.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/256/2020/08/Rubin-Embedding-Collaborative-Online-International-Learning-at-Higher-Education-Institutions.pdf>

Universities UK International. (2024). *Gone International: A new generation: A study of higher education students who study, work, and volunteer abroad*. Universities UK International.

<https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/insights-and-publications/uuki-publications/gone-international-new-generation-0>