memo tool
monitoring exchange mobility outcomes

CHE Consult GmbH
1. METHODOLOGY
memo analyses the impact of international mobility on students
memo provides information on how mobility affects students and which groups of students benefit more and which less
memo helps HEIs to focus on improving the quality and impact of exchange programmes

memo focuses on the effects of different types of mobility on the development of students’ personality traits which are closely linked to employability and intercultural competence
memo analyses who students are (facts), what they think (perceptions) and how they behave (personality traits). By combining these three aspects and comparing pre- and post-stay data, memo allows you to learn:

- how different groups of students handle their stay abroad,
- how the international experience influenced student’s personality
- how this might be related to services provided by the home and host universities.
memo approach

- memo is much more than a student satisfaction survey
- memo tool contains a **psychometric-related part** which enables to measure the real (not perceived) development of students

**memo** uses data based on **students’ assessment of their own behaviour** (*psychometric analysis*) before and after the mobility period to show the real effect of mobility
memo analyses exchange students from different perspectives: a set of different aspects of analysis (on the left side below) is used to assess students in more detail and show how different groups of students handle studying abroad.

Aspects of Analysis

- gender
- family’s academic background
- participation in preparatory courses
- types of mobility and programmes
- duration of the stay abroad
- destination countries

Other Characteristics

- fields of study
- degrees
- extracurricular activities
- languages
- school performance
- financing
- previous international experience
- motivations
- support for the decision
### Perceptions – what students think

**…of Personal Aspects**

- Preparedness
- Experiences made abroad
- Contacts made abroad
- Prospects of living and working abroad/in international context

**…of Academic Aspects of the Study Programme**

- Workload
- Support in academic issues
- Accessibility of information

**…of Non-Academic Aspects of the Study Programme**

- Financial, administrative/organisational support
- Support in social issues
The added value of student mobility is measured and analysed by means of 67 psychometric items, which have been subjected to a statistical factor analysis.

**memo Factors**

- Confidence
- Tolerance
- Self-awareness
- Sociability
- Problem-solving
- Self-assessment
- Decisiveness
- Position-defending
- Adaptability
- Curiosity

**memo Total**

The added value of student mobility does not aim to provide solely an assessment of the students’ abilities to interact in different international and intercultural contexts, but also to provide an assessment of how well the design and management of study or internship abroad programmes are suited to enhance students’ employability and international competence. The analysis of the added value produced by mobility programmes must therefore be understood as an **assessment of the roles of the home and host institutions** in preparing their students for, and guiding them through, their experiences abroad.
Individual memo factor values were combined into a memo total index. The memo total index comprises aspects of employability as well as the ability to deal with foreign concepts, cultures and values. High values on the memo total index prior to departure reflect a very comprehensive ability to adapt to the demands of an international experience, while after return, they indicate a better predisposition for work in an international context. Low values may indicate room for improvement – with help and support from the university.

Memo total change shows the added value of students mobility on the development of personality traits.
memo factors of Employability and Intercultural competence

**memo factors of employability**

Six memo factor values (Confidence, Tolerance, Problem-solving, Curiosity, Self-assessment and Decisiveness) were combined into memo factors value of employability.

These factors were used in the Erasmus Impact Study and a survey amongst employers and alumni confirmed the relevance of these factors for the skills related to employability.

**memo factors of intercultural competence**

Five memo factor values (Tolerance, Sociability, Curiosity, Position-defending and Adaptability) were combined into memo factors value of intercultural competence.

The selected factors address aspects of intercultural competence as the use of the related items in QUEST, a large-scale project over three years conducted by CHE Consult on study adaptability, showed.
2. MEMO SURVEY
memo project cycle

• memo tool covers one academic year

• memo project takes about 15 months to complete (all memo phases)

• workload for HEI is low
  • Initial data for survey
  • Registration link to students

memo project phases:

Survey set-up
Registration of students
Invitation to pre-survey
Invitation to post-survey
Data Analysis
Final data report and executive summary
memo survey

• Registration page for the survey (mobility data, email)

• Two-phase survey (15 - 20min)
  • pre-departure survey (14 days before departure)
  • post-return survey (30 days after return)

• Invitations and reminders done automatically
• Designed for outgoing & incoming students
• Currently available in 8 language versions
Content of the survey

- **Facts – who students are**
  - Key aspects of analysis (gender, duration, exchange type, exchange programme...)
  - Other characteristics – linguistic background, financing of stay abroad, previous international experience, motivation for going abroad, support for decision to go abroad...

- **Perceptions – what students think**
  - Personal aspects – preparedness, contacts, prospects of living/working abroad...
  - Academic/non-academic aspects of the study programme at home and host institution

- **Personality traits – how students behave**
  - Psychometric items reflecting behaviour of students
memo report for HEI

annual memo report produced for each participating university

- Data analysis report
- Executive summary with main findings

- Use results to work better with different groups of outgoing/incoming students
- Optimise services for students
- Increase pre-departure support where necessary
Comparisons in annual memo report

- comparison of *pre and post* survey data
- comparison between *home and host* institution
- comparison with *memo average* results
- comparison with *peer institutions* (same type and size)
- comparison with *previous years* (for long-term memo partner HEIs)
Personal feedback for students

- How to motivate students to participate in memo...
- **Personal feedback for each student** who fully completes the survey
- **Personal results – development of personality traits** compared with the average results of other students

### MEMO chart

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Segment where the middle third of participants was located.
3. MEMO FACTORS
memo factors

• memo introduces 10 memo factors describing the main personality traits of students related to intercultural competence and employability

• comparison of pre-departure and post-return values are used to assess the direct outcomes of the mobility experience and show real development of students
Curiosity

High values on this factor indicate that a person is not only open to new experiences but seeks them actively. This also applies to new academic challenges.

Low values hint at an altogether more reluctant attitude towards new experiences and a greater appreciation of what is familiar.
Confidence

High values on this factor point to a high degree of self-sufficiency and a **strong conviction of one’s own abilities** – aspects that may positively impact academic success. Individuals with high values on this factor may, however, also be inflexible and set in their ways.

Low values show doubt about one’s own abilities and perseverance, which might be grounded in negative experiences or insecurity.
Adaptability

An individual with high values **deals well with negative experiences** and therefore does not fear possible future setbacks. In the academic context, this goes along with physical well-being and a belief in one’s own strength and ability.

Students with low values on this factor feel exhausted and overwhelmed, which can be accompanied by further symptoms like sadness, sleeplessness or certain helplessness. Such students find it hard to find and accept help or support.
High values refer to an individual who not only *likes to socialize*, but who cannot be alone very well. For these individuals, an active social life coincides with good emotional well-being.

Low values show a person who does not like to mingle, but is better able to deal with negative feelings such as rejection and is less concerned about the opinion of others.
Tolerance

High values on this factor mean that a person is capable to tolerate the behaviour and values of other people without compromising his or her own values.

Low values mean that a person feels very uncomfortable if confronted with other persons’ different values and ways of life. Such individuals may espouse a more traditional view of things, based on their own perspective and experience as influenced by family, society and established norms and values. Deviation from what is conceived as “normal” is perceived as threatening or at least discomforting.
Decisiveness

High values point to an active and decisive individual, who may have a critical attitude toward the content of his or her study programme.

Low values suggest that the individual is more likely to reconsider his or her decisions to accommodate the opinion of others.
Self-awareness

High values indicate that the person is convinced that he or she can influence the outcome of their ambitions and efforts (such as study results), and that these are not a matter of luck or coincidence. This perspective is accompanied by a high self-awareness and a good assessment of what is expected.

Low values not only suggest that a person does not feel that he or she really can make a difference with respect to the outcome of a certain task or situation, but they also feel a certain ambiguity about the demands and conditions of the task or situation.
High values reflect a “problem-solver” who does not like to delve into the insolvable aspects of a task but focuses on the doable, and also likes a challenge. Such individuals may either be very pragmatic in their approach to academic education, considering it as a means to solve practical problems, or else very theory-oriented in that they are attracted to problem-solving as an academic exercise.

Low values reflect an individual who is well aware of problems or problematic aspects of a situation and might be more concerned with identifying the problem than with solving it.
Self-assessment

High values on this factor indicate that a person knows his or her strengths and weaknesses. This good self-assessment not only leads to a more relaxed relationship to other people or new demands, but also might prevent disappointments with the higher education institution.

Low values, on the other hand, suggest an altogether higher stress level that can be caused by a misjudgement of one’s own abilities, accompanied by troubles to understand the demands and requirements of the study programme.
Position-defending

High values characterize an individual who engages easily in and enjoys discussions, feels passionately about things and also does not hesitate to voice his or her opinion in an academic environment.

An individual with low values keeps his/her opinion to him/herself, not only because of a less strong conviction but also in order to avoid confrontations. Such an individual is more hesitant to engage in discussions in seminars.
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