

## Module One: The Student Experience

### *What is Student Experience?*

Student experience can be broadly defined as ‘all aspects of student life’. So when you stop and think about it, this can include a whole array of things that we might not think of as having a direct impact on a student’s study experience or ability to adjust to life outside of their home country. When you look closely at the list of areas that student experience can include, there are things there that you might not necessarily think of immediately as having an impact on the study experience. But take for example, opening a bank account. Students are going to need to have a local bank account to be able to receive money from home, pay fees, perhaps pay rent and get paid into if they are working. Sometimes knowing what you need to open a bank account isn’t always that easy, particularly when you are doing it in another language, maybe for the first time in your life, in an unfamiliar commercial landscape. The stress of not being able to pay fees to continue their studies or transfer money for a deposit for accommodation could seriously impact on a student in class, if they come to class and how they are settling into their new life. Helping students open a bank account when they first arrive, giving them options of branches with multilingual staff who could assist them if your Centre doesn’t have the capacity, and explaining forms of ID they will need to have with them, will be one less thing students have to navigate and eliminates a lot of potential stressors, that will leave headspace to help them focus more on their studies.

Looking back at the list of what student experience can include, and thinking about the example of opening a bank account, many of these things have implications around cultural knowledge, or cultural capital, and are not simply about language competency or language barriers.

Many of you will ask ‘Isn’t good teaching and learning enough?’ And the answer to that quite simply is no. Students are customers and consumers, whether or not we like to think of ELT in commercial terms, and our courses or programmes are our products, which means students have the option to go elsewhere. Domestically and internationally there are more study options than ever before. In our Asia-Pacific region there are destinations for English language students that might be perceived as cheaper, safer or more culturally familiar, such as Singapore, Malaysia and The Philippines or the UAE, in addition to a burgeoning market of joint venture pathways and branch campuses. So a wholistic student experience is the key to a Centre’s survival.