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Internationalization of curricula



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Shape and Purpose



- The shape and purpose of internationalisation in the higher education environment has undergone many changes – many of those related to globalisation.
- Internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) is an essential component of the broader concept of internationalisation in higher education which has been variously defined and interpreted in different parts of the world for many years.



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And the role of universities

- Universities have a social responsibility to prepare all graduates to live and work as responsible national and global citizens. International and intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes are essential for citizens of today's and tomorrow's worlds.
- In preparing students for their future it is important therefore that universities incorporate international and intercultural perspectives into the curriculum while recognising that as graduates, all students will have social and cultural as well as economic roles and responsibilities.
- Wherever they are, their lives and their work will be influenced by the global environment.

...connecting....

- International and intercultural skills and knowledge, an awareness of and commitment to connecting positively with cultural others, and the ability to think 'locally, nationally and globally' will be important in this world.
- Thus internationalization of the curriculum is a critical component of any university's internationalization strategy.



But challenges ahead

- The complexity of the process of internationalization itself and the challenges and frustrations associated with engaging academic staff.
- Yet many academic staff are either uncertain what internationalization of the curriculum means within their disciplinary and institutional contexts or do not think it has anything to do with them



Essential ingredient

- It is generally agreed today that internationalization of the curriculum is an essential component of the broader concept of internationalization in higher education.
- Indeed it is difficult to argue that an institution of learning can be internationalized unless the curriculum is internationalized





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Let's try a definition



- The incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study



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Crossing national boundaries



- It assumes that curriculum content will be informed by research that crosses national as well as cultural boundaries and that teaching, as well as student and academic support services provided as part of the informal curriculum, will address any issues that teachers and learners face due to their national and cultural backgrounds and identities.
- It provides a direct focus on international and intercultural learning outcomes as well as teaching and learning processes and is clearly focused on student engagement with diversity, including the cultural and linguistic diversity that surrounds them in the world, in class and on campus

The Italian job

- In comparison, when the rector of the Politecnico di Milano announced in spring that, as of 2014, all of its graduate programmes would be taught in English, there was widespread protest from politicians, the media and academics.
- Words such as ‘illegitimate’ and ‘unconstitutional’ were used and the move was seen as “a threat to Italian culture and language”. The difference in reaction to the spread of teaching in English in Asia and in Italy is remarkable.



Watch out, don't fall for this trap

- Curriculum in English doesn't mean the institution is internationalized nor the curriculum is an international one
- One of main misconceptions about internationalization of HEIs.





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Institutional context

- Institutions have their own unique mission, ethos, policies and priorities. The formal curriculum does not operate in isolation of these.
- They are reflected in various ways in policies (such as in 'graduate attributes' state- ments), the range and focus of degrees offered (such as the availability of and requirement for foreign language study and recognition of concurrent

Local context

- Developing students' abilities to be ethical and responsible local citizens who appreciate the connections between the local, the national and the global is an important aspect of internationalization of the curriculum.
- The local context includes social, cultural, political and economic conditions. All may provide opportunities and challenges for internationalization of the curriculum. For example, there may be opportunities for students to develop enabling intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes through engagement with diversity in the local community.

National and regional context

- National and regional matters and related government policies concerning internationalization are the background against which institutions formulate policy and academic staff do or do not engage in internationalization of the curriculum.
- For example, policies concerning foreign language learning and support for student mobility, the recruitment of international students and the extent to which universities are connected with others in the region will all influence approaches to internationalization of the curriculum. Different national and regional contexts will to some extent determine the options available.

- In the process of internationalization of the curriculum the key questions to be considered in relation to the global context are:
 - • What kind of world do we live in?
 - • What kind of world do we want?
 - • How can we best prepare our students to participate ethically and responsibly in the world today and in the future, as both professionals and citizens?