



Challenges and Opportunities for Internationalising Higher Education in Europe

HANS DE WIT,

**PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
INTERNATIONALISATION (CHEI), UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA DEL SACRO CUORE (MILAN, ITALY)**

**PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONALISATION,
AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
(AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS)**

**FOUNDING EDITOR 'JOURNAL OF STUDIES IN
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION' AND CO-EDITOR
'SAGE HANDBOOK ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHER
EDUCATION'**

Content

- The context and concept of internationalisation in higher education
- The EU Strategy: an example
- The globalisation of Internationalisation, towards a new phase

The key Issue in current international higher education

The global knowledge society we live in has placed the internationalisation of higher education at the forefront.

International organizations, national governments, higher education leaders, students and faculty are advocating the development of global engagement, global networking and global citizenship as cornerstones for internationalisation in general and internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes in particular.

Can we reinvent and innovate internationalisation such that not only in words but also in practice we create global professionals and citizens?

Evolution of internationalisation: Competition and Cooperation

- There is an increasingly more **competitive higher education environment** and that competitive environment is more diverse and global than ever before
- The role of **cross-border delivery of education** is becoming an alternative for student mobility
- **Skilled immigration**: competition for skilled labour in the global knowledge economy between developed countries and emerging economies **is becoming more driving**
- **Outcomes and competences**: a move from input and output to outcomes and competences (**internationalisation of the curriculum and learning outcomes**)
- **Exchange and cooperation (mobility as part of the home degree)** continue to be an important dimension of internationalisation

Internationalisation as a Concept

There is a shift is towards the increasing importance of the international dimensions in higher education and of the related transfer from a marginal set of programs and activities to a more mainstream and comprehensive process.

The process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education

(Knight, 2003)

It is this process oriented view on internationalisation of higher education that can be accredited mostly for the shift from the more static term 'international education' into 'internationalisation', even though the reality not always confirms this shift.




From margin to centre

- ‘Over the last two decades, the concept of the internationalization of higher education is moved from the fringe of institutional interest to the very core.’
- (The End of Internationalization, *Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011*)
- This process is also described in Europe as ***Mainstreaming of Internationalisation***.
- And recently more general as ***Comprehensive Internationalisation***.
- Basically labels that re-emphasize the integrative and *process component* in the definition of internationalisation by Jane Knight.

Comprehensive Internationalisation

- “Comprehensive internationalization is a **commitment, confirmed through action**, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education.
- It shapes institutional **ethos and values** and touches the entire higher education enterprise.
- It is essential that it be embraced by **institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units**.



“Not only is internationalization a means rather than an end, but the ends may vary from institution to institution and the particular approach to internationalization chosen is dependent on the ends being pursued.”

(Comprehensive Internationalization, NAFSA)

- We consider internationalisation of higher education too much as a goal in itself instead of as a means to an end.
- Internationalisation is not more and less than a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their service to society. That objective is too much forgotten in the strive for quantitative goals.

Internationalisation

- Is still largely embedded in institutional, national and regional cultures and systems
- Expresses itself in specific ways by disciplines and their relation to society
- As well as by levels and type of education
- And changes over time in response to political, societal and academic developments

Emerging concerns with the concept of internationalisation

- Internationalisation has become a rather **broad concept**, combining many different and even contradictory elements and activities.
- Internationalisation has moved **from innovation to tradition**.
- In other words: Internationalisation requires a **new innovative approach and incorporate non-traditional ideas**.

Internationalisation can be seen as to consist of two components:

Internationalisation Abroad: all forms of education crossing borders, mobility of students, teachers, scholars, programmes, courses, curriculum, projects

Internationalisation at Home: activities that help students develop international understanding and intercultural skills

(Knight, 2006)

The primary attention at (inter)national level and in most institutions is still at the Abroad component, but a shift to the At Home component is noticeable.

Emerging notions and terms

- We see a shift from abroad to at home and as a result current internationalization increasingly is related to terms and concepts such as
 - Intercultural,
 - International and
 - Global,
- without clearly defining them and distinguishing between them and increasingly labelling them under vague notions, such as:
- Global Competence, Global Citizenship, Global Engagement, Globally Networked Learning, presented as innovative ways of internationalisation.

Global Engagement

- Global Citizens
- Global Professionals
- The **personal development** (citizenship) and the **employability** dimension (professionalization) are two related aspects of global engagement and become together more central to the internationalisation process in higher education

Priorities in the current context as internationalisation

- 1: The need to *learn from other non-western national and cultural contexts* – to understand the full extent of internationalisation as a phenomenon and what we can learn from each other in order to benefit students, employers and nations.
- 2: To ensure that *no single approach or paradigm* dominates the discourse but to take account of the nature of internationalisation as a comprehensive process
- 3: Not to see internationalisation as a goal in itself but as a *contribution to the quality of education and research* for the benefit of students.
- 4: To offer *greater clarity on the 'why' of internationalisation*, being more explicit about institutional and individual rationales for a strategy or approach so that objectives and outcomes are clear and measurable.

Priorities 2

- 5: To pay *more attention to faculty and student perspectives* on internationalisation. There is still too great a focus on political and economic rationales from an (inter)national and institutional perspective, in which the perspectives of those for whom it is all intended are underrepresented.
- 6: To *understand better the impact of international and intercultural learning outcomes* on student employability, taking into account the perspectives of employers.
- 7: To continue *research on the benefits of internationalisation* and the impact on students, faculty and administrators.
- 8: To better understand the *link between internationalisation and multiculturalism* and undertake further research on whether similar benefits can be gained through internationalisation of the curriculum at home as are evident in the literature on study/work/volunteering overseas.

Strategy of the European Commission

“A *comprehensive internationalisation strategy* should cover key areas grouped into the following three categories:

international student and staff mobility;

the internationalisation and improvement of curricula and digital learning;

and strategic cooperation, partnerships and capacity building.

These categories should not be seen as isolated but as integrated elements of a comprehensive strategy.”

(EU Communication, 2013)

Global dimension

“[...] higher education policies must increasingly focus **on the integration of a global dimension in the design and content of all curricula and teaching/learning processes** (*sometimes called “internationalisation at home”*),

to ensure that the large majority of learners, the 80-90% who are not internationally mobile for either degree or credit mobility, are nonetheless able to acquire the international skills required in a globalised world.”

(ibid, 2013)

Staff and networks

“The presence on campus of internationally minded and foreign teaching/research staff in addition to foreign students is an instrument

to expose the non-mobile student majority to international approaches; it has the potential to enhance the performance of HEIs and the quality of their education, by encouraging the exchange of course material, and, increasingly, facilitating the efficient use of virtual campuses, courseware and cooperation.

Disciplinary and multidisciplinary networks can be vehicles for staff exchanges and for internationalisation of the curriculum.” (Ibid, 2013)

Languages

“Integrating an international dimension in curricula highlights the importance of languages.

On the one hand, **proficiency in English is de facto part of any internationalisation strategy for learners, teachers and institutions** and some Member States have introduced, or are introducing, targeted courses in English (especially at Masters level) as part of their strategy to attract talent.

On the other hand, **multilingualism is a significant European asset**: it is highly valued by international students and should be encouraged in teaching and research throughout the higher education curriculum.”
(Ibid 2013)

Globalisation of internationalisation, a new phase?

*“Just as the scope and complexity of the **challenges** facing humanity are unprecedented, so are the **opportunities** to address them.*

*Higher education and research institutions are central to **finding solutions** and to **creating greater awareness** among students and the larger public about numerous **global issues**.*

*Since most of these challenges are intrinsically linked to the globalised nature of our world, **internationalisation** – defined in the simplest but perhaps the most comprehensive manner as an appreciative openness to the world and to other ways of knowing and learning – **is an essential dimension of higher education and of the search for truth and knowledge in this more globalised context. It can also become an essential pathway to a more inclusive global higher education space of our making.**”*

Manifestations: IAU Global Survey

- The international dimension and the position of higher education in the global arena are more dominant in international, national and institutional documents and mission statements than ever.
- According to the latest *IAU Global Survey*, 53% of the institutions have an internationalisation strategy, 16% have integrated internationalisation in their overall strategy and another 22% are working on such a strategy. 69 % report that internationalisation is important for the leadership of the institution.
- That implies that between 7 and 9 out of 10 universities consider internationalisation as a central strategic dimension.

Other relevant findings of IAU Global Survey: benefits of internationalisation

- The top ranked finding (32%) for benefits of internationalisation is *student's increased international awareness and engagement with global issues*, followed by *improved quality of teaching and learning*.
- *Revenue generation* is the lowest ranked benefit overall.

Other findings: drivers and risks

- 46% see *institutional leadership* as the most important driver for internationalisation, 28% *the international office*, 32% *government policy*.
- *Rankings* are another top driver.
- The most important risk according to institutions is that *international opportunities are only available to students with financial resources* (elitism)
- The most important societal risk is *commodification of education*.

Other findings: obstacles and geographic priorities

- *Insufficient financial resources* are seen as the main obstacle for internationalisation, including limited public funding.
- The *language barrier* is another obstacle.
- *Limited experience of faculty members and staff* is another obstacle.
- For Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America are their top geographic priorities and for North America Asia Pacific, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, where in other regions the *own region* is top priority.

Other findings: priority activities

- *Outgoing mobility (29%), international research collaboration (24%) and strengthening international content of curriculum (14%) are the priority internationalisation activities.*
- *Outgoing faculty or staff mobility is in emerging and developing regions also a high priority.*

Other findings: **curriculum internationalisation**

- *Foreign language requirements are ranked highest*
- *Student scholarships for outgoing mobility surprisingly second*
- *Programmes or courses with an international theme third.*
- *Acquiring international/global competencies and learning outcomes are high on the agenda*
- *Joint and double degree programmes are increasing*
- *English, Spanish and Chinese are the most mentioned language courses*

Lessons from the Survey and recent trends: Globalisation and Internationalisation

Even though different accents are made in literature about the topic, one can say that

- ***globalisation*** is a social, economic and political process to which higher education responds and in which it is an actor itself,

and

- ***internationalisation*** is the way higher education responds to and acts in it.

Growing competition and marketization

- In this process of increased globalisation and internationalisation in higher education, Van der Wende (2001) speaks of a *shift in paradigm from cooperation to competition*, and
- Teichler (2004) of a *growing emphasis on marketization, competition and management of internationalisation*.

A reaction to marketization

- In reaction to this commercialization in higher education, authors call for more attention to ***social cohesion*** and to ***the public role of higher education*** as an alternative force to the growing emphasis on competition, markets and entrepreneurialism in higher education.
- In this reaction, the emergence of the notion of ***Global Citizenship*** has to be seen.
- It re-emphasises the importance of ***social responsibility*** and ***civic engagement*** next to ***global competence*** as role of higher education.

From tradition to innovation

*“Nowadays, we tend to be advocates rather than pioneers of internationalization, we are no longer the spearhead of innovation but **defenders of traditions**. This creates the danger of **self-depreciation** and **defensive self-perception**.”*

*In effect, it means that we are holding firm to **traditional concepts** and act on them while the world around us moves forward.*

*We lose sight of **innovative developments** such as the emergence of the digital citizen for whom mobility can be at least as much virtual as real.”*

(Brandenburg and De Wit, 2011)

Three aspects have to be kept in mind

- Globalisation of Internationalisation is growing
- Quantity should be driven by quality and not the other way around
- At Home and Abroad are two sides of the same coin

Globalisation of Internationalisation

- “In the current global-knowledge society, the concept of **internationalization of higher education has itself become globalized**, demanding further consideration of its impact on policy and practice as more countries and types of institution around the world engage in the process.
- Internationalization should no longer be considered in terms of a westernized, largely Anglo-Saxon, and predominantly English-speaking paradigm.”

(De Wit and Jones, 2014)

manifestations

- Notions **of importing and exporting countries** are being turned upside down as students choose study destinations in countries that were once seen as merely sending students to the 'west' to study.
- **Global mobility flows** are increasingly complex, offering new opportunities for those able and willing to access them.
- At the same time, **other countries are emerging as key players** and beginning to challenge the dominance of western discourse on internationalization.
- Alongside rising student demand for study overseas, **the globalization of working practices and environments are reflected in increasing expectations of employers for cross-culturally capable graduates**, ideally with international experience, to meet these demands.

What we have to realize

- In countries /Europe where internationalization has been around for some time, the head start in itself can become a handicap resulting in a lack of innovation.
- There is often ***a tendency to stick to established models and activities that are primarily focused on internationalization abroad*** (study abroad, recruitment of international students, exchanges).

A comprehensive notion of internationalisation is required

“The concepts ‘international’, ‘comparative’, and ‘global’ intermingle to offer a paradigm for understanding the direction of higher education internationalisation. (...)

A more comprehensive set of behaviours associated with internationalisation are a response to this intermingling and its implications.”

(Hudzik, 2013, 100)

Some key examples of how European higher education can innovate internationalisation

- **More focus on Joint Degrees**
- **More attention for Virtual Exchange/Collaborative online international learning**
- **More emphasis on outcomes than on input and output**
- **More focus on at home than abroad with abroad made more an integrative part of at home**
- **More attention to the programme level than the institutional level**
- **Better understanding of the professional perspective**
- **Integrate internationalisation as a key component in overall strategies and accreditations, at all levels**

The background is a dark, textured surface with a pattern of diagonal lines, resembling wood grain or a stone wall. A large, white, stylized star is centered in the background. The star has a thick outline and a slightly irregular, hand-drawn appearance. The text "The End" is written in a white, elegant, cursive script across the center of the star.

The End