



# Trends in Internationalization and Cross-border Education: Implications for Accreditation

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# Key themes

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**What have been and are the main trends, rationales and drivers for internationalisation over the past decades?**

**The different perceptions and meanings of internationalisation in and of higher education, and what are key shifting paradigms?**

**What might be the future directions of internationalisation in response to current drastically changing global contexts?**

**What is the role of QA in internationalisation and of internationalisation in QA in these changing contexts? Implications for Accreditation!**



# Global Trends in International Higher Education that impact and are impacted by internationalisation

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Massification

Recently:

Global Knowledge Economy

Changing Global Economic, Social and Political Climate

Concerns of Autonomy, Academic Freedom and National Security

Ethics and values in higher education



# Over the past half century, internationalisation in and of higher education has evolved:

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- From a marginal and ad hoc range of activities to more comprehensive and central processes and policies.
- It has become a key strategic agenda for universities but also national and local governments around the globe.
- It is driven by a diverse range of rationales, organizational and program strategies, and includes the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, internal and external to the system
- But at the same time has resulted in many different approaches and actions.



# Looking Back

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**Education abroad in all its forms is more driving the agenda than internationalisation at home**

**Increasing focus on international rankings are the rules, and favor some over others.**

**The divide between the North and the South and between those universities classified as top world-class universities and the “Others” persists.**

**Internationalisation has become more synonym to competition and marketisation than to its traditional values (cooperation, exchange and service to society).**

**Inequality and exclusiveness increased nationally and internationally, in part due to elitist approaches to internationalisation.**

**Input and quantitative output have been more synonym to quality in the internationalisation process than qualitative outcomes**



# A counter reaction: from competition back to cooperation?

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As a counter reaction to the exclusive focus on mobility, movements like *'Internationalisation at Home'* (Beelen and Jones, 2015), *'Internationalisation of the Curriculum'* (Leask, 2015) and *'Comprehensive Internationalisation'* (Hudzik, 2015) have emerged around the turn of the century, trying to shift the focus on internationalization for all students, not exclusively the small percentage of mobile ones.

Also the rather exclusive focus on only one of the three missions of universities, education, has been challenged with an appeal to more specific attention to *internationalisation of research* (Woldegiyorgis et al, 2018) and *internationalisation of higher education for society* (Jones et al, 2021).

Critique of *internationalisation as a western paradigm* and call for its *decolonisation* has become more to the forefront.



# A changing paradigm?

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Appeals for change, and a related call for virtual exchange or 'Collaborative Online International Learning', resonates in words.

In practice the focus continues to be on internationalisation abroad, mobility.

De Wit and Rumbley (2017) speak of *rhetoric* more than concrete action, and

Leask, Jones and de Wit (2018) of *a struggle to move beyond good intentions and isolated examples of good practice*.



# A multifaceted and evolving concept

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Two dimensions, *multifaceted* and *evolving*, are key characteristics of the internationalisation of higher education;

And one can add, also of several of its components:

Study abroad, international students, internationalisation at home, transnational or cross-border education, digitalization, the use of terms like 'global citizenship', and so on.

Internationalisation is not one model that fits all, its diversity is institutional, local, national and regional defined, and has changed and evolved over time in response to changing contexts and challenges.





# A problematic sloppiness, mixing and confusing

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the **'why'** (the rationales for internationalisation)

the **'impact'** (its outcomes)

the **'what'** (its programs and actions)

the **'whom'** (partnerships) and

the **'how'** (its organization)

the **'where'** (its context).



# Multifacetedness and sloppiness also in its different dimensions and subthemes

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- One can question the difference between *'internationalisation at home'* and *'internationalisation of the curriculum'*
- Many scholars of *international student mobility* do not distinguish between different types of student mobility, while there is a fundamental difference between degree seeking, credit seeking, and certificate seeking international students, both in their rationales, their experiences and their outcomes
- They also ignore the *difference in levels of international students, and in their origins and motivations*
- In the area of *cross-border delivery of education and transnational education*, there is not only no common agreement on their meanings, but also not on what they entail
- The same is true with the use of *virtual mobility/virtual exchange/COIL* and their distinction from *distance education/online education/MOOCs*
- Frequently used terms like *'global citizen'* and *'global engagement'* more identify with a notion of sympathetic perception of what it might entail than that there is a clear common meaning and understanding
- The use of intercultural, international and global



# A need for change

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**Concerns about elitist, competitive and market-oriented approaches to internationalisation have persisted.**

**A need for more attention to the qualitative, human dimensions of internationalisation, including global learning for all; employability; improvement of the quality of research, education, and service to society.**



# Labeling internationalisation

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***'Comprehensive internationalization'***  
(Hudzik, 2011),

***'Intelligent internationalization'***  
(Rumbley, 2015),

***'Ethical internationalization'*** (Andreotti, 2016)

***'Conscientious internationalization'***  
(Wolhuter, 2008, Ledger and Kawalilak, 2020)

***'Responsible internationalization'***  
(Stallivieri, 2019) and

***'Humanistic internationalization'***  
(Streitwieser, 2019).

Other definitions have a more focused approach: ***'learner-centered'*** (Coelen, 2016),

***'forced'*** (related to refugees, Ergin et al, 2019), and

***'coerced'*** (Teferra, 2019).

Another term more frequently used these days as alternative to internationalisation is ***'global engagement'***, focusing more on the aspect of cooperation, networking and partnership.



# A changing global landscape

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## Key challenges

Geopolitical developments and tensions

Increased competition for global talent

Health concerns

Sustainability/environment

Other SDGs

Nationalism

Racism

and other factors

## Key questions

*How will internationalisation be shaped by this global landscape?*

*How will those working in internationalisation respond to the challenges they face?*

*And how will they therefore contribute to shaping the future?*



# In response, Defining Internationalisation of Higher Education for the Future

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## **Reflects increased awareness that**

- **IoHE must become more inclusive and less elitist**
- **Mobility must become an integral part of the internationalised curriculum that ensures internationalisation for all**

## **Re-emphasises that**

- *Internationalisation is not a goal in itself, but a means to enhance quality*
- **Should not focus solely on economic rationales**

## Future direction

(de Wit et al, 2015, European  
Parliament Study)

The **intentional** process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality* of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to **society**

# Lessons to be learned



**Internationalisation as a process of higher education as well as of its diverse dimensions in higher education requires *more clarity* on the meaning, the rationales, its programs and its organisation as well as its outcomes/impact.**

**This is even more true than ever given the *current geopolitical environment*.**

**And is essential for the understanding and use of internationalisation in QA and Accreditation!**





# QA in relation to Internationalisation

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The QA of internationalisation strategies

The shifting role of internationalisation in QA of HE

The way QA and Accreditation Agencies interpret and use internationalisation in the QA and Accreditation Process



# The QA of internationalisation strategies

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This theme was dominant in the 1990s when institutions of higher education wanted to assess the quality of their internationalisation strategies.

Examples of instruments used are:

- **Internationalisation Quality Review (IQR)**
- **Indicators for Mapping & Profiling internationalisation (IMPI)**

They looked more at the quality of the internationalisation policy of an institution and were based more on inputs and outputs than on outcomes!



# The way QA agencies interpret and use internationalisation in the QA process

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Increasingly QA agencies look at ways how to measure the contribution of internationalisation to the overall quality of the institution, as part of accreditation processes of programs and institutions.

Rankings are also an example that look at international dimensions to assess the position of the institution or discipline.

Inputs and outputs are more dominant than rationales and outcomes/impacts in rankings and most accreditation processes:

*Number of international students, number of students studying abroad, number of international faculty, number of publications with international co-authors, number of collaboration agreements!*



# The shifting role of internationalisation in QA of HE

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In the past two decades there has been a gradual shift in focus towards the role that internationalisation can play in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning and the overall mission of higher education institutions.

Examples are:

- **The Comprehensive Internationalization Framework of the American Council on Education (ACE),**

**<https://www.acenet.edu/Research-Insights/Pages/Internationalization/CIGE-Model-for-Comprehensive-Internationalization.aspx>**

- **The Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation (CeQuint) of the European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA), focusing in particular on the impact of internationalisation on teaching and learning.**

**<https://cequint.eu/>**

Where the first looks more at the institutional level, the second has both a program and institution option.

*Although these instruments are more comprehensive, they still focus more on the international dimension and strength of the institution, than on international indicators for measuring the quality of the institution.*



# Main challenges in assessing the contribution of internationalisation to the quality of programmes and institutions

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**Outputs are context related**

**Outputs do not say much about the quality**

**Internationalisation is still too much perceived as mobility and the quantitative dimensions of that mobility**

**Internationalisation is a broad container field and needs to be placed in a contextual analysis of quantitative and qualitative indicators**

**Internationalisation can be quite different by type of institution, by location and by program: not one model that fits all**

**Most frameworks and indicator lists do only address education but not the two other missions of HE: research and service to society**



# Recommendations for discussion

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**The relationship between QA and internationalisation has to be shifting from QA of internationalisation towards internationalisation in enhancing the QA of higher education!**

**Avoid the focus on 'internationalisation' as the generic subject, but use indicators such as of ACE and CeQuint as reference for assessment!**

**Focus not only on education but also on research and service to society, as they are strongly connected to and cannot be isolated from the education mission of HE!**

**Use inputs and outputs as illustration of trends, not as outcomes, and focus on the qualitative impact of international dimensions.**



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Thank You