

Internationalisation of Higher Education: Europe, Austria and beyond!

Beate Tremel

Academic Development Conference 2025,
St. Pölten UAS

27 February 2025

Overview

- History
- Definition of Internationalisation of Higher Education
- Links to other fields of HE policy
 - Recognition
 - Quality assurance
 - Social dimension of higher education
 - Learning and teaching: Internationalization of the curriculum

History

- Students and scholars have always been mobile
- 20th century: institutionalising organisations that support mobility:
 - USA: Institute of International Education (IIE) (1919)
 - Germany: DAAD (1925)
 - UK: British Council (1934)
 - The Netherlands: nuffic (1952)
 - Austria: OeAD (1961)

History

- Founding of the ERASMUS programme in 1987 to „*promote closer cooperation between universities and higher education institutions across Europe. This meant setting up an organised and integrated system of cross-border student interchange.*“
([EU](#))
- 1990s: European integration in many aspects of politics and society, education remains national responsibility under the principle of subsidiarity
- Initiation of HE cooperation in Europe in 1998 ([Sorbonne Declaration](#)) and start of the Bologna Process in 1999 ([Bologna Declaration](#))

Internationalisation of HE - Definition

Definition (DeWit et al, [2015](#); based on Knight, [2008](#))

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

Hans DeWit: Internationalisation of higher education, an introduction on the why, how and what ([2013](#))

- Cooperation vs competition
- *“internationalisation at home – activities that help students to develop international understanding and intercultural skills”*
- *“internationalisation abroad, including all forms of education across borders: mobility of students and faculty, and mobility of projects, programs and providers”*
- Rationales: political, economic, social and cultural, academic -> *“not mutually exclusive, may be different in importance by country and region, and can change in dominance over time... lead to different approaches and policies”* (p. 17)

Links to other fields of HE policy: Recognition

“Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region” - Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) - signed 1997 – legally binding

Recognition of

- qualifications giving access to higher education
- Periods of study
- Higher education qualifications
- qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation

“...unless a substantial difference can be shown“

Bundesrecht konsolidiert

[← Zurück zur Trefferliste](#) [← Zurück zur Suche](#) [➤ Zum ersten Suchbegriff](#) [← V](#)

Gesamte Rechtsvorschrift [heute](#) / [anderes Datum](#)
[Art. 1 am 25.02.2025](#) ➤ [Alle Fassungen](#)

Kurztitel

Übereinkommen über die [Anerkennung](#) ➤ von Qualifikationen im Hochschulbereich in der europäischen Region

Kundmachungsorgan

[BGBl. III Nr. 71/1999](#)

Typ

Vertrag – Multilateral

Links to other fields of HE policy: Recognition

Signatories: Member of the CoE and beyond (Australia, Belarus Canada, Holy See, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, USA)

Similar [regional conventions](#) in other regions of the world

[Global Convention](#) on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, 2019, currently 36 parties

Recognition needs comparability: Bologna Tools and didactic concepts:

- European Qualification Framework / National Qualification Frameworks
- ECTS
- Competencies instead of content: Learning Outcomes and constructive alignment

Links to other fields of HE policy: Quality assurance

Recognition requires trust in HE provision abroad

EHEA: QA already in the Bologna declaration of 1999

“Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.”

EHEA system for quality assurance

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area – [ESG](#) (2005, 2015, currently under revision)
- [European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#) – founded in 2008



Links to other fields of HE policy: Quality assurance

- [European Approach for QA of Joint programmes](#) (2015)
- [Database of External Quality Assurance Results \(DEQAR\)](#) (2018)
- Internationalisation discussions today in QA:
 - QA for European Universities Alliances
 - QA of trans-national education

Initiatives similar to the EHEA in other regions of the world focus on QA:

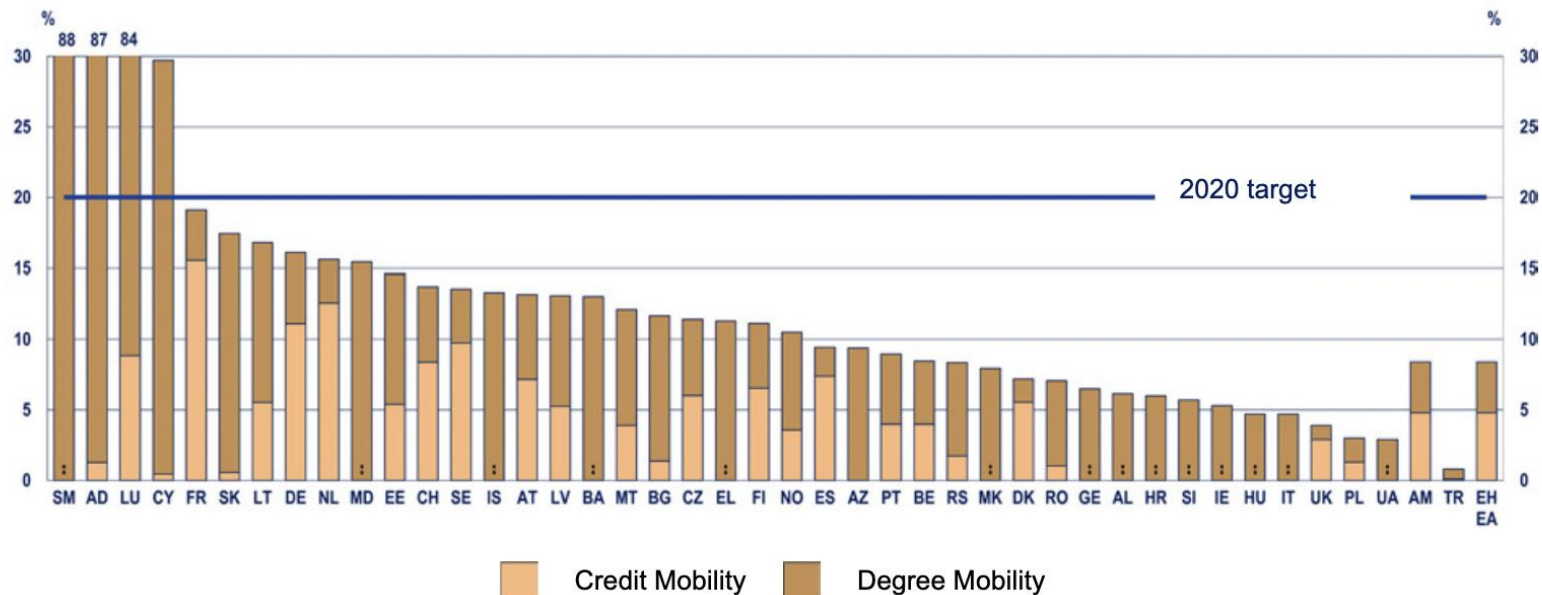
- Africa: [HAQAA](#) Projects
- ASEAN: [EU SHARE](#) Projects

Links to other fields of HE policy: Social dimension of HE

HE graduates with a learning mobility experience: EHEA: 20 % target set in 2009 ([Leuven/ Louvain la Neuve](#)), reiterated 2024 ([Tirana](#)); EU in 2024: 23 % ([EU](#))

Most countries struggle to reach it:

Figure 6.1: Outward (degree and credit) mobility rate of graduates (ISCED level 5-8) by country of origin, 2020/2021 (%)



Links to other fields of HE policy:

Social dimension of HE

[EUROSTUDENT VIII](#) : insights in differences in mobility rates in relation to demographic characteristics -> there are groups of students that are underrepresented

Four types of obstacles to mobility that students experience:

- Financial
- Motivational
- Practical
- Social

Projects and initiatives on mobility of underrepresented groups:

- [SALTO Resource Centre](#) for ERASMUS+
- Peer Learning Activities and Resources for Social Inclusion in Mobility Programmes ([PLAR-4-SIMP](#))

What about those, who cannot or do not want to be mobile? How to ensure international experience and intercultural competences for all students?

Internationalization of the curriculum

Concept by the Australian Professor Emerita Betty Leask (Leask, B. (2015). [Internationalizing the Curriculum](#). Abingdon: Routledge.)

Free online resource: [The Center of Internationalization of Education Brazil-Australia: Internationalization of the curriculum in Latin America](#)

What is it?

Incorporating international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study (Leask, 2015, p. 9).

Internationalization of the curriculum

Why do we need it?

HE needs to ensure graduates have international / global knowledge and intercultural competences to be able to contribute to facing the challenges of an ever more interconnected society and solving the problems of our times.

Nowadays more than ever...



Images: Pixabay: [Ted Erski](#), [Pete Linforth](#)

Internationalization of the curriculum

What is the curriculum?

The **formal curriculum** is what is written down about what and how students are learning: content, method, literature, assessment procedures

The **informal curriculum** are extracurricular activities that is going on on the campus that contribute to the culture in which the students are learning

The **hidden curriculum** is what students learn implicitly through the formal and informal curriculum about their HEI's values:

- Who has power and authority?
- How are conflicts resolved?
- How is learning organised?
- Who is used as a source of knowledge?
- Who is invited to speak at important events?

Internationalization of the curriculum

What to consider?

A conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum



Conceptual framework of internationalization of the curriculum (Leask, 2015)

Internationalization of the curriculum

- At the centre: **Knowledge in and across disciplines:** complex problems require trans- and interdisciplinary approaches
- Challenge the status quo and consider **emerging paradigms** when considering what knowledge to include
- Consider **requirements of professional practice and citizenship**

A conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum



Internationalization of the curriculum

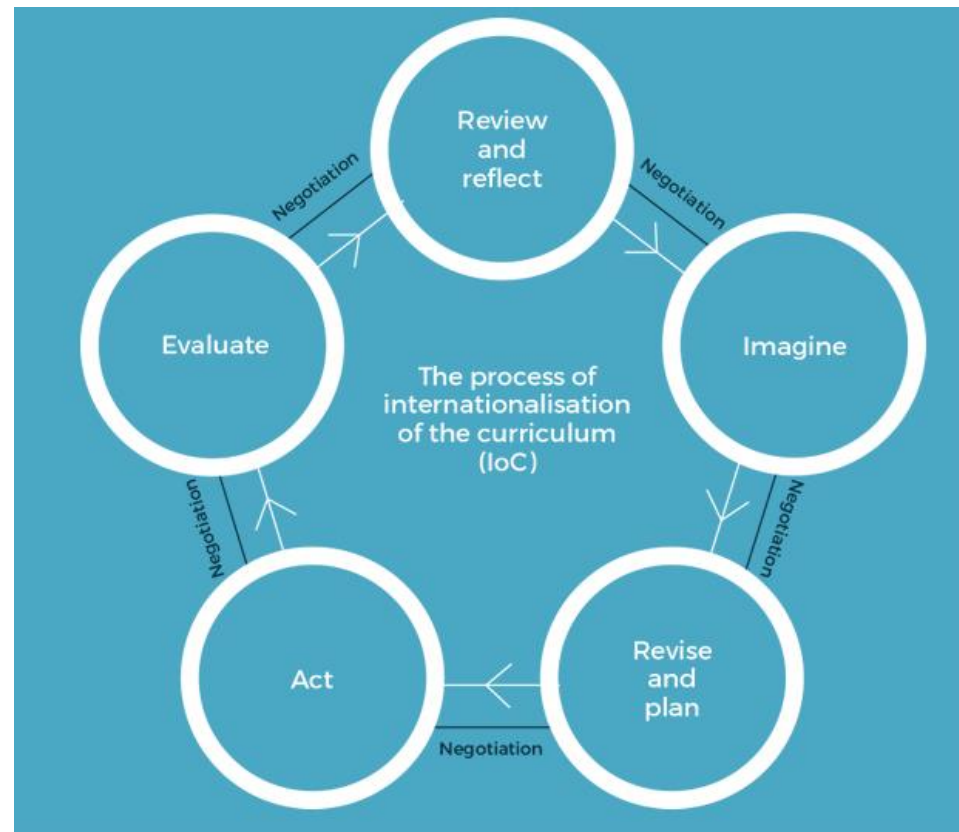
- Define intended **learning** outcomes and appropriate **assessment**
- Have a **systematic** approach to **development of knowledge and skills across the programme for all students**: competencies might need to be considered in different courses at different levels, different students might have different prior knowledge or need different methods
- In **context**: **institutional, local, regional and national, global**

A conceptual framework of internationalisation of the curriculum



Internationalization of the curriculum

How to do it?



Process of IoC (Leask 2015)

Internationalization of the curriculum

Review and reflect the status quo: What is our definition of internationalisation? Where and how is the curriculum already internationalised?

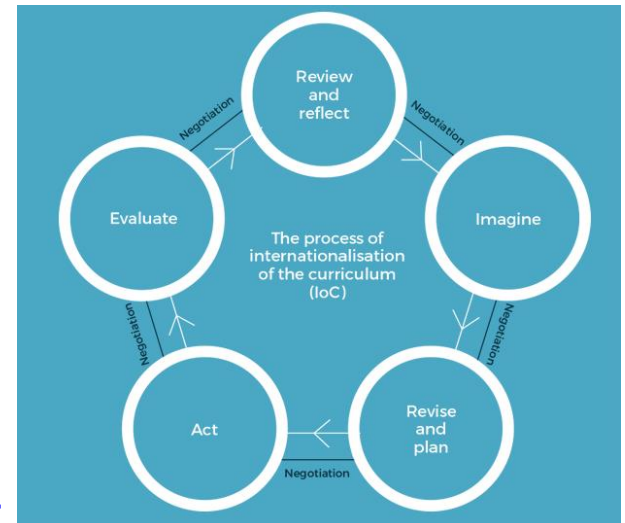
Imagine what you could do differently and how you could do it (emerging paradigms!)

Revise and plan what you are going to do

Act and implement your plan

Evaluate in how far you have reached your goals

May be helpful: [Design Thinking Approach](#)



Tools and didactic concepts to internationalise a curriculum

- Mobility window for long- or shortterm mobility: „... a period of time reserved for international student mobility that is embedded into the curriculum of a study programme“ (Ferencz et al., [2013](#))
 - Explicit part of the curriculum
 - Compulsory or voluntary
 - Recognition for all or at least part of it is possible and procedures are transparent
- Blended mobility: E.g. [ERASMUS+ Blended Intensive Programmes](#) (BIPs)
 - [Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes. Basic Toolkit.](#)

Tools and didactic concepts to internationalise a curriculum

- Virtual mobility: „... students using online tools and platforms to follow courses at other institutions without physically leaving their homes“ (O’Dowd, Beelen, [2021](#))
- Virtual exchange: „... students engage in structured online intercultural dialogue with other learners as part of regular courses in their home institutions“ (and platforms to follow courses at other institutions without physically leaving their homes“ (O’Dowd, Beelen, [2021](#))
 1. Focus on people-to-people interaction and dialogue;
 2. Transversal skills: intercultural awareness, digital literacies, teamwork
 3. Learner-led: following the philosophy of dialogue where participants are the main recipients and the main drivers of knowledge;
 4. Explicitly address intercultural understanding and engaging with difference
 5. Integrated into students’ formal learning or at least receives some form of academic recognition (credits, certificates)
 - COIL: **C**ooperative **O**nline **I**nternational **L**earning:
 - [State University of New York](#)
 - Eva Haug, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
- Reflecting content, sources, case studies, questions asked -> affects also the hidden curriculum!
- Bring the international experience to the students: guest lecturers

Where do you see the biggest challenges for internationalisation of HE / of the curriculum?

Any other comments?

Any questions?

Beate Tremel

beate.tremel@gmx.at

Additional resources

- Austrian [National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020 – 2030 \(HMIS2030\)](#)
- Platform for sharing good practice accompanying the strategy:
www.hmis2030.at
- Austrian [National strategy on the social dimension of higher education](#)
- [Website of the European Higher Education Area \(EHEA\)](#)
 - Basic information on topics of EHEA policy
 - Official documents
 - Minutes and agendas of meetings, current meeting documents
- [EUROSTUDENT](#) project on the social dimension of HE in the EHEA