

## Nota Universiteitsraad

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**Aan** : Universiteitsraad

**Van** : College van Bestuur

**Opsteller** : Femke van der Geest (O&O)

**Onderwerp** : Internationalisering in de Masterfase

**Status** : ter instemming

**Behandeling in** : commissie OOS  
universiteitsraad met CvB

d.d. 9 juni 2015  
d.d. 22 juni 2015

### Kern van de inhoud

In de richtlijn onderwijs staat als uitgangspunt in artikel C 2d dat een masterprogramma opleidingsonderdelen bevat die studenten 'een internationale oriëntatie bieden'. In het kader van de herziening masterfase hebben de faculteiten gevraagd om nadere uitwerking van hiervan. Bijgaande toelichting op de richtlijn onderwijs biedt deze uitwerking. Daarnaast dient het 'Book of inspiration', dat geen onderdeel uitmaakt van de toelichting, als praktische handreiking en inspiratie voor docenten en programmacoördinatoren. Die sturen wij u daarom ter informatie ook mee.

Beide stukken zijn besproken met door de vice-decanen aangewezen vertegenwoordigers van faculteiten, met hoofden onderwijs- en studentzaken, met de vice-decanen onderwijs en met een aantal studenten. Ook is er over dit onderwerp een informeel overleg geweest met een afvaardiging van de Universiteitsraad.

### Verzoek aan de universiteitsraad

Het College verzoekt de Universiteitsraad in te stemmen met de "Nadere toelichting op de Richtlijn onderwijs, Thema: Internationalisering".

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The Directive on Education places great emphasis on the internationalisation of study programmes. This clarification aims to give the background and rationale for this emphasis, as well as provide more information on the possible forms this can take. As programmes vary greatly in content, size, and international focus, the directive does not aim to prescribe a blueprint. There is no required number of EC, nor does it dictate the form the international experience should take. Which leaves programmes free to make the choices that are tailored to their situation.

Internationalisation means different things at different levels. For Utrecht University as a whole, it is an important means to achieve several goals:

- adding important, contemporary learning outcomes to student experience;
- mobilising internal intellectual resources;
- enlarging the academic community within which to benchmark our activities;
- increasing institutional strengths through strategic partnerships;
- developing stronger research groups;
- national and international visibility;

### **Benefits at programme level**

Internationalisation can support a number of goals for Utrecht University programmes, both at Bachelor and at Master-level. Cooperation with selected partners abroad can benefit the international profile of the programme or department, and can make the programme more attractive and relevant to both Dutch and international students. Extending research cooperation to education introduces students to international academic environments. But most importantly, international cooperation can enhance the quality of the programme and international and intercultural activities add relevant contemporary learning outcomes for students.

Internationalisation can make an important contribution to the goals set out in the Education Guideline, and as such can be a very important tool in all Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Research shows that international experience not only enriches students' professional and academic lives, but can also promote openness, adaptability and flexibility, and enhance language learning, intercultural skills, self-reliance and self-awareness. The world – and by association the labour market – has seen an increasing pace of globalisation over the last decades. This trend is likely to continue, and the problems posed by it to grow. And while two thirds of employers consider an international experience important for recruitment, almost all of them are looking for transversal skills such as openness to and curiosity about new challenges, problem-solving and decision-making skills, confidence, tolerance towards other personal values and behaviours. Hence creating international experiences for students not only enriches the learning process, but is an essential part of preparing them for the labour market.

### **Education for the future**

The conclusion is that in order to reach our strategic goals, neither Utrecht University as a whole nor study programmes in particular can limit themselves to a national setting. This has long been evident in research, and is becoming more and more apparent in education. In order to prepare students for their next step we need to look (if not go) across borders. Whether students continue on to a master's programme that is taught in English, a PhD position, or a job in an increasingly globalised labour market – international and intercultural skills are a necessity in almost any setting, and this should be reflected in their learning outcomes.

In order to meet the international requirement in the Directive on Education, programmes can choose many different options – some of which are easier to realise than others. The focus in the directive is on Master's programmes, but it should be mentioned here that an international experience is equally relevant in the Bachelor phase.

Internationalising education can include:

- increasing student mobility through summer school participation, student exchange, structured mobility and joint programmes
- creating international experiences for non-mobile students through virtual mobility, international classrooms, internships at international companies or other international/intercultural activities
- defining learning outcomes that reflect the international and intercultural skills that students acquire through these activities
- developing an inclusive culture, valuing and embracing diversity, thereby creating a welcoming environment for international students and staff

The different actions and activities through which these can be achieved are summarised in the 'book of inspiration – internationalising education'.

# Book of inspiration – internationalising education

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## Introduction

The project to renew the masters programmes at Utrecht University places great emphasis on Internationalisation. But what exactly do we mean by that? The first things that often come to mind are teaching courses in English, and sending students abroad. But there is more to it than that – the Dutch Minister of Education emphasised in her [letter on internationalisation](#) to the House of Representatives that international and intercultural competences are a necessity for *all* students.

The term ‘internationalisation’ is often used as if it were a goal that should be achieved, rather than a means to an end. Too easily it becomes about numbers: sending more students abroad. Whereas ‘Asking why students should go abroad should lead to a discussion of how students might acquire some of the same learning if they do not.’ (NAFSA: [Measuring and Assessing Internationalization](#), 2012)

So what is internationalisation a means to? For study programmes, internationalisation can:

- contribute to the quality of education
- add to the relevance of educational programmes
- enhance the international profile of the programme/department
- strengthen research and knowledge output

For students, an international experience at home or abroad can

- promote (inter)cultural knowledge
- add important, contemporary learning outcomes
- foster contact with international academic environments
- help prepare for a ‘glocal’ labour market

## Internationalising learning outcomes

If we mean to prepare our students for the future – whether that future is a Master’s programme, PhD position, or the labour market – international and intercultural skills are indispensable. As many Master’s programmes are taught in English, it is important to equip Bachelor’s students with the skills and competences they need to successfully participate in an international environment. And we should continue to develop those competences during the Master’s phase, as graduates will go on to jobs in academia – by definition an international field – or the labour market, where international and intercultural skills are a necessity even when staying in the Netherlands. Using existing learning outcomes as a starting point and ‘internationalising’ them can be a means to make explicit what is already there, or can be used to rethink the international aspect of a particular course or programme.

International learning outcomes are often divided in international and intercultural competences. Several studies have been done, and definitions are by no means standardised, but in general the following division can be made:

International competences:

- refer to content
- do not require an international setting, and
- can be acquired at home or abroad

whereas intercultural competences:

- refer to the process
- require a diverse international/intercultural group of students
- in which the international/intercultural diversity itself is a topic of study, and
- can be acquired at home or abroad.

## From student mobility to internationalisation at home

Several studies have shown that students with an international experience do better on the job market – a recent [impact study](#) by the European Commission shows that 5 years after graduation, students who participated in Erasmus study or traineeship abroad are 23% less likely to be

unemployed. Considering the current youth unemployment situation in Europe, that is a significant difference. The study also shows that 64% of employers indicate an international experience is important, versus 37% in 2006.

A 2014 [study](#) by the Finnish Center for International Mobility CIMO shows that international experiences build key competencies; in fact, exactly the kind of competencies that employers are looking for, even if they indicate that international experience is not important in their recruitment process:

'In other words, even if the employers do not value international expertise as such, it is still bundled together with many other skills and qualities that employers place great value on.'

Traditionally, studies have shown that students who have been abroad acquire language skills, intercultural competences, broadmindedness and tolerance. This study argues that we should add productivity, resilience, and curiosity to that list. And that in addition to recognising learning outcomes of international mobility, we need to make them more visible.

Numerous studies have clearly shown the benefits of student mobility, and for a long time this has been the main focus of internationalisation activities. In the late 90's however the realisation began to grow that despite this emphasis on sending students abroad, it was still only a small portion of the total student population that was doing so. As the number of incoming students grew, so did the realisation that while mobility is an important aspect of internationalisation, it does not require everyone to be mobile – after all, in this day and age the world is at our doorstep.

At the same time there is a growing awareness that universities have somewhat neglected a dimension of internationalisation in their own sphere: while research is often considered to be international by definition, it is not clear how this reflects on education.

Thus the concept of 'internationalisation at home' was born, initially with a focus on extra-curricular activities, but growing more and more into a fixed part of the curriculum.

Nuffic completed an [inventory](#) (in Dutch) in November of 2014 of the ways in which Dutch institutions of higher education implement internationalisation at home. The result is an overview that can provide inspiration, but in its diversity hopefully also shows that there are many creative and innovative ways in which internationalisation can be integrated and used to reach important goals. On the next pages is a (translated) selection of the options they have found.

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*In this era of increasingly rapid globalisation, the teaching and learning experience for all students must be globally connected, enabling students to develop an understanding of how their subject is viewed and pursued in different parts of the world.* Modernisation of Higher Education, report to the European Commission, 2011

### Part of the programme is offered in a different language

Offering a part of the programme in English (or another language) can create opportunities for an *international classroom*, engaging international staff, and for intercultural learning.

In Bachelor's programmes, offering specific courses in English can help Dutch students prepare for a Master's programme that is offered in English, and it is an opportunity to attract exchange students who may be (or become) interested in pursuing a Master's programme in Utrecht.

In a more elaborate form it also offers an opportunity for developing a shared or complementary curriculum with partner universities, leading to *structured mobility*: a form of exchange in which the programme provides a clear path of study at selected partner institutions, e.g. a minor or specialisation that is not offered at the home institution. Collaboration on the curriculum with partner universities can lead to a more attractive programme, and a higher quality of education. It can be a first step to developing a joint programme.

### Parts of the programme are offered abroad

Students can go abroad for courses, field work, research, an internship or summer school as part of their programme in the Netherlands. This can make the programme more attractive, and by creating a similar offer for students from the partner institution(s), it becomes possible to create an international classroom experience which also benefits students who do not go abroad.

The easiest way to do this is through *student exchange* with partner institutions, more elaborate forms are:

- *structured mobility*, whereby the programme makes it possible for students to take specific courses (i.e. a minor or specialisation) at a selected partner institution,

or

- joint programmes offering a double or joint degree – the icing on the cake when it comes to jointly designing and running a programme. Due to its complexity however it is recommended to start with exchange and/or structured mobility.

### Summer schools

Participation in an international summer school can be seen as internationalisation at home (if in the Netherlands) or as an easy form of mobility, as it is usually short term and takes place in between semesters. Partner institutions abroad often offer summer school courses, and it is worth exploring if and how their offer complements the home curriculum, and whether there are any possibilities to extend the exchange agreement to include summer school courses.

In a more advanced form it can be a means to highlight institutional cooperation in a particular field or programme (such as this [example in Groningen](#)), or it can be used in a joint programme in order to create a community for students studying in the same programme but at different institutions in different countries.

### International classroom

The international classroom is a combination of many activities, involving both mobility and internationalisation at home. It basically comprises a group of students from diverse countries and cultural backgrounds, and the programme places a focus on intercultural and international competences of all participating students. A sense of community is essential in this context, as is a good mix of nationalities and cultural backgrounds.

It should be mentioned however that cultural diversity in a Dutch classroom can of course also be used to develop intercultural competences. Just as students enrolled in a Dutch programme can be involved in an international community within a faculty or graduate school.

*"Internationalisation of the curriculum is 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."* B. Leask (2009)

An important dimension of internationalising the curriculum is the formal appreciation of internationalisation at home activities. This not only encourages serious participation from students, but can provide a means to internationalise the programme content as well.

For many study programmes [competences](#) are formulated in a very generic way. Describing them more specifically and including international skills and competences can help students be better prepared for their future role in society.

### Intercultural skills

Recent years have seen a growing focus on international and intercultural competences as part of the 21st century skills. Aspects that are often addressed are intercultural communication, reflection on one's own cultural values, working in multicultural groups and intercultural sensitivity. These skills can be part of the regular curriculum, or offered in a specific course. You can read about the experiences of the Maastricht school of business and economics in Nuffic's publication '[Studenten internationaliseren in eigen land](#)' (in Dutch), p. 35-40.

### Foreign languages

Enabling students to enhance their language competences, either by offering Academic English modules, by offering Dutch courses for international students to help them prepare for a Dutch labour market, or by encouraging students to learn other foreign languages.

### Focus on an international topic / International comparison or context

Focussing on an international topic, comparative studies, placing the Dutch situation in an international context or vice versa can make students aware of their own cultural context. This is common practise in many university programmes, but the cultural aspect is not always made explicit.

### Explicitly integrating the knowledge and background of (international) students in the curriculum

Actively encouraging (international) students to share their knowledge and experiences to foster understanding between different cultures and backgrounds.

### Virtual and blended mobility

Technical innovations make it possible to create an international learning environment without students having to leaving the classroom. Projects can be done in international student teams, whereby each bring their own specific knowledge to the group. Virtual mobility is often combined with regular classroom activities (blended learning).

Online education and/or virtual mobility can also be used to prepare prospective international Master's students.

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## Work and/or research experience for students

*"One of the main goals of internationalised higher education is to provide the most relevant education to students, who will be the citizens, entrepreneurs and scientists of tomorrow."* OECD, Approaches to Internationalisation and Their Implications for Strategic Management and Institutional Practice, 2011

### Activities involving international companies

Examples are: guest lectures, company visits, research projects, internships, an advisory board with international companies, skills workshops, etc.

### Involvement in capacity building projects

Students can actively participate in capacity building projects that the faculty or programme is involved in.

### Involvement in international conferences

Involving students in the organisation of international conferences, either together with staff, and/or students from international universities.

### International extra-curricular activities

Social or academic activities organised by study or student associations involving both home and international students. Examples are an international week, buddy programmes, international case competitions, excursions abroad, or volunteer work in developing countries.

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### Staff

*"More than 70% of the staff agreed that the most important aspect of [staff] mobility was the increase in their knowledge of good practices and skills to the benefit of their home HEI. Of the academic staff, 81% observed beneficial effects on the quality of teaching and on multi-disciplinary and cross-organisational cooperation in teaching, 92% saw effects on international cooperation, and 69% observed a positive impact on research opportunities."* Erasmus Impact Study, 2014

The international and intercultural competences of staff members (such as fluency in English, having the skills to create a learning environment that fosters intercultural communication, international experience) are essential for the success of *internationalisation at home* activities. Staff mobility can be a great tool in increasing international opportunities, from giving (and receiving) guest lectures for an international perspective, exploring options for student exchange (semester or summer school), comparing curricula for possible structured mobility or a joint programme, or creating visibility for a Master's programme.

Research cooperation often leads to visits to and from other institutions. It can be interesting to look for opportunities to extend these visits to education – a guest lecture by an expert in the field can provide important international context for students.

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### Tools for internationalisation

#### General Tools

- Mapping Internationalisation - MINT  
MINT is a self-evaluation tool that results in an overview of the different goals and means that are relevant to internationalisation. It analyses facilities, quality assurance and policy outcomes, and can be used at institutional level, at faculty level, or by individual programmes. MINT is an online tool developed by Nuffic in cooperation with institutions of higher education. More information is available at [www.nuffic.nl/mint](http://www.nuffic.nl/mint).
- Bijzonder kenmerk internationalisering / Certificate for the Quality of Internationalisation  
Programmes and institutions can have their efforts in the area of internationalisation recognised by the "bijzonder kenmerk internationalisering (BKI)" of the NVAO (Accreditation organization of the Netherlands and Flanders) The criteria for awarding the BKI to a programme are centred on learning outcomes. Based on the definitions of the programme for international and intercultural learning outcomes, the NVAO establishes whether these goals are being met. The BKI exists for programmes since 2010, and for institutions since 2012. In total, 33 programmes and 2 institutions have obtained a BKI. See [www.nvao.net/bijzonder\\_kwaliteitskenmerk\\_internationalisering](http://www.nvao.net/bijzonder_kwaliteitskenmerk_internationalisering)  
The website is in Dutch but also refers to the [CeQuint](#) project which currently develops the European Certificate for the Quality of Internationalisation

#### Specific tools

- [Erasmus student mobility grants](#) can help fund mobility to EU partners such as exchange, structured mobility or (research) internships.
- The [Handleiding Joint Programmes](#) (in Dutch) is available on intranet and provides useful information on setting up structured mobility and joint programmes (double or joint degree).
- Erasmus+ joint master's programme offers the opportunity for prestigious new double/multiple/joint degree programmes to obtain funding. See information on [intranet](#) and on the website of the [European Commission](#).



- [Utrecht Summer School](#) has a lot of experience and expertise in setting up summer courses for diverse target groups (e.g. students, teachers, PhD students).
- The University of Groningen has done several pilot projects with regard to the international classroom and shares this information [online](#).
- Utrecht's [Educate-IT programme](#) is developing an online module about blended learning that will include options for internationalisation. As soon as it becomes available the link will be added here.
- [Elevate](#) is a platform for online courses. Currently the focus is on health/life sciences, but courses are being developed in other areas as well. Includes a course on '[Teaching an online course](#)'.
- An overview of several good practices in internationalisation at programme level can be found on the [NVAO website](#).

#### Resources for staff development

- the Utrecht University Centre for Teaching and Learning (COLUU) offers courses for teachers: '[teaching in the international classroom](#)'
- EP Nuffic has developed an online module '[Leeruitkomsten voor Internationalisation at Home](#)' (free of charge, in Dutch) to help teachers develop international learning outcomes in their courses
- [Erasmus Staff training & teaching mobility](#) can help fund visits to EU partner institutions for training or teaching purposes
- [Teaching Academy Utrecht University](#) (website in Dutch, activities also in English) regularly offers workshops and seminars by and for teachers, including on internationalisation.