Vilnius University

GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION
OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Vilnius University (hereinafter, University) has stated in its Mission the aim to "[...] strengthen the learning and creative potential of Lithuania and the world, foster academic and other moral and social values, and educate active and responsible citizens and social leaders of Lithuania [...]", while in its vision the University sees itself "among the leading universities of Europe". In accordance with these aspirations, the University has specified strategic priorities and directions in its Strategic Plan to help achieve the planned objectives. Effective integration of an international dimension into studies at the University would contribute to the achievement of strategic directions specified in the University's Strategic Plan.

Internationalisation of teaching and learning is understood and defined as the purposeful integration of an international, intercultural or global dimension into the aims and functions of higher education, and the implementation process that aims to improve the quality of studies and research for all students and staff, while also contributing significantly to societal progress[1]. This definition aims to expand the concept of teaching and learning internationalisation by including into it not only mobility, which affects a relatively small part of the academic community[2], but other activities as well, and to create conditions that would ensure the implementation of a comprehensive internationalisation in all activities undertaken by the University's community.

The importance of curriculum internationalisation, which for the purposes of this document is defined as including an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, implementation, and outcomes of curricula[3], must be emphasised.

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[1] Knight, Jane (2004). An Internationalization Remodelled: Definition, Approaches and Rationales. Journal of Studies in Higher Education, 8, 5-31. De Wit, Hans, Fiona Hunter (2015). The Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe, International Higher Education, 83: Special Issue, 2–3.

[2] Mobility has been the main form of internationalisation emphasised by the University so far (Senate decision No. S-2009-01-03 of 27 January 2009 "The Plan for Improving the International Activity of Vilnius University").

[3] Leask, B. (2009). Using formal and informal curricula to improve interactions between home and international students. Journal of Studies in Higher Education, Vol. 13, No. 2, 205-221.

The study programmes taught at the University should foster **global competences[4]** by emphasising the importance of **intercultural competence[5]** through programme content and consequently enabling graduates to communicate and work in various intercultural contexts. The importance of intercultural competence is also emphasised in the documents of the European Commission and Council[6], UNESCO[7], OECD[8], the World Economic Forum[9] and in the national strategic document "Lithuania 2030"[10]. Guidelines for Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning at Vilnius University (further, Guidelines) were prepared based on the aforementioned documents, the Priorities of Promoting Internationalisation in Higher Education for 2019 – 2020 established by the Minister of Education, Science and Health[11], the 2016 analysis of the situation of international studies at the University, and the conclusions of focus group discussions under the strategic project *Developing Master's Studies in Foreign Languages*.

The aim of the Guidelines is to identify and define internationalisation activities of teaching and learning relevant to the University and the conditions necessary for this to happen, as well as to propose a methodology for evaluating the scope of teaching and learning internationality (further, Methodology) that could be used when developing and/or improving study programmes, attracting foreign students, ensuring staff competence and maintaining a sustainable study environment. It must be emphasised that **internationalisation is not a goal in itself. Rather, it is a mean of improving quality that, if implemented successfully, not only improves the overall study quality at the University[12]**, but also grows the University's reputation in the international higher education sphere. When implementing internationalisation activities of teaching and learning, University staff should adhere to the concept of academic hospitality, according to which interaction between different cultural groups is based on mutual openness, the recognition of the uniqueness of the other as an integral part of our interdependent existence, and the realisation that learning is an interrelated activity[13].

> **" Internationalisation is not a goal in itself. It is a mean of improving quality. "**

[4] OECD (2018), Dimensions of Global Competence, PISA Handbook.
https://www.oecd.org/pisa/Handbook-PISA-2018-Global-Competence.pdf
[5] Deardorff, D. K. (2006) , The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalisation at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266.
[6] Communication from the Commission "EUROPE2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". Brussels, 2010; Communication from the Commission "On a renewed agenda for higher education". Brussels, 2017; Council of the European Union. The Rome Declaration. Rome, 2017; Communication from the Commission "Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies". Brussels, 2018.
[7] Future Competences and the Future of Curriculum: A Global Reference for Curricula Transformation. International Bureau of Education, UNESCO.
[8] OECD (2017), OECD Skills Outlook 2017: Skills and Global Value Chains, OECD Publishing, Paris.
https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264273351-en
[9] World Economic Forum (2018). The Future of Jobs Report. Insight Report.
[10] Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania No XI-2015 of 15 May 2012 Concerning approval of the National Progress Strategy "Strategy for the Progress of Lithuania 'LITHUANIA 2030'".
[11] Order No V-364 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of 5 April 2019 "On the approval of priorities of promoting internationalisation in higher education for 2019–2020".
[12] European Parliament. (2015). Internationalisation of Higher Education. Brussels: Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, European Parliament.
[13] Bennett, J. B. (2003). Academic Life: Hospitality, Ethics and Spirituality. Bolton, MA: Anker.

INTERNATIONALISATION

Budget

Institutional, project-based (EU and other national and international programs).

Research

Research, integration of research into study content, knowledge transfer.

Infrastruc-ture

Material and didactic resources, information, student dormitories.

Studies

Studies developing global competencies

International academic staff community

International student community

Sustainable study environment

Strategic partnership

International memberships, alliances, cooperation agreements.
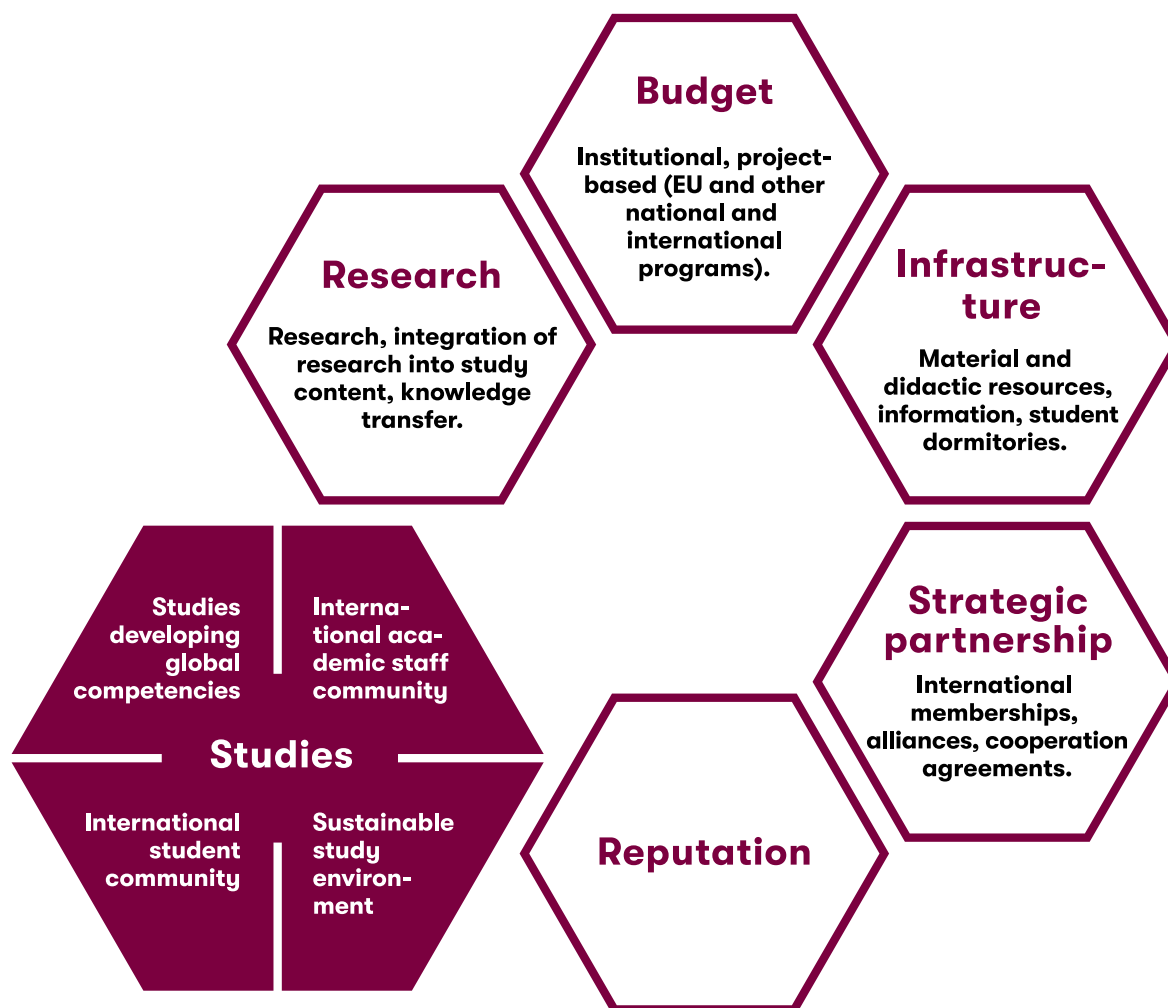
Reputation

Image 1 A scheme of internationalisation at Vilnius University

Guidelines for Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning should become an integral part of the University's internationalisation strategy, which would encompass not only studies, but also research, infrastructure, services, and strategic partnership, while all of University's activities would have an international dimension.

The Guidelines outline four priority areas of study internationalization, while the Methodology, which is an integral part of the Guidelines, identifies self-evaluation criteria and indicators that will help core academic units (further, CAUs) to evaluate the current situation with internationality, formulate strategic aims for internationalisation of teaching and learning, prepare operational plans and implement them in line with the self-evaluation. The outcomes of self-evauations will be used for the planning and evaluation of current or planned internationalisation activities, as well as for their funding from the Teaching and Learning Internationalisation Fund and the spread of good practice.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR INTERNATIONA-LISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. STUDIES THAT DEVELOP GLOBAL COMPETENCES

The aim is to increase the competitiveness of study programmes and to internationalise their content.

The study programme portfolio of the University is diverse, attractive, and open to the international community.

Particular general and subject-specific competence blocks, showing the relevance of studies, are integrated commonly and into specific study fields.

The content of study programmes reflects international standards, globalization processes, contemporary tendencies; the programmes develop global competences[14] and are based on international literature; interdisciplinary opportunities are utilized.

The intercultural competence of students is developed throughout the entire study process at all levels of studies.

Study flexibility is implemented in various formats.

Active study (self)evaluation methods are implemented in studies; learning is based on diversity reflection; there are conditions for learning from diverse experiences in a multicultural environment.

International social partners are actively involved in study processes.

Innovative ICT solutions are implemented in the study process to develop digital competences and reduce physical distance by sharing information through various forms of technology in a diverse community and creating a community without borders.

International research or science promotion activity, generation, implementation and dissemination of innovative ideas and socially responsible use of expertise and subject knowledge are integral parts of the study process.

[14] Future Competences and the Future of Curriculum: A Global Reference for Curricula Transformation. International Bureau of Education, UNESCO http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/resources/future_competences_and_the_future_of_curriculum.pdf

2. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNITY

The aim is to increase targeted admissions of international students and to properly integrate them into the University's environment.

Target international marketing of content is conducted to ensure that the University attracts and admits motivated and able students from abroad.

Scholarships are available for exceptionally talented foreign (non-EU) students to partially or fully cover their tuition fees.

Various student mobility opportunities are available and encouraged.

Learning at the University happens in mixed student group and part-time or full-time students from abroad are integrated into common groups if the study programme or the subject (module) is delivered in English (or in another foreign language).

The student's scientific, public and cultural activities, as well as organisations that are active at the University, have an international dimension, and conditions are there for foreign students to get involved in these activities.

The learning of languages is available and ensured.

3. INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC STAFF COMMUNITY

The aim is to foster a community of academic staff that would be characterised by its internationality.

Foreign lecturers and partner lecturers from multinational companies, institutions and organisations are active members of the University's academic community.

The same qualification requirements are applied to foreign lecturers as to Lithuanian ones, and they have the same working conditions.

Teaching staff have great teaching competence, are open to innovations and committed to constant learning. They offer content based on latest developments in their field, apply diverse and innovative study methods, and are ready and able to work in a multicultural environment.

Teaching staff are active participants of mobility programmes.

It is ensured that teaching staff constantly improve their competence.

Teaching staff attestation and hiring procedures are transparent and emphasise the ability to work in an international environment.

4. SUSTAINABLE STUDY ENVIRONMENT

The aim is to create a bilingual environment of study information and services.

Suitable and equal working and study conditions, including material infrastructure, are created for all members of the University community.

Relevant and necessary information is published in Lithuanian and English (or other foreign languages); information is constantly updated, understandable and easily accessible. For persons with accessibility needs, such information is presented in a way that meets their needs.

Academic and non-academic staff are able to work in a multicultural environment and pay constant attention to communication and services directed at foreign students and teaching staff.

The University establishes and maintains relationships with target social partners and alumni in Lithuania and abroad.