

# Internationalising higher education: framework for action

Consultation document – March 2014



Dear colleague,

We are pleased to invite you to help shape Higher Education Academy's (HEA) draft strategic framework entitled *Internationalising higher education: framework for action*. The title reflects a focus on the process, rather than seeing internationalisation as an end in itself.

The framework has been designed to inspire and assist the sector, to address the need for national guidance in the UK. The proposed text for the framework is offered to incite dialogue and discussion. We invite feedback on all aspects of the framework including the aspirations that underpin it, its content and the language used. It is intended to be relevant to multiple audiences. We therefore welcome contributions to this consultation from anyone with an interest or involvement in the process of internationalising higher education. We wish to ensure that the final version of the framework is as appropriate and helpful for the sector as possible.

This circular contains background information on why and how the framework has been developed and explains why and how we are consulting the sector at this stage in the process. The final version of the framework will be launched at the [HEA's Annual Conference](#) (2-3 July 2014, Birmingham).

If you would like further information regarding this consultation document or consultation process, please email [internationalisation@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:internationalisation@heacademy.ac.uk)

We look forward to receiving your feedback on this draft framework.

Kind regards

Helen

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## This consultation document is structured around the following questions:

[Why is a strategic framework for internationalising HE needed?](#)

[Where has the \*Internationalising HE: framework for action\* come from?](#)

[How can I take part in the consultation process?](#)

[Why are we consulting and who should respond?](#)

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## Why is a strategic framework for internationalising HE needed?

There is a lack of national guidance in the UK available to HE providers and associated bodies on what it means to internationalise HE. This strategic framework is offered as an enhancement tool for the HE sector to promote consistency and coherence. It offers a shared point of reference and common language to discuss and shape practice, policy and partnerships. It can be used to prompt reflection and act as a catalyst for change.

We know that internationalisation is a key agenda, yet there are different understandings and definitions of what it entails. Our research shows that the student learning experience is not always foregrounded relative to the need to recruit international students and develop new international business. Whilst there are clear financial and reputational benefits of internationalisation, learning and teaching also has much to gain from, as well as contribute to, the agenda. This framework seeks to raise the profile of learning, teaching and research within the agenda, ultimately seeking to enhance the quality of the student learning experience, in line with the HEA's core mission. It pertains to students coming to the UK to study, for those studying UK programmes offshore and for all students in promoting a global experience.

## Where has the *Internationalising HE: framework for action* come from?

The HEA has invested significantly in the internationalisation agenda, funding a range of initiatives and projects, including through its Teaching Development Grants, Connections Pilot Scheme and Workshop and Seminar programme. We directed the Teaching International Student project from 2009-11 and have widely disseminated resources arising from this work. Following a synthesis of HEA funded work we convened a learning and teaching summit. This took place in July 2013 and involved 30 national and international specialists. The purpose of the summit was to identify a set of principles for internationalising HE and the associated implications of these for policy and practice, arising from this knowledge base.

This event was driven by a vision, set by the HEA, to promote a high quality, equitable and global experience for all students studying UK programmes across the world. The principles created are now represented in the framework as the 'activity strands', alongside the underpinning values and considerations of the implications for practice for different stakeholders.

## How can I take part in the consultation process?

You can engage with the consultation for the framework through the following methods:

- Online survey [https://surveys.heacademy.ac.uk/internationalising\\_he](https://surveys.heacademy.ac.uk/internationalising_he) (open until 9 May 2014);
- [PVC network meeting](#) (7-8 May).

## Why are we consulting and who should respond?

We are consulting the sector at this critical point in the framework's development to ensure that it is most relevant, informative and engaging to those who will use it. We have particularly targeted those with an expressed interest in the agenda, including sector bodies and student agencies, as well as networks of research and practice, discipline and pro-vice chancellors.

We are keen to hear from a diverse range of individuals, higher education providers, sector agencies, networks, professional and regulatory bodies, employers, from across the UK as well as from overseas, in particular transnational partners. Therefore, we would be grateful if you would inform any parties that you think might be interested in engaging in this consultation and helping us shape this national strategic framework.

## What is the scope of the consultation?

We are consulting on all aspects of the framework. The structure of the framework is modelled on the familiar sector-owned UK Professional Standards Framework, whereby it identifies separate strands of activity, as well as the underpinning values and the knowledge required to implement them effectively. Putting these into practice is recognised to be complex, with wide reaching and long-term implications. The second part of the framework therefore poses some key questions organised around the practical implications for organisations, people (individuals) and curriculum in higher education.

## What is the deadline for responses and what happens after that?

The survey will be open until 9 May 2014, following which we will analyse and synthesise the responses, before reviewing and revising the framework content accordingly. We will then work with our communications team and the designers to create the final version of the framework, which will be published in July 2014 at the HEA annual conference.

## Contact details

Please send all enquiries and comments to [internationalisation@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:internationalisation@heacademy.ac.uk)

## Appendix A: draft text for the framework

# Internationalising higher education: framework for action

This document is a collation of the proposed text for the framework and is structured around the following sections:

[Introduction](#)

[Aims and objectives of the framework](#)

[Why is the internationalising HE framework pertinent to everyone?](#)

[Aspirations for the framework](#)

[Potential applications](#)

[Activity strands](#)

[Knowledge](#)

[Values](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[Operational implications](#)

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## Introduction

The Higher Education Academy's (HEA) strategic framework for internationalising higher education (HE) has been developed in response to requests from the sector and in acknowledgement of the need for national guidance in the UK. It has been designed to inspire and assist in enhancing HE policy and practice, recognising internationalisation as a process rather than an end in itself. This is reflected in its content and style, in being aspirational as well as practical.

The framework is driven by a vision of promoting a high quality, equitable and global learning experience for all students studying UK programmes, irrespective of their geographical location. It pertains to students coming to the UK to study, those studying UK programmes offshore and all students having a global learning experience. It focuses attention on learning, teaching and research, in line with the HEA's core mission. A collective commitment is required to internationalise HE, hence the framework is designed to be relevant for multiple audiences. Ultimately, internationalising HE will benefit all students, all staff and the wider society. The framework has been developed for the UK sector, but may also have relevance for HE systems across the world.

The framework emerges from the HEA's learning and teaching summit involving national and international specialists in July 2013. This was a first step in seeking to build on effective existing practice and developments. A collaborative approach has been an essential aspect of the development of the framework to ensure it is most relevant, informative and engaging to those who will use it.

The structure of the framework is modelled on the familiar sector-owned UK Professional Standards Framework, whereby it identifies separate strands of activity, as well as the underpinning values and the knowledge required to implement them effectively. The first section provides suggestions on what is required to internationalise HE. Putting these into practice is recognised to be complex, with wide reaching and long term implications. The second part of the framework therefore poses some key questions organised around the practical implications for organisations, people (individuals) and curriculum in higher education. There are a number of contexts in which these may be used to prompt reflection and act as a catalyst for change, such as curriculum (re)validation, staff development or strategic planning. The questions provide a shared point of reference and common language to discuss and shape practice, policy and partnerships.

## Aims and objectives of the framework

The framework aims to **inspire and assist** the sector in the process of internationalising higher education, facilitating the achievement of a high quality, equitable and global learning experience for all students studying UK HE programmes, irrespective of their geographical location.

The framework is designed as an enhancement tool to achieve the following objectives:

**To recognise and build on the quality and variety** of internationalisation policy and practice in higher education.

To foster **collegial approaches** to education, research and partnership that transcend national and international boundaries.

To acknowledge the on-going institutional and individual **roles and responsibilities** required to realise the internationalising of higher education.

## Why is the internationalising HE framework pertinent to everyone?

Political, economic, social, educational and technological systems across the world are becoming more global in their outlook as well as more internationally connected. Higher education in the UK is responding to these drivers, looking to prepare their graduates to live and work in, as well as contribute to, a globalised society. To be internationally competitive, HE providers have been mindful of the need to ensure that their degrees are relevant, current and attractive to students throughout the world. The staff and student population of UK HE is increasingly international. Furthermore, UK degrees are now offered across the world and as a result, international partnership and collaboration is commonplace.

Internationalisation is a multi-faceted agenda. Whilst there may be different understandings and definitions of what this agenda entails, it is commonly regarded as a process by which we engage with and learn from the world. Whilst there are clear financial and reputational benefits of internationalisation, learning and teaching also has much to gain from, as well as contribute to, the process. It is an agenda that could arguably have an impact upon everyone and everything in HE.

In addressing these key issues, the *Internationalising higher education: framework for action* deliberately targets multiple audiences in recognition of the necessity for a shared commitment and combined action to truly internationalise higher education. The information is organized into three key audiences:

- **Organisations** – at the level of the collective – including HE providers as a whole, particular faculties/departments, sector agencies, professional and regulatory bodies, unions, and employers, amongst others. This is concerned with the communal or joint aspects of higher education design and delivery such as policy, systems and procedures, which impact upon and influences both practice and experience.
- **People** – at the level of the individual – including all staff, students, employees. This is concerned with individuals' attitudes, knowledge and practice, which impact upon the learning experience.
- **Curriculum** – at the level of learning and teaching – including the formal curriculum, whether at the level of programme or units of study such as modules, and informal curriculum. This is concerned with the content of the curriculum as well as the approach, which impact upon staff, students and the wider society.

The framework is an enhancement tool aiming to inspire and assist in the development of policy and practice related to learning, teaching and associated research. It provides national guidance, to build on, and complement, the quality and variety of existing strategies and approaches to internationalisation within the sector.

## Aspirations for the framework

In recognising learning as socially situated, the framework aspires to having regard for:

- HE as a global community, in which all members are international;
- the convergence of cultures and individual diversities in any given context;
- the continual enhancement of the activity, knowledge and values required for internationalising HE;
- a shared responsibility for internationalising HE between organisations, people and curriculum;
- an embedded and holistic approach, covering all functions and services;
- collegial and collaborative ways of working;

- the whole academic lifecycle, from pre-entry, enrolment, induction through to departure and beyond;
- variations in interpretation and application, which are relevant to different contexts.

## Potential applications

There are a range of potential ways in which the *Internationalising higher education: framework for action*, can be used as an enhancement tool for higher education:

- a self-reflective audit tool;
- a communication tool;
- a staff development tool;
- a curriculum review tool;
- a performance review tool;
- a benchmarking tool;
- a planning tool.

## Activity strands

**Developing an inclusive ethos** – enhanced by, and appropriate for, the diversity of the academic community.

**Fostering intercultural engagement** – empathy, sociability and sensitivity to cultural diversity.

**Enabling a global learning experience** – integrated global perspectives and opportunities for cultural immersion and language acquisition, through inward and outward mobility.

**Facilitating a global academic community** – international knowledge exchange, networking and collaboration.

**Embedding global social responsibility** – an ethical approach to learning and teaching as a means to address societal challenges and inequalities.

## Knowledge

**Diverse cultures:** understand the diversity of cultural and social capital within the academic community as an asset that can enrich learning, teaching and research.

**Different cultural practices:** understand, appreciate and work with varying cultural approaches to learning, teaching and research.

**Effective intercultural relations:** understand different cultural, professional and personal ways of interacting, communicating and working with others.

**International contexts of higher education:** understand the relevance of different international contexts to your institution, professional responsibilities and subject area.

**Knowledge creation and exchange:** understand various means of creating, contesting and exchanging knowledge within and across the global academic community.

**Global society:** understand the role that the higher education community can play in contributing to and shaping the global society and addressing its challenges.

## Values

**Equity:** approaches to, and opportunities for participation and success are practiced with parity and fairness.

**Ethics:** learning, teaching and research are conducted in an ethical manner.

**Respect:** individual, cultural and linguistic diversity is acknowledged, valued and nurtured.

**Openness:** different ideas and ways of working across cultures and learning contexts are embraced willingly.

**Reciprocity:** knowledge, ideas and resources are mutually generated and exchanged within and across cultures and intellectual traditions.

**Empowerment:** global knowledge, skills and attributes are encouraged and enabled.

## Responsibilities

To contribute towards internationalising HE, **organisations** (including HE providers, agencies, professional and regulatory bodies and employers), **can lead and inspire** the development of:

- a global vision, jointly owned by its community;
- an inclusive culture, upholding shared values and embracing diversity;
- a shared commitment across the academic community;
- an embedded and flexible approach across all services and functions;
- collegiality within and across local, national, and international contexts.

To contribute towards internationalising higher education, **all people** including all staff, students, senior managers, and employees, as individuals, **can take responsibility** for the:

- development of a global understanding, social responsibility and mindset;
- realisation of shared values and promotion of diversity;
- utilisation and development of ethical and flexible approaches to learning, teaching and research;
- creation and uptake of experiential learning opportunities to build social and cultural capital;
- use of reciprocal and collaborative ways of working within and across local, national, and international contexts.

To contribute towards internationalising HE, **the design of curriculum**, including all HE programmes and associated units of study (modules, courses), as well as the co-curricular, **can be mindful of a responsibility to:**

- facilitate global thinking, recruitment, mobility and collaboration;
- keep informed of relevant global trends and developments.



- have in place systems to monitor and respond to demographic changes in the HE community;
- generate data to benchmark and evidence the impact of associated activity on practice;

## Operational implications

### Organisations

#### *To what extent are you...*

- Ensuring all functions are clear about their roles and responsibilities in jointly contributing towards internationalising the organisation and higher education more broadly?
- Celebrating the cultural diversity and international achievements of the HE community?
- Reviewing and adapting policy, processes and systems to ensure international collaborations are facilitated and discrimination and/or barriers to participation and success are addressed?
- Resourcing the development of operational systems and procedures that facilitate internationalising higher education?
- Encouraging inter-cultural experiences and the development of partnerships and collaborations within relevant institutional policy and strategy, as a means to facilitating international learning?
- Devolving leadership to programme providers and recipients to be visionary in their approach to internationalising higher education and inspire others to take action?
- Providing, signposting and promoting a diverse range of developmental opportunities in the transition into, through and beyond HE, to enable the whole community to fully contribute to the internationalising of higher education?
- Using reward and recognition systems to value and motivate individuals' contribution to internationalising the organisation or higher education more broadly?

### People

#### *To what extent are you...*

- Creating and seeking on-going personal and professional learning opportunities to develop global and cultural understanding through, for example, participation in international networks, conferences, groups, courses, festivals, cultural events, and travel?
- Drawing on diverse individuals' learning histories, narratives and experiences, within the local and wider communities of the organisation, as part of intercultural learning?
- Enhancing an understanding of the academic benefits and value of contributing to, or participating in, activities associated with the process of internationalising higher education?

- Seeking opportunities to understand the variety of social, discipline, and cultural contexts that underpin what is learned and how, in order to incorporate and learn from different perspectives?
- Critically reflecting upon personal prejudices, biases and assumptions and how they are manifested into practice and modify accordingly?
- Using flexible approaches that appreciate and respect individual differences in knowledge, education and culture?
- Contributing to international scholarly activity and knowledge exchange, associated with internationalising higher education?
- Leading and supporting others to reflect on, and engage in, scholarly, experiential and lifelong learning as part of the process of internationalising higher education?

## **Curriculum**

### ***To what extent are you...***

- Embedding and debating global and local perspectives in the design and delivery of the formal and informal curriculum?
- Being proactive in developing inclusive learning outcomes, practices and/or attitudes appropriate for diverse societies, cultures, or individuals?
- Providing and promoting a range of accessible opportunities for intercultural learning or work experiences, within both the formal and informal curriculum?
- Being flexible in the design and structure of curriculum (such as timetabling, timing and format of assessments, start/end dates, induction) to facilitate international recruitment, mobility and collaboration?
- Adapting the content, pace and modes of delivery and assessment to the learning context?
- Facilitating on-going dialogue and partnerships, in the design and delivery of the formal and informal curriculum, between those from different cultural and educational backgrounds?
- Celebrating and utilising the diversity of the academic community (whether differences in cultural and educational backgrounds, country of origin or languages spoken) as a key learning resource?