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POLICY FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

2024

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,Preamble

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published a *'Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa'* (DHET, 2020) for the purpose of providing high-level principles and guidelines; to set broad parameters; and to provide a national framework for internationalisation of higher education (HE) within which higher education institutions (HEIs) can develop and align their institutional internationalisation policies and strategies.

The University of Limpopo (UL) as one of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa subscribes to internationalisation as one of the pillars to enhance teaching and learning, research, community engagement and staff and student development towards being global citizens. UL is driven by the pursuit of finding solutions for Africa through development of knowledge, innovation and production of high calibre researchers and graduates with a unique institutional culture based upon the values it espouses. UL's vision is geared towards transformation and being a leading African University focused on the development needs of its students, staff and communities and epitomising academic excellence and innovativeness. To this end, the aim is to ensure that UL is one of the top study destinations for researchers and students from both the African continent as well as the international arena. UL commits to developing curricula that are locally and globally relevant, to create international engagement opportunities for its staff and students, to share its expertise, knowledge, and culture, to educate international students particularly from Southern African Development Communities (SADC) and beyond and to widening researchers' international experience and partnerships.

1. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

In this policy framework any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997) has the same meaning, unless the context otherwise indicates.

1.1 Internationalisation It is accepted that it is not possible to define internationalisation in its broader contexts as by its very nature, it is a constantly evolving phenomenon. It is closely related to the dynamic process

of globalisation. The key concept of “inter-nation” implies a relationship between and among countries, people, systems and cultures.

Internationalisation includes but is not limited to:

- 1.1.1 **curriculum development** that encompasses international dimensions and ensures that students are exposed to comparative perspectives and contemporary developments in their fields internationally,
 - 1.1.2 the cultivation of **international partnerships** that enrich the quality of research and debate,
 - 1.1.3 **teaching and learning** that embraces innovative methodology, new technologies and international academic exchanges to enrich and enhance the learning experience,
 - 1.1.4 seeking opportunities for **international mobility of staff and students**,
 - 1.1.5 participation in **global networks** and conferences,
 - 1.1.6 “**internationalisation at home**” which promotes and values diversity and nurtures a culture where everyone feels valued, is curious and respectful of others and actively engages in socially responsible, inclusive activities.
- 1.2 Internationalisation at Home** means the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, *within domestic learning environments*. Internationalisation at Home focuses on all students reaping the benefits of international higher education, *not just those who are mobile*.
- 1.3 Internationalisation of higher education** means an intentional or steered process to integrate or infuse intercultural, international and global dimensions in higher education; to advance the goals, functions and delivery of higher education and thus to enhance the quality of education and research.
- 1.4 Internationalisation of the curriculum** is the incorporation of 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 programme of study.

- 1.5 International student** means an individual registered as a student in a public or private higher education institution in a country other than their country of citizenship. It also includes students on short-term mobility programmes.
- 1.6 Higher education institution** means any institution that provides higher education on a fulltime, part-time or distance basis and which is (a) established or deemed to be established as a public higher education institution under Higher Education Act; (b) declared as a public higher education institution under the Higher Education Act; or (c) registered or conditionally registered as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act.
- 1.7 Student mobility** refers to the movement of students between national territories for academic and related purposes and it can take the form of inbound mobility and outbound mobility.
- 1.8 International Staff:** Staff who require a work permit in order to work in South Africa.
- 1.9 Cross-border collaborative qualifications**
- 1) Type 1: Co-badged degrees or qualifications** are the result of collaborative or partnership programmes in terms of which a part of the curriculum is offered by a partner(s), but where the degree is (a) accredited by the relevant QA authority in the country in which the enrolling institution is located, and (b) awarded by the enrolling institution only. The degree-awarding higher education institution recognises the contribution of one or more other institutions by a reference on the degree certificate, which may include the name(s) and/or badge(s) of the other partner(s).
 - 2) Type 2: Joint degrees or qualifications** are collaborative arrangements involving two or more South African institutions, together with international partners, in consortia agreements of institutions offering shared degree

programmes. The degree is awarded by an agreement of the partner institutions on successful completion of a jointly offered single study programme by two (or more) higher education institutions. If, for any reason, the partners cannot come to a joint decision to award the joint degree, none of the partners may then proceed to award the degree as a single-institution degree outside of the agreement. Upon completion of the study programme, the student is awarded as a single certificate issued and **signed jointly** by the authorised officers of the two (or more) higher education institutions involved in the programme.

1.10 Cotutelle means an agreement between a South African HEI and a partner institution, the candidate and the candidate's supervisors, entered into within a collaboration or partnership and providing for the joint supervision of the candidate for a doctoral degree and regulating enrolment, supervision and evaluation of the candidate and the way in which a degree or qualification will be awarded.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to

- 2.1 articulate UL's aspirations for internationalisation, which are central to its understanding of itself, the environment it operates in and its vision, mission and motto.
- 2.2 provide an Institution wide framework within which Faculties and Support Units can develop and align their internationalisation strategies and activities.
- 2.3 provide legitimacy to and guidance on activities related to internationalisation at UL.

3. RATIONALE

- 3.1 The rationale for the internationalisation of academic activities and for establishing partnerships has various dimensions. UL's rationale behind internationalisation is to:
- 3.1.1. create platform for staff and students to contribute to the international body of knowledge,
 - 3.1.2. expose the international world to the unique research, knowledge, culture and diversity of students and staff,
 - 3.1.3. advance the quality of academic offerings, research, and community engagement initiatives,
 - 3.1.4. benefit society and communities through exposure of students and staff to international education, research, cultures, and alternative ways of bringing about development,
 - 3.1.5. position UL, its students, and staff (academic and support) to be competitive in a globalised world.

Scope

This policy applies to all Faculties, Administration and Support service units and students of the University.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

As a University that seeks to find solutions for Africa, to radically transform itself and actively respond to developmental needs of its communities through partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders, it is key that UL recognises its location in the SADC, appreciates the value of its relationship with other countries beyond South Africa while acknowledging that collaboration opportunities anywhere else in the world are crucial and relevant to achieving its mission. Globalisation and recently COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the way in which countries in general and institutions of higher learning in particular operate and engage to enhance their development. In recognition of this, the University strongly supports internationalisation as an essential element of quality higher education, research, community engagement and staff and student development and capacity building.

4.1 Policy Objectives

A key goal of internationalisation at UL is to broaden the worldview of staff, students, and graduates; leverage internationalisation opportunities to enhance teaching and learning and research and provide unique experiences and knowledge to the global world partnerships and collaboration. This gives effect to the vision, mission and motto of the University by being intentional in its endeavor of institutionalising and coordinating its internationalisation efforts in order to contribute to the development of students, graduates and staff for the benefit of the broader community that it serves.

UL recognises that a commitment to internationalisation has implications for curricula, teaching methodologies, research collaboration, administration, student recruitment and selection, induction, orientation and promotion of staff, resource mobilisation, marketing, experiential learning through student and staff mobility, quality review, budget, communication and all aspects of institutional culture. This policy therefore aims to ensure that:

- 4.1.1. All decisions regarding the curriculum, teaching and learning and research agreements, staff and student mobility, and international projects are guided by considerations of potential for academic excellence, relationship with the global world as well as the potential for personal growth.
- 4.1.2. Internationalisation at UL develops within the framework provided by policies, strategies and laws at the higher education sector. Important documents include: The SADC Protocol on Education and Training, especially Articles 7 and 8 (2006); the Code of Ethical Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by South African Higher Education Institutions, International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA, 2017) and the Policy Framework on internationalisation of higher education in South Africa- (DHET, 2020).

- 4.1.3. Special attention is paid to developing relations with institutions in the African continent and to continue to provide quality and affordable tertiary education to African students, especially to those from the SADC region.
- 4.1.4. There will be clear and stipulated aspects of internationalisation that UL will engage in and the expected outputs of the collaborations and partnerships.
- 4.1.5. UL will from time to time determine the optimal size of the international student component considering the size and shape and the enrolment plan of the University.

5. INTERNATIONALISATION AT UL

5.1 Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations, irrespective of the initiator, will be guided by Memoranda of Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement (where applicable) signed by the Vice Chancellor prior to commencing on activities emanating from the partnership.

UL puts high premium on international partnerships and will:

- 5.1.1 forge partnerships for the purposes of teaching and learning, research and community engagement enhancement,
- 5.1.2 forge partnerships and collaborate with other African Universities in innovative initiatives of common interests,
- 5.1.2 collaborate with other South African Universities for purposes of joint international funding opportunities and initiatives,
- 5.1.3 collaborate with international partners in the rest of the world in research projects to share expertise and resources for mutual benefit,
- 5.1.4 encourage researchers to establish meaningful partnerships for purposes of postgraduate students' research experience enhancement and contribution to global knowledge development.

5.2 Student mobility

5.2.1 Inbound degree students

The UL headcount enrolment of international students will be at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Students from SADC region will comprise at least 5% of the overall UL headcount enrolment. The Code of Good Practice for International Mobility of Students (**Annexure A**) will be a guide for enrolling international students or sending UL students on international exchange programmes.

- 5.2.1.1 International students seeking admission to an undergraduate degree will submit their existing high school qualification to Universities South Africa (USAf) for assessment and granting of an exemption,
- 5.2.1.2 International students seeking admission to a postgraduate degree must submit their existing qualifications to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for evaluation,
- 5.2.1.3 The residential status of international students will be monitored to ensure adherence to visa stipulations by the Department of Home Affairs,
- 5.2.1.4 Agreements regarding Credit Accumulation and transfer (CAT) for incoming and outgoing students will be developed at institutional level in accordance with the applicable legislation, Rules and policy,
- 5.2.1.5 UL will apply the policy of students from the SADC countries paying the same tuition fees as South African citizens. However, students from countries beyond the SADC will be charged an unsubsidised tuition fee as determined by the University,
- 5.2.1.6 A levy on top of the standard tuition fees paid by international students will be charged and be set at a reasonable level.

5.2.2 Inbound short-term exchange students

- 5.2.2.1 UL will host international students for credit and non-credit short-term academic and intercultural programmes,

5.2.2.2 Faculties will determine the programmes that the international students can be hosted in,

5.2.3 Outbound UL students

5.2.3.1 UL will facilitate opportunities for its students to take part in international learning experiences which may include students who:

5.2.3.1.1. are enrolled at UL but complete part of their programme as an exchange student at a foreign institution,

5.2.3.1.2 are enrolled at UL and a foreign institution and complete part of their programme at the foreign institution as part of a collaborative or partnership degree or qualification agreement,

5.2.3.1.3 are enrolled at UL and spend a short period (semester) at a foreign institution as part of partnership agreement,

5.2.3.1.4 participate in a range of academic-related activities in a foreign country.

5.2.3.2 Measures to protect students' interest must include:

5.2.3.2.1 pre-departure confirmation of the academic status of the qualifications for which UL students enroll as degree-pursuing students in foreign countries,

5.2.3.2.2 pre-departure confirmation of credit-transfer and recognition arrangements,

5.2.3.2.3 ongoing confirmation of the quality of the students' learning experience at foreign partner institutions; and

5.2.3.2.4 pre-departure confirmation of financial implications and provisions (accommodation and leaving expenses).

5.2.3.3 Measures to ensure improvement of students' experiences must include:

5.2.3.3.1 A written report from students upon return to be submitted to the Faculty and to the Office of International Affairs,

5.2.3.3.2 An opportunity for the students to present about their experiences to their peers,

5.2.3.3.3 Involving students who have international experience in information sessions on scholarships and other student mobility opportunities.

5.3 Staff mobility (Academic and Support Staff)

International academic experiences for staff members, and the continuous exchange of people and ideas, are key dimensions of high-quality higher education. Exposure of administrative and academic support staff enhances their understanding of the global world in which students and staff are expected to operate at. UL will therefore:

5.3.1 create and facilitate access to international research and academic opportunities for its academic staff members,

5.3.2 create opportunities for administrative and support staff to obtain international experience and participate in international initiatives,

5.3.3 expect staff members to record their international endeavors and initiatives with the Office of International Affairs,

5.3.4 appoint the best possible people in academic positions, including talented and qualified scientists and scholars from elsewhere in the world. However, this will be balanced with addressing race and gender transformation through creating opportunities for South African academics who have previously not been catered for

5.3.5 expect foreign nationals working at UL to participate in knowledge and skills transfer and capacity-building activities, including PhD supervision focused on South African citizens to develop the next generation of scientists and scholars.

5.4 Cross-border Collaborative qualifications

UL supports the offering of co-badged and joint cross-border collaborative qualifications. These qualifications will be undertaken under the following conditions:

- 5.4.1 For any programme and qualification to be offered on a collaborative, cross-border basis, there must be a Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) approval from the DHET, accreditation by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and registration by SAQA,
- 5.4.2 DHET must be notified when entering into collaboration or partnership agreements for collaborative programmes,
- 5.4.3 An agreement of joint supervision (Cotutelle Agreement) will be signed by each student and the supervisors,
- 5.4.4 Joint registration for a PhD emanating from an international partnership must be approved by the Faculty and reported to the Institutional Planning Office.

5.5 Internationalisation of research

Building, expanding and ensuring research collaboration between UL and international researchers and scholars – including the development of international research partnerships – is high priority for UL.

- 5.5.1 The research partnerships will be built primarily around the UL Research Niche Areas,
- 5.5.2 UL encourages special focus of research partnerships and collaboration with universities in the African continent on matters of mutual significance,
- 5.5.3 UL encourages the establishment and maintenance of international partnerships with governments, agencies and foundations across the world, in the interest of increasing access of UL scientists and scholars to international research funding opportunities and international research facilities,
- 5.5.4 Access will be facilitated for international scientists and scholars to research opportunities and research facilities at UL, provided such access will be equitable and reciprocated,
- 5.5.5 Co-authorship of publications by UL researchers and their foreign scientists and scholars is highly encouraged.

5.5.6 The following dimensions of research collaboration will. Also be recognised as internationalisation of research:

- keynote addresses at international meetings/conferences,
- participation in international committees and advisory and/or editorial boards,
- participation in international research networks and consortia
- international funding received relative to the investment made by the DST/NRF; and
- international patents and/or other intellectual property rights registered.

5.6 Internationalisation of Teaching and Learning

5.6.1 Programmes leading to a collaborative or partnership degree, or qualification will be offered,

5.6.2 A Memorandum of Agreement with another international higher education institutions will be signed prior to enrolment of students into a collaborative qualification,

5.6.3 Exchange of lecturing staff with collaborating institutions will be encouraged,

5.6.4 When reviewing or developing curricula, national and international benchmarking will be undertaken in order to incorporate best practices.

5.7 Internationalisation at Home

Internationalisation at home is the intentional integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students, within domestic learning environments. Internationalisation at home focuses on all students – not just those who are able to travel abroad– reaping the benefits of international higher education.

5.7.1 The curricula will be internationalised by incorporating international, intercultural knowledge and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as into the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of the programme of study,

- 5.7.2 The curricula will include indigenous knowledge where appropriate in order to share the African perspectives with the global world,
- 5.7.3 Teaching of students through international virtual exchange will be an integral part of offering international experience to a wider range of students,
- 5.7.4 Intercultural activities aiming at cultural understanding and appreciation are encouraged, particularly of the African continent,
- 5.7.5 Hosting of international scholars and experts and of international conferences is encouraged, for the benefit of the wider range of staff and students,
- 5.7.5 Internationalisation at home can be partly achieved through increased and/or intensified academic staff international mobility, and emphasis on the informal curriculum.
- 5.7.6 Internationalisation at home may extend beyond the UL campus and the formal learning context to include other intercultural and/or international learning opportunities within the local communities.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement this policy, a number of university entities, departments and units will be required take different responsibilities in accordance with the mandate of their portfolios towards success of international activities and initiatives.

6.1. Responsibilities of the University Management

The UL management is responsible for playing major role in supporting internationalisation activities and ensuring mutual benefit from partnerships and collaborations. To that end, Management should enable and support staff through time and resources to develop curricula for international collaborative teaching, attend international academic events to showcase UL research expertise and establish networks and to visit international institutions for purposes of collaborative research and teaching. Management will also thus be responsible for the legal aspects

of partnerships and collaborations and of participating in international activities.

6.2 Responsibilities of academic staff

Academic staff must familiarise themselves with the purpose and policy for internationalisation. When revising curricula, they must take into consideration international trends by way of benchmarking. They must endeavour to establish international partnerships for research, research funding application, cross-border qualification development and sharing of teaching expertise. Academic staff must ensure that they furnish the Office of International Affairs (OIA) with their internationalisation activities for purposes of reporting to DHET. Faculties must ensure that there is diversification of students by making sure that international students are admitted to the programmes in their schools.

6.3 Responsibilities of the Office of International Affairs (OIA)

OIA is the first port of call for international activities of the Institution. It plays an important role in serving international students, visiting international academics and students, UL researchers, staff and students and international partners. It serves and support Faculties with international student applications and admissions and build capacity of administrative staff in that regard. It is the responsibility of OIA to share information on international trends in Higher Education, create opportunities for mobility, partnerships and networks, source funding opportunities and monitor and keep record of internationalisation activities

6.4 Responsibilities of the Administrative and Support Staff

The Administrative staff is responsible for ensuring that academic processes and systems are adhered to in aspects of international students' administration, curriculum development and cross-border qualifications. It is the responsibility of the Support staff to ensure that UL portrayed appropriately in the international space for purposes of

recruitment and establishment of partnerships, welfare of international staff and students is taken care of and that international activities and initiatives are supported and communicated to the UL community.

7. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

- 7.1 The Senate Academic and Planning Committee reconsiders the effectiveness of the Internationalisation Policy every 5 years and its recommendation will be submitted to Senate and subsequently to Council for consideration and approval,
- 7.2 If revisions are recommended and approved, a copy of the revised policy will be widely distributed by the Committee Secretariat, and the web version will be replaced by the new updated policy.

References

- Code of Conduct International Student in Dutch Higher education (2006), <http://www.internationalstudy.nl>
- Department of Higher Education and Training (2020) *Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa*
- International Education Association of South Africa (2018) *Code of Ethical Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by South African Higher Education Institutions*
- Southern African Development Community (1997) *Protocol on Education and Training*

ANNEXURE A

THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS

1. Protection of the interests of international students

South African higher education institutions have the obligation to put in place measures to protect the academic and other interests of their students going on academic exchange programmes to foreign institutions. Such measures include:

- a) pre-departure confirmation of the academic status of qualifications and of credit transfer and recognition arrangements; and
- b) ongoing confirmation of the quality of students' learning experience at foreign partner institutions.

2. Provision of information to inbound international students

Higher education institutions must provide, through the institutional website and/or other means, timely, reliable and easily accessible information in English to international students concerning:

- a) the admission requirements of the study programme, including policies for admission and registration and the associated costs,
- b) the accreditation status of the study programme,
- c) the institutional quality criteria with which the study programme must comply and the institutional quality assurance arrangements assuring such quality,
- d) a description of the study programme, including duration and the qualification that will be awarded on successful completion of the programme,
- e) the examination (or comparable) regulations,
- f) the language of teaching,
- h) the Code of Good Practice for International Mobility of Students (or whatever title an institution may decide on for the code); and
- i) the institution's student rules.

3. Admission and registration

- a) An international student who applies for admission and registration with the HEI must provide proof of the required preparatory education; sufficient language skills; and possession of the qualifications required for admission to the specific study programme.

- b) The admission requirements for a study programme are determined by the HEI. Prior to registration, the HEI confirms that the international student meets the requirements.
- c) A HEI may charge a fee for the assessment of language skills, preparatory education and qualifications.

4. Support provided to international students

- a) Higher education institutions must comply with the relevant national legal requirements.
- b) Higher education institutions may only offer international students access to accredited degrees or qualification programmes and institutionally approved short-term programmes.
- c) A HEI must provide information on the services it offers to international students with respect to study visas, housing, introduction and assistance. The HEI must clearly specify in its information material which services it provides and what the associated costs are.
- d) At the end of each academic year, the HEI determines the student's progress, captures the results on the student's study record and communicates this information to the student.
- e) The re-admission of an international student is processed in terms of the standard institutional processes and rules, including in cases where a student is excluded on the grounds of not meeting minimum requirements.
- f) The HEI is obliged to offer the study programme as advertised and for which international students are admitted. If the study programme is cancelled for valid reasons, international students will have the same opportunities for transition to alternative qualifications offered to all other students.