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## Management of Internationalization Processes of Higher Education Institutions

**Abstract:** Universities have undergone internationalization processes over the past few decades. In Poland higher education institutions are seeking models of management of internationalization. This article defines the term in connection with universities, its different aspects and directions of the transition. The paper contains also the results of work of the 'Higher Education Internationalization Team' headed by the author of this article.

**Key words:** management, higher education, internationalization

### Introduction

One of the axes of changes of contemporary universities and whole systems of higher education, observed also in scientific research, are deepening internationalization processes. With the development of globalization internationalization of science and higher education in its many forms is increasing. It can even be argued that over the past few decades from universities operating on a national scale and focused on the nation-development mission have been transformed in the direction of internationalized, and in part even global, universities. This fundamental transformation is taking place in Poland as well. In our country, universities are seeking effective models of internationalization management which would facilitate, as shown by many studies, the process of internationalization of higher education.

The search for effective management models of internationalization processes of higher education should begin with the differentiation of forms and level of interna-

tionalization, depending on the type of institution and its mission. In the second half of the twentieth century tendencies towards internationalization of universities and higher education on a global scale developed [Geuna 1998, pp. 253–270]. In this paper an attempt is made to define the term ‘internationalization of universities’, its different aspects and directions of the transition promoting the internationalization of research and higher education over several decades. The article is closed with the presentation of the results of work of the “Higher Education Internationalization Team” headed by the author of this article.

## Meaning of internationalization of universities

Internationalization is defined in a number of ways. N.F. Piercy [Piercy 1985] defines it as the transfer of the organization’s activities abroad, and thus equates internationalization with the physical creation of an organization outside the home country. L. Melin [1992] defines it as a process of evolutionary changes leading to increase the level of the organization’s international commitment, which is a function of the growth of knowledge about foreign markets.

L. S. Welch and R. Luostarinen [1988] define internationalization as the process of increasing involvement of the organizations international business, which includes both internal operations (passive, e.g.: purchasing a license, using a franchise) as well as external ones (active, e.g.: foreign direct investment, various forms of capital and non-capital cooperation, international strategic alliances). J. Rymarczyk believes that any kind of business activity on foreign markets is a symptom of internationalization [Rymarczyk 2004].

In the article, due to the need to refer the definition of internationalization to higher education, the definition of internationalization of education by J. Knight can be regarded as adequate [2003, pp. 2–3]. The author defines the process of internationalization as the integration of international, intercultural and global dimension into functions, purpose and specificity of institutions of higher education, and harmonization of policies and programs implemented by universities and governments in order to respond to globalization. The activities mainly relate to foreign exchange of students and faculty, creating satellite campuses and organizations, involvement in various kinds of inter-institutional cooperation.

Therefore, for the purposes of the article I suggest to adopt the following understanding of the processes of internationalization of universities. Internationalization of study is the integration of international, intercultural and global perspective in processes of planning and implementation of higher education and improving the quality of education. Internationalization of higher education includes, among others, the following spheres: strategic planning, international mobility of students and staff, foreign langu-

age teaching, joint curricula, international research and intercultural educational content [De Wit 2015].

## Contemporary model of internationalization of universities

Among the most important reasons of the development of internationalization in the higher education sector, the following can be indicated [Sułkowski 2016a]:

- Deepening globalization processes,
- Strategie of universities aiming to attract as many bright students from abroad as possible,
- Growth of internationalization of scientific research,
- Pursuit to increase education quality through the internationalization of education.

Deepening globalization processes demonstrated by: the development of the international economic market, an increase in the flow of goods, services and labor, the evolution of knowledge based economies and societies as well as liberalization of trade and the weakening of the role of national states [Stiglitz 2002; Lewitt 1993; Appadurai 1996; Scholte 2005; Hirst, Thompson, Bromley 2015] motivate to the development of internationalization of higher education [Altbach, Knight 2007, pp. 290–305; King, Marginson, Naidoo 2011; Morey 2004, pp. 131–150]. Globalization affects many aspects reinforcing the pressure on the internationalization of universities. Firstly, due to the globalization of communication processes, numerous candidates decide to choose universities outside their own country. It is possible thanks to the expansion of knowledge of English as a modern *lingua franca*. Secondly, global competition is forcing universities to promote their own brands and develop education programs aimed at foreign students. Thirdly, many universities in developed countries face problems of demographic decline, which means that both labor markets and universities are looking for young people outside their own country. Finally, the development of multinational corporations and business activities in the global market motivates to improve intercultural competencies that employees need. Global competition for students and academics takes place simultaneously in several segments. Some universities, having high prestige, focus on attracting the most outstanding students and researchers from around the world. In the segment of the university with lower prestige, marketing activities are developed aimed at attracting as many potential students as possible. A bright side of the competition for outstanding researchers is the development of creative international teams, which can boast of the world's scientific achievements. However, the downside may be the effect of the brain drain depriving the less developed countries of more talented researchers, which exacerbates the inequalities between rich countries and the rest of the world [Johnson, Regets 1998]. However, the internationalization, as many authors note, should not be un-

derstood as an end in itself, but above all as a means to improve the quality of education and research. Many studies show that the growth of various forms of internationalization promotes the development of quality of education. In general, according to studies by various authors, internationalization also correlates positively with the scientific productivity of research workers employed by universities [Kwiek 2015].

In most studies internationalization of higher education is presented as favorable for the quality and development of higher education and science. Among the most important assessments of values of internationalization, the following appear: stimulation of intercultural relations, improvement of universities, global competition for talents among researchers and students, the source of economic development and others. In the literature, there are also opinions that internationalization should not be seen as an end in itself, but only as a means to improve education and research [Knight 2015]. There is also a growing group of skeptical opinions towards the internationalization of universities, which take the form of criticism:

- International marketing, which focuses on attracting foreign students paying for their education [Lee 2015, pp. 5–7],
- International rankings, which become a fetish and instrumental objective of universities [Knight 2015],
- Intercultural ideology, which deepens the domination of economically developed regions over the 'peripheries',
- Dual, double and joint degrees, which are increasingly becoming only 'marketing products' and do not require the implementation of additional learning outcomes and student effort [Knight 2015],
- Treatment of educational programs as a pass to leave the country, which will allow to obtain visas to attractive countries [Knight 2015].

Motives making the universities lean toward the growth of internationalization vary quite considerably depending on particular universities and regions of the world. For example, for the US and UK internationalization has primarily the aspect of a commercial project depending on attracting foreign students who pay for their education [Altbach, Reisberg, Rumbley 2009]. In addition, English and American prestigious research universities are a magnet for talented researchers from around the world [Schuster 1994, pp. 437–452]. In Western European countries, internationalization is perceived as part of the Bologna agenda and is associated with the strengthening of integration processes and intercultural communication [Altbach, Reisberg, Rumbley 2009]. Polish context of internationalization, analyzed further in the article, is an example of attracting students, mainly from Ukraine, combined with the promotion of the internationalization of research and higher education seen as a strategic challenge of Polish universities and supported by the State.

## **Indicators of internationalization**

According to Altbach globalization has increased the international role of universities and has expanded the scope of campus internationalization [Altbach 2014, p. 26]. Internationalization has come to be the strategic orientation for universities in the last decades. The level of internationalization of a university depends on different factors like: country, type of school, type of program. However the general tendency of change towards international universities is fixed. The first strong wave of internationalization was based mainly on business schools in USA, UK and in Europe, and international accreditation processes. The USA business accreditations like AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business Accreditation), IACBE (The International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education Accreditation), UK accreditations like AMBA (The Association of MBAs Accreditation) or European EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) have been developed on an international scale [Aggarwal 1989]. The strong factor of internationalization is still the growing number of students studying outside of their home country [Palmqvist 2009].

The European Association for International Education identifies 8 main reasons for internationalization: 1) Improve the overall quality of education, 2) Prepare students for a global world, 3) Attract more international students, 4) Improve international reputation, 5) Improve the quality of research and development, 6) Increase competitiveness, 7) Labour market demands, 8) Financial benefits for institution. The list is created according to the questionnaire done with the universities in Europe. The interesting observation is that financial reasons are on the last position [Engel, Sandstrom, van der Aa, Glass 2015] (Table 1).

Table 1. Top five reasons to internationalize per country

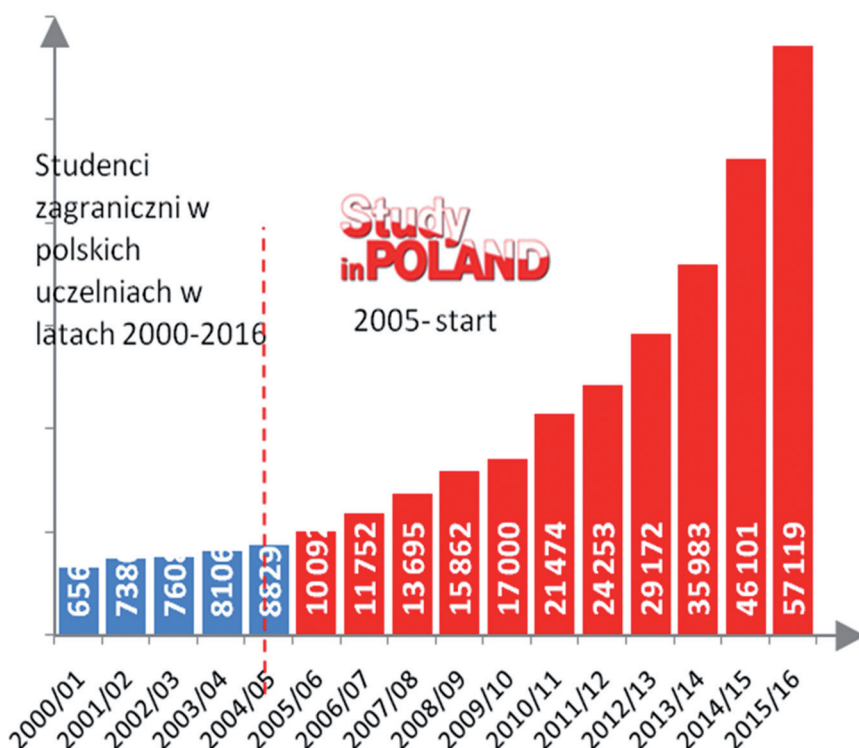
	Improve the overall quality of education	Prepare students for a global world	Attract more international students	Improve international reputation	Improve the quality of research and development	Increase competitiveness	Labour market demands	Financial benefits for institution	Align institutional policy with European internationalization policy	Attract more local students	Align institutional policy with national international policy	Attract local and international staff	Build capacity in developing countries
Albania	1	3		4	2	5							
Austria	2	1		5		3	4						
Belgium (Flemish)	2	1		5	4		3						
Belgium (French)	2	1	4	3			5						
Belgaria	1	5	4	2	3								
Croatia	1	2		4	3		5						
Cyprus	1	5	3		2	4							
Czech Republic	1	2	4	5	3								
Denmark	2	1				5	3				4		
Estonia	1	5	4		2	3							
Finland	2	1		4	3		5						
France	3	1	2	4	5								
Georgia	1	4		5	2	3							
Germany	3	1	4	5		2							
Greece	1	2	5	4	3								
Hungary	1	4	2			5		3					
Ireland	4	2	1	5				3					
Italy	3	4	1	2	5								
Latvia	1	5	2	3		4							
Lithuania	1	3	2	4	5								
Netherlands	2	1	3	5			4						
Norway	1	3	4		2						5		
Poland	2		1	3	4	5							
Portugal	3	1	2	5	4								
Romania	1		2	3	4	5							
Russian Federation	5		3	1	4	2							
Slovenia	1	3	5	2	4								
Spain	3	4	2	1	5								
Sweden	1	2	4		3	5							
Switzerland		1	5	2	3	4							
Turkey	1	2	4	3	5								
Ukraine	1			3	2	5	4						
United Kingdom	4	1	3	2		5							
EHEA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

Source: Engel, Sandstrom, van der Aa, Glass 2015, pp. 104–105.

## Polish context of internationalization

If the share of foreign students in the higher education system is adopted as a fundamental measure of internationalization, Poland is an example of a very rapid growth in the internationalization of students in recent years. Yet in 2015, some researchers pointed to the frighteningly low level when it comes to foreigners attending university education in Poland. Bianka Siwińska believes that only 0.71% of the share of foreign students in Poland puts our country among the least internationalized countries in the OECD group of countries [Siwińska 2015]. The reality, however, is changing much faster than her analyses. In the academic year 2015/2016 the share of foreigners studying in Poland amounted to more than 4%, placing us in the first 20 countries with a high rate of internationalization, next to the United States (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Internationalization indicator of Polish universities**



Source: *Study in Poland, Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2016*, report. Statistical and information report prepared within the "Study in Poland" program realized by the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (KRASP) and "Perspektywy" Educational Foundation, ISBN 978-83-61239-29-1, October 2016.

It is worth noting that the estimated increase in the number of foreign students in the world in the last decade also had a large upward momentum growing by more than 50%. In 2005 around 3 million foreigners studied all over world, while in 2012 the number grew to about 4.5 million. Countries with the highest ratio of internationalization of studies are accountable for almost 20% of the number of foreign students in relation to the total number of students (Table 2).

**Table 2. Selected countries with the highest ration of internationalization of studies 2014**

	Country	Foreign students in relation to the total number of students (%)
1.	New Zealand	18.74 %
2.	Australia	18.30 %
3.	Great Britain	18.22 %
4.	Switzerland	17.11 %
5.	Austria	15.47 %
6.	Belgium	11.19 %
7.	The Netherlands	10.07 %
8.	Denmark	9.94 %
9.	Canada	9.72 %
10.	Finland	7.43 %
11.	Germany	7.23 %
12.	Hungary	7.04 %
13.	Ireland	6.99 %
14.	Sweden	5.91 %
15.	Slovakia	5.62 %
16.	The USA	4.21 %
17.	Portugal	4.11 %
18.	Estonia	3.72 %
19.	Norway	3.50 %
20.	Japan	3.44 %

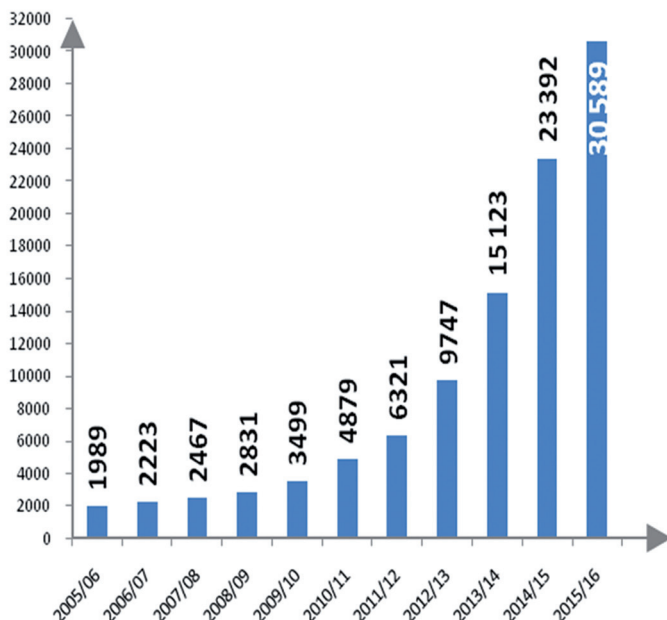


21.	Lithuania	3,04 %
22.	Slovenia	2.75 %
23.	Spain	2.43 %
24.	Poland	1.97 %
25.	Chile	0.27 %
<b>average</b>		<b>8,43 %</b>

Source: *Education at a Glance*©OECD 2016, *Wissenschaftweltoffen* 2014.

More than 50% of foreign students in Poland are Ukrainians and Belarusians, which is associated not only with the cultural closeness of our countries, but also with the geopolitical situation of Ukraine being the result of the armed conflict with Russia. Therefore, Poland raised the level of internationalization largely because it has become a cultural bridge for Ukraine. This trend is confirmed in the analysis of the regional distribution of foreign students who are focused in the capital and in the Malopolska and Lublin provinces, having historical ties with Ukraine (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Increase in the number of students from Ukraine in 2005–2016**



Source: GUS.

It seems, however, in the future, increasing the participation of students from other cultures and developing other aspects of domestic and foreign internationalization would be recommended. The increase in the number of Ukrainian students and other students from abroad is not the only measure of internationalization of Polish higher education. The other criteria which include: recognition of Polish universities in the world, international research and intercultural educational content, do not note spectacular successes. There is a gradual degradation of Polish universities in international rankings. Currently, the two highest ranked Polish universities are only in the fourth hundred of the Shanghai ranking. As studies by Marek Kwiek show, the internationalization of Polish researchers leaves much room for growth [Kwiek 2010].

## **Key challenges for internationalization in Poland**

In Poland, the awareness of the importance of internationalization of higher education is growing, which is reflected in the activities of educational institutions taken in recent years. An example could be the "Higher Education Internationalization Team" operating from May to December 2016 at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, chaired by the author of this article. The team's recommendations were submitted to the Minister of Science and Higher Education and presented for discussion during the First Conference of the Congress of Polish Science devoted to the internationalization of Polish universities and published in the "Academic Forum" [Sułkowski 2016b]. Here, there is only an abbreviated version of these recommendations.

Suggested recommendations have been divided into seven areas, which include: management of the educational process, internationalization of scientific personnel, building the brand of Polish higher education in the world, internationalization of the process of education – education in foreign languages and internationalization of accreditation processes, strengthening the international mobility of students and staff from Polish universities, university support in the development of international activities.

1. It seems very important to integrate the processes of internationalization of higher education in the framework of the "Strategy for scientific excellence, modern higher education, partnership with business and social responsibility of science" and "Strategy for Responsible Development" and "Law 2.0". Institutional support of internationalization can be done through the establishment of government institutions along the lines of: DAAD, Campus France. The operation of such institutions should include: scholarship programs for Polish scientists conducting research abroad, scholarship programs for Polish students studying abroad, scholarship programs for foreigners undertaking studies and research in Poland, promoting higher education in Poland etc. (NAWA).

2. It is also necessary to increase the attractiveness of the employment of Poles and foreigners from leading scientific centers in Polish universities by e.g.: stimulating the development of joint postdoctoral programs with foreign universities, strengthening the arrangements for postdoctoral work at an institution other than the home institution (scientific mobility), providing financing for postdoctoral researchers to cooperate with foreign research centers and to ensure the researcher's return to Poland.
3. It may also be of key importance to create new mechanisms for greater hiring of visiting professors from leading research centers by the universities (what matters here is: the flexibility of employment, scientific record, lower limits of teaching hours, recognition to the minimum staff requirements, effective competitions and announcements).
4. The promotion of Polish education in the international field should be taken care of (co-operation of Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Development and Finance, Polish Accreditation Committee, Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland), also in the framework of a new institution, if possible. The improvement of the visibility of Polish universities in international rankings can be fought for mainly through the work on improving the quality of education, but also by creating incentives for the consolidation of universities and other instruments of international promotion (e.g. technology transfer centers).
5. More effective teaching and language skills verification methods can be worked out, among others, by considering mandatory certification exams in graduate studies on B2 level. Ministerial support programs for universities will prove important (connected with the measurement of the outcomes). It would be important to introduce a required fluent proficiency in a foreign language for the candidates for teaching and research positions in public universities and as a criterion for employee assessment serving the extension of employment (level B2+).
6. Polish universities could realize programs promoting MOOC and other online programs in foreign languages (*cross-border education*).
7. Another good move is the creation and operation of joint international studies (*joint programs; double/multiple degrees and joint degrees*), they should be preceded by the removal of all legal barriers.
8. Promoting the accreditation of institutions run by the Polish Accreditation Committee and other accreditation agencies in English and with the participation of experts from abroad will also be favorable.
9. Furthermore, it would be useful to link the distinctive assessments from the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) with the high level of internationalization corresponding to the mission of the university ('Law 2.0', PKA regulations) or to make additional certification of 'internationalization' on the model of ECA, NVAO.

**10.** Implementation of the system of development of international mobility of students and employees of Polish universities could occur through: expansion of the system of research internships for postdoctoral researchers, an increase share of doctorates and habilitation in a foreign language prepared with the participation of academics with recognized achievements from abroad (or with the participation of foreign entities) in Polish universities, the creation of interdisciplinary doctoral schools on an international scale and the development of international summer schools for doctoral students (flexible PhD study programs).

**11.** Internationalization can be supported by international programs, including stimulating the implementation of intercultural, international and global dimension in the educational process carried out in Polish universities (internationalization at home). Universities should be encouraged to develop and implement internationalization strategies or to see the internationalization as a strategic goal (connecting internationalization at home with internationalization abroad).

**12.** Cooperation of the universities with social and economic environment actors should be encouraged and 'good practices' in the field of internationalization in Poland should be encouraged and rewarded

**13.** Systems for handling services to foreign students should be developed (e.g. offering regular trainings, a catalog of best practices, ministerial workshops in intercultural competence, projects, POWER, publishing recruitment guides for administrative employees working with international students).

**14.** It is also recommended to run the program reinforcing the safety system for foreign and Polish students and employees of universities (for this purpose special sections for contacts and safety issues should be established at the university, cooperation with the police, immigration services and the city authorities should be started.

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