



INTERNATIONALISATION POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The internationalisation of higher education has intensified over the last twenty-five years. This has been in response to economic globalisation and to drivers at the institutional level such as increased competition between universities, the importance of fee income from international students, and pressures to improve programme relevance. Internationalisation is now a dimension of world-wide university ranking systems. Undoubtedly, the internationalisation trend will continue as countries develop knowledge-based economies and implement the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, many key contemporary challenges, such as climate change and cybersecurity, are essentially “borderless” and can only be analysed and mitigated by internationally oriented research and education. Indeed, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17 explicitly states that the SDGs can only be realized with a strong commitment to global partnerships and cooperation.

1.2 The Botswana Open University (BOU) and its legacy institution, the Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning, have a strong history of international engagement. But at present BOU’s activities are uncoordinated and ad hoc because there is no overarching policy framework for internationalisation. However, the University’s *Strategic Plan 2019-2023* specifies internationalisation as a strategic initiative. This Policy therefore seeks to promote an international outlook within the University and enable the achievement of the long-term strategic goal of BOU to be “A globally recognized open university” by 2036.

2. DEFINITION

Internationalisation of higher education – “The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.” (De Wit and Hunter, 2015)

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Policy is to express the University’s commitment to the strategic goal of internationalisation and its pledge to support the implementation of internationalisation initiatives across the University.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- 4.1 Ensure the University markets itself actively to recruit international students.
- 4.2 Ensure that the University delivers a superior student experience for its international students.
- 4.3 Ensure that the curricula of BOU programmes prepare all students for diverse cultural contexts and for successful participation in the global economy.
- 4.4 Encourage staff and student exchange.
- 4.5 Promote the recruitment of senior international scholars.
- 4.6 Promote international collaboration for research and innovation.
- 4.7 Increase the number of value-adding international partnerships for, inter alia, development and delivery of programmes, capacity-building, and benchmarking.
- 4.8 Promote internal and external resource mobilization for internationalisation and ensure adequate funding provision in the University's annual budget.

5. SCOPE

The Policy applies to all divisions of the University and encompasses students, academics and administrative/professional staff.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This Policy provides guidance for the implementation of the goals of the *BOU Vision 2036 Framework* and the *BOU Strategic Plan for 2019 to 2023*. Related

policies include the *Partnerships Policy*, the *Strategy for Technology-Enhanced Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Support* and the *University Research and Innovation Policy*. The Policy also addresses the requirements for internationalisation in the Botswana Qualifications Authority *Criteria for Registration and Accreditation of Education and Training Providers*. The Policy is supported by the *Internationalisation Implementation Plan 2020-2023* which identifies priorities and specifies outcomes, outputs, initiatives, performance indicators and responsibilities for each of the Policy's objectives.

7. POLICY STATEMENT

7.1 The aim of the Policy is to advance the strategic intent of the University to offer high-quality technology-enhanced programmes, undertake relevant research and innovation, and to have societal impact. The Policy seeks to achieve this aim through promoting internationalisation initiatives that are clearly defined, adequately resourced, quality assured and regularly

evaluated. It is based on establishing high-value international partnerships, particularly with other open universities and with dual mode conventional universities that utilise open and distance learning.

7.2 It is the intention of the Policy to bring the following major benefits to the University:

- 7.2.1 Improved student preparedness for engagement with the global economy and society through enriched programme content and enhanced digital delivery.
- 7.2.2 Enhanced research and innovation impact through international networking and collaborative projects.
- 7.2.3 Deeper engagement of students, academics and administrative/professional staff with global economic, social and environmental issues through international cooperation for learning, research, knowledge sharing and application.
- 7.2.4 Strengthened institutional operations through the utilization of capacity-building opportunities and the adoption of international good practice in all areas of the University.
- 7.2.5 Increased student fee income by expansion beyond the restrictions of Botswana's small population.
- 7.2.6 Increased Third Stream income through international grants.
- 7.2.7 Improved national and international reputation of the University through diverse internationalisation initiatives that have a visible impact.

7.3 Policy Principles

The Policy will be guided by the following principles:

- 7.3.1 Emphasis on quality outcomes of internationalisation initiatives as well as quantitative results.
- 7.3.2 Adherence to international quality standards and ethical practices with respect to international students.
- 7.3.3 Observance of standard research ethics in all international collaborative research projects.
- 7.3.4 Reciprocity in international partnerships so that there is mutual benefit and accountability based on respect for institutional differences in context, capabilities and interests.
- 7.3.5 Transparency in sharing the outcomes of internationalisation with all stakeholders and in seeking benefits for the wider community.

8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

8.1. Implementation Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Internationalisation Policy are as follows:

8.1.1 **Council** – Provides governance oversight of the implementation of the Policy through the consideration of regular reports.

8.1.2 **Executive Management** – Ensures accountability and resources for implementation of the Policy.

8.1.3 **Senate** – Facilitates and monitors the implementation of the Policy.

8.1.4 **Academic Policy, Programmes and Quality Assurance Committee of Senate** – Responsible for overseeing the University-wide implementation, risk management and quality assurance of internationalisation initiatives undertaken within the framework of the Policy.

8.1.5 **Boards of Schools, Departments, Institutes and Centres, and Divisional Management Teams** – Ensure implementation of the Policy within their areas of responsibility.

8.1.6 **Office of Partnerships and Business Development** – Provides the technical support for the comprehensive implementation of the Policy, including coordination of initiatives, partnership management, risk assessment and the provision of capacity-building, and is responsible for institution-wide reporting.

8.2 Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the implementation of the Policy will be monitored and evaluated in relation to defined performance indicators stipulated in the *Internationalisation Implementation Plan 2020-2023* for each of the Policy's objectives. The Office of Partnerships and Business Development shall submit an annual performance report to Senate in February each year.

9. REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every 3 years or earlier as necessary.