RiHEI



# Responsible and Impactful Universities as Sustainable Growth and Enterprise Catalysts in Georgia

## Upgrading international relations offices towards European University Alliance values

Toolkit 5

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# Introduction

This toolkit is a comprehensive guide supporting the processes of internationalization in higher education institutions (HEIs). Internationalization is presented as a key element for institutional growth in the global educational environment, requiring a balance between global trends and local needs. The booklet consists of five main chapters, detailing various aspects of internationalization: institutional strategies, academic cooperation, project management, and university branding.

The aim of the toolkit is to provide resources, strategies, and guidance to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for enhancing their internationalization efforts and strengthening their operational capacities in key areas such as:

- International academic cooperation: facilitating collaborations between universities, industries, and other stakeholders to foster innovation, knowledge sharing, and professional growth;
- Institutional management: supporting the management of international relations, human resources, finances, and legal frameworks to align with global academic standards;
- Mobility and partnerships: supporting the development and implementation of mobility programs and cooperation partnerships, such as those under Erasmus+, to promote cross-border education and cultural exchange;
- University branding and communication: preparing to build a strong institutional brand, enhancing visibility, and ensuring consistency in messaging across all platforms;
- Crisis and risk management: preparing institutions to deal effectively with challenges like cultural barriers, legal compliance, and communication issues effectively in international settings.

The first chapter defines internationalization as the integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the core functions of HEIs. It highlights its values, such as increased international visibility, research development, and mobilization of intellectual resources. Various forms of internationalization are outlined, with a focus on initiatives like "Internationalization at Home" that provide global competencies to all students.

The second chapter focuses on academic cooperation networks, which play a vital role in building international relationships. Models such as the Triple Helix and Quadruple Helix are discussed, emphasizing how collaboration between academia, industry, government, and civil society drives innovation and societal development. The importance of international networks like Erasmus+ in enhancing student and staff mobility is underscored.

The third chapter addresses institutional management in the context of internationalization. It discusses key areas such as strategy, human resource management, financing, and legal

compliance. The chapter emphasizes the importance of effective project management methodologies like Agile and PRINCE2 in executing international initiatives successfully.

Erasmus+ is highlighted as a key program supporting international collaboration in education. The publication describes its structure, major actions, and benefits, such as fostering student mobility and creating opportunities for cross-institutional knowledge exchange.

The final chapter is dedicated to university branding. It stresses the importance of strategic market positioning, building brand awareness, and engaging alumni in enhancing the university's reputation. Crisis management and adapting to global changes are also identified as critical for long-term success.

By attending the course, participants will:

- learn about the key drivers, challenges and policies related to internationalisation in higher education and assess their relevance in institutional and global contexts.
- gain the ability to evaluate and implement different forms of academic collaboration, such as inter- and intra-institutional collaboration or alumni networks, in order to strengthen institutional networks, research and international communication.
- acquire competences in designing and implementing institutional strategies for international collaboration, including financial management, human resources and project implementation with global and local priorities.
- gain knowledge in the planning and management of Erasmus+ mobility and cooperation projects, including key stages such as partnership development, project implementation and evaluation of results.
- acquire knowledge in developing strategies to strengthen the university's brand, integrating elements such as brand positioning, alumni engagement and crisis management to increase the global visibility and reputation of the institution.

The publication offers not only theoretical insights but also practical solutions and recommendations for HEIs to effectively implement internationalization strategies. It highlights the need to balance global and local priorities, creating a more inclusive, sustainable, and effective model for international engagement.

# Unit 1. Internationalization in HEI

## 1.1. Definition, values and outcomes

Internationalization of HEIs is a must in a globalized world, but it doesn't mean that each university knows how to properly be involved in this ongoing process or what can be a scope of internationalization.

Internationalization of HEI is „the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Jane Knight, 2004).

Internationalization brings a lot of value added to the educational process. Values and beliefs about internationalization in HEI can be explained in the following way: (Knight, 2017)

- internationalisation builds on and respects local context
- internationalization is a customised process—'one size does not fit all'.
- internationalization brings benefits, risks and unintended consequences.
- internationalisation is not an end unto itself.
- globalisation and internationalisation are different but linked.

Internatiolization of HEIs added value (Henard et al, 2012):

- Increase in national and international visibility
- Leverage of institutional strengths through strategic partnerships
- Enlargement of the academic community within which benchmarking their activities
- Mobilisation of internal intellectual resources
- Additional important, contemporary learning outcomes to the student experience.
- Developement of stronger research groups.

NAFSA's Comprehensive Internationalization:[1]

Comprehensive internationalization is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility (Hudzik, 2011, p. 6).

[1] NAFSA: Association of International Educators is a member organization promoting international education and providing professional development opportunities to the field. Hundreds of NAFSA members volunteer to serve the Association and thousands advocate for international education. NAFSA serves international educators and their institutions and organizations by establishing principles of good practice, providing training and professional development opportunities, providing networking opportunities, and advocating for international education; www.nafsa.org

## 1.2. Forms and areas of internalization – the perspective of NAFSA, IAU, EAIE

Internationalization can be understood in various ways. It is also being studied by international organizations. The reports based on their studies can illustrate ways internationalization is perceived and adopted by HEIs.

NAFSA's understanding of internationalization measures and outcomes:

1a. student-focused measures:

- study abroad program diversity,
- the number of international students and their majors,
- the number of students achieving language competencies,
- the number of students in "international, global, and comparative majors"

1b student-focused outcomes:

- Identifiable knowledge competencies or learning objectives met.
- Standardized levels of language competency achieved.
- Positive impacts on attitudes, beliefs, skills,
- Impact on careers and workforce development.
- Increased capacity to learn from and with others from different cultures
- Meeting requirements of internationally defined credentials.

2. research, scholarship, and engagement outcomes:

- Reputational: e.g., Refereed publications in international journals and citations; invited speakers at international conferences; institutional position in global rankings; international awards, prizes, and recognition.
- Research discoveries of intellectual consequence and/or problem solving.
- Strategic cross-border collaborations that contribute to institutional mission
- Objectives and strengthen institutional capacities.
- Commercial applications income.
- Impact on peoples and communities: economic, health, education, nutrition, etc.
- Safety/security and access.

Another organization which conducts surveys on internationalization is EAIE, and activities examined by EAIE's Barometer:[2]

[2] The EAIE is a non-profit organization for higher education administrators and professionals engaged in internationalization. According to EIAE, its mission is to "help our members succeed professionally and to contribute to developments in international higher education from a European perspective"; *(PDF) What Counts as Internationalization? Deconstructing the Internationalization Imperative*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331135697_What_Counts_as_Internationalization_Deconstructing_the_Internationalization_Imperative[accessed Sep 21 2024].

- international student recruitment;
- international faculty/staff recruitment;
- international mobility for home students;
- international mobility for home faculty/staff;
- internationalization of the curriculum;
- programs in a non-local language;
- courses and activities developing students' international awareness and cultural competence;
- distance/online/blended international learning;
- branch campuses;
- joint degree programs, capacity building in developing countries;
- engagement with local community and society;
- internationalization of campus services;
- institution-wide internationalization training for faculty/Staff.

In IAU's Global Survey on Internationalization internationalization is understood through the following dimensions: [3]

(a) institutional profile,

(b) internationalization as an institutional priority,

(c) specific strategies and activities associated with internationalization,

(d) student mobility,

(e) internationalization at home,

(f) the respondent profile.

[3] The IAU (2016) is an institutional membership-based international non-governmentalorganization (INGO) that aims to build a worldwide higher education community. TheIAU was founded in 1950 as a worldwide association of HEIs; *What Counts as Internationalization? Deconstructing the Internationalization Imperative*. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331135697_What_Counts_as_Internationalization_Deconstructing_the_Internationalization_Imperative[accessed Sep 21 2024].

## 1.3. Internationalization at home (IaH)

Internationalization at home is "…the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments" (Beelen et al, 2015).

With only a small proportion of students who can have physical international mobility experience, IaH is an opportunity to create equality for all students. Thus,IaH can foster the development of intercultural competences and global citizenship and encourage students to consider physical travel.

Areas of importance of IaH: (Internationalization at home…, 2024)

- Students deserve to experience a curriculum which reflects the rich diversity of our local and international communities and to feel included, enabled and empowered by their studies.
- It is an inclusive and accessible form of learning that can be made broadly available to more students, especially those for whom travel may not be possible due to time and financial restrictions.
- It supports the development of critical thinking skills, global citizenship and employability skills which are all key resources for successful community building and workforce development.
- It encourages knowledge diplomacy through the process of collaboration, intercultural communication and networking between international and home students, and promotes mutual understanding and shared solutions which can help build international relations.

Internationalization at home:

- refers to the promotion of internationalization efforts within the campus environment, even if physical mobility of students and staff is limited,
- emphasizes creating a global and intercultural learning environment within the institution itself, through curriculum internationalization, virtual exchange programs, cross-cultural activities, and other initiatives that foster international perspectives and connections among students and staff,
- recognizes the importance of global competencies and intercultural understanding in today's interconnected world,
- provides students with opportunities to engage with diverse perspectives, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and prepare for the challenges of a globalized workforce,

- contributes to enhancing the quality of education and promoting a culture of inclusivity and diversity within the university community.

Here are some effective community engagement practices that can build connections between local and international students, fostering internationalization "at home" and promoting cultural exchange:

1. Cultural Exchange Programs
   - Organize events where local and international students can share their cultural heritage through food, music, dance, and traditional activities.
2. Peer Mentoring Systems
   - Pair local students with international students to facilitate friendship, cultural understanding, and support. This can help newcomers navigate the local culture and university system.
3. Community Service Projects
   - Involve both groups in volunteering opportunities that address local needs. This fosters teamwork, understanding, and shared goals.
4. Workshops and Seminars
   - Host workshops focused on various cultural practices, languages, and international issues, encouraging collaboration and dialogue between students.
5. Social Events and Networking
   - Organize informal gatherings, such as potlucks or game nights, where students can interact in a relaxed setting, sharing stories and experiences.
6. Cultural Awareness Campaigns
   - Create awareness initiatives that highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion, showcasing different cultures through art, presentations, or social media.
7. Student-Driven Initiatives
   - Encourage students to propose and lead their own projects that promote cultural interaction, allowing peer leadership to flourish.
8. Global Competence Training
   - Provide training sessions on global competencies, focusing on intercultural communication and global issues relevant to students' fields of study.
9. Field Trips and Community Tours

- Arrange trips that explore local cultural sites or events, providing context and experiences that enrich understanding for both local and international students.

10. Inclusive Student Organizations

- Support the formation of student clubs that welcome members from diverse backgrounds, offering platforms for collaboration and celebration of various cultures.

By implementing these community engagement practices, educational institutions can foster meaningful connections between local and international students, enriching their cultural experiences and promoting an inclusive environment that values diversity. These practices should include the aspect of engaging students from rural or underrepresented backgrounds.

## 1.4. Policies towards internationalization

National internationalization policy in HEIs is a guiding framework put forward by high-level national actors that provide an overarching outline, plan, roadmap, or strategy for the internationalization of, or within, a given country's HE sector (Rumbley et al., 2018) and it typically provides:

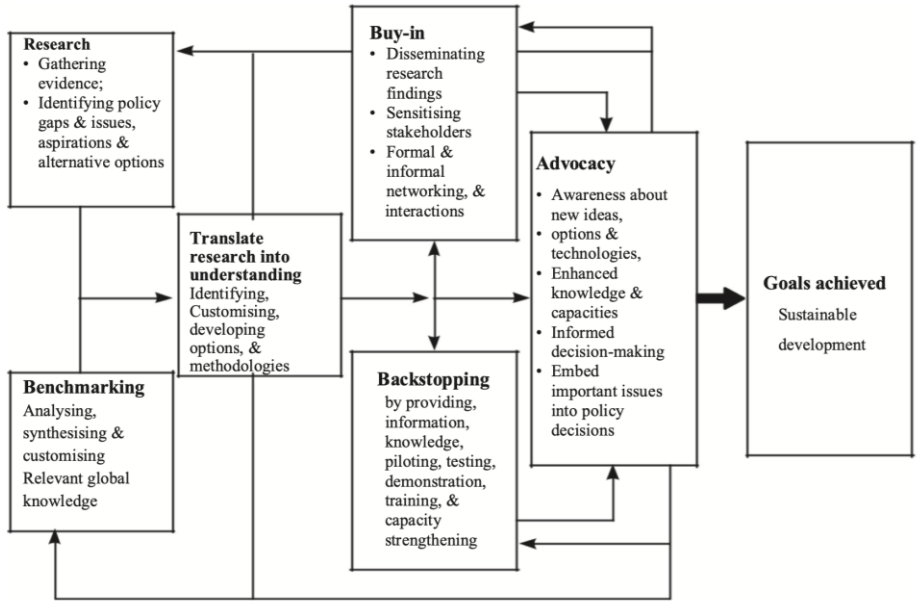
1. legal, programmatic and institutional guidelines that direct collective and individual behavior;
2. rationales, overarching vision, mission and an implementation framework with goals and outcomes; and
3. cross-cutting enabling policies.

Developing policy has to be an efficient process based on properly identified factors. The framework developed by Rasul and Karki (2008) emphasizes the following: (Garwe et al, 2021):

1. Context setting - analysis of the existing situation national internationalization context identification of stakeholders and defining their role;
2. Research to obtain evidence - baseline information, the status quo and the intended direction, outcomes and priorities (Chigumira, 2005);
3. Developing solutions collectively - close interaction between researchers and stakeholders is a key to ensure inclusivity with respect to actors and their needs/perspectives;
4. Benchmarking with others who have documented and non-documented bestpractices makes it possible to avoid pitfalls. However, benchmarking should bedone with caution, taking into consideration differences in history and context inorder to effectively manage risks;

5. Goal-setting guided by national imperatives.

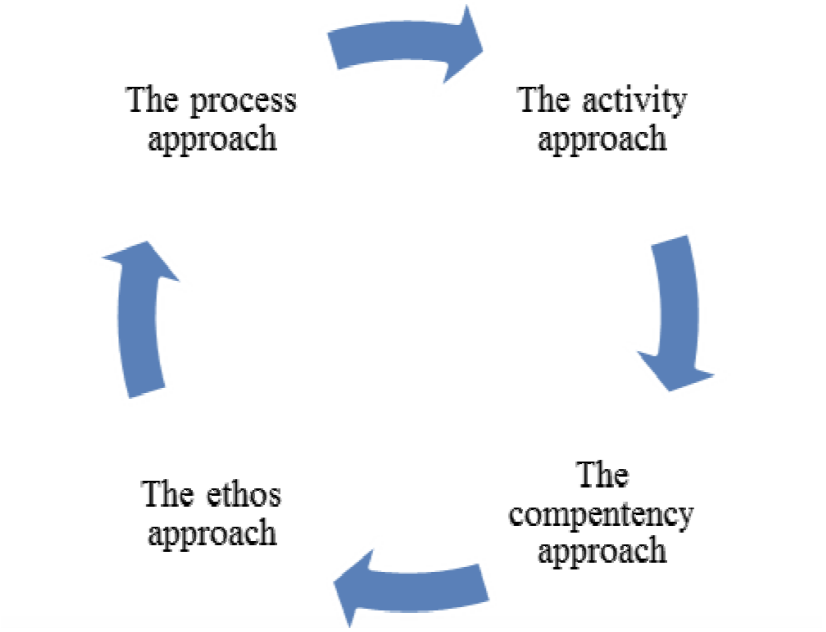
*FIGURE 1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK*




*SOURCE: RASUL, G. AND KARKI, M. (2008), "STRATEGIC APPROACH TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT, A FRAMEWORK", IN RASUL,G. AND KARKI, M. (EDS), POLICY PRIORITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN DEVELOPMENT, ICIMOD,PP. 327-339*

1. The activity approach, which centers on activities like curriculum development, student/faculty exchange, technical assistance, and international student initiatives, was prevalent during a time when the international aspect was viewed in terms of specific programs. In the 1970s and 1980s, the activity approach was synonymous with the concept of international education. However, perceiving the international dimension solely through activities can cause them to be seen as separate programs, leading to a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to internationalization.

*FIGURE 2. FOUR KEY APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONALIZATION*




*SOURCE: QIANG, Z. (2003). INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: TOWARDS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK. POLICY FUTURES IN EDUCATION, 1(2), 248-270. HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.2304/PFIE.2003.1.2.5*

2. The competency approach, on the other hand, focuses on nurturing skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values in students, faculty, and staff. It underscores how the generation and transfer of knowledge can help enhance competencies among individuals in higher education institutions to make them more globally aware and interculturally adept. The development of internationalized curricula and programs in this approach is not an end goal but a means to cultivate the necessary competencies in students and staff. While the competency approach is gaining traction due to the labor market's evolving needs, there is a call for further research to pinpoint the key competencies that enable students to succeed as national and international citizens.
3. The ethos approach emphasizes establishing a culture that embraces and advocates for international/intercultural viewpoints and endeavors. It aligns with organizational development theories that stress creating a culture within an institution to uphold specific principles and objectives. This approach recognizes the critical role of the international dimension in shaping a university or educational institution and asserts that without a strong belief system and supportive culture, the international aspect will not be fully actualized. Lastly, the process approach accentuates integrating an international/intercultural aspect into teaching, research, and service through a blend

of activities, policies, and procedures. Sustainability of the international dimension is a key concern in this approach, highlighting the importance of focusing on both programmatic aspects and organizational structures like policies and procedures.

## 1.5. Challenges and drivers

Internationalization is a process being executed in a changing environment. Therefore its scope, instruments and methods of application et cis under constant change.

For the last 30 years internationalization in HEIs has been:

- More focused on internationalization abroad than on internationalization at home;
- More ad hoc, fragmented and marginal than strategic, comprehensive and central in policies;
- More in the interest of a small, elite subset of students and faculty than focused on global and intercultural outcomes for all, so little to no inclusiveness and equity;
- Directed by a constantly shifting range of political, economic, social/cultural, and ducational rationales, with an increasing focus on economic motivations;
- Increasingly driven by national, regional, and global rankings;
- Little alignment between the international dimensions of the three core functions of higher education: education, research, and service to society;
- Primarily a strategic choice and focus of institutions of higher education, but increasingly also a priority of national governments (soft power, reputation and/or revenue- driven) and regions (European Union, Bologna signature countries, ASEAN);
- Following already well-established models—mainly promoted by “big players” with enough economic clout and tradition in higher education promotion: the UK, USA, France, Germany etc.

Coming trends in internationalization in HEIs: [de Wit et al., 2020]

- A shift from internationalization abroad with a strong focus on a small elite of mobile students, faculty, administrators and programs towards internationalization at home for all students, faculty and administrators;
- Making internationalization more carbon-neutral;
- Addressing more the importance of the contribution of internationalization to society;
- Linking the global to the local;
- Revising the role of national authorities;
- The impact of high profile new projects needs to be assessed, such as the European Universities Initiative;

- Challenge of forced internationalization of refugees in higher education.

Whatever the process of change is, one must take into consideration some universal challenges which can occure in the following dimensions: [Saat, 2007]

1. Individual:
   - lack of competency,
   - negative attitudes,
   - absence of incentives,
   - lack of personal knowledge and expertise.
2. Institutional:
   - lack of financial sources,
   - scarcity of human resources,
   - educational structure.

Georgian universities applies internalization thanks to significant reforms that were adopted in Georgian higher education, leading to increased transparency, less corruption and diversification of higher education sector: [Nastase, 2020]

- Bologna process as convergence promoting force
- Application for EU membership
- Use of mobilities – ERASMUS, state scholarships, private funds

As there is still a field for improvement, it is important to be familiar with driving forces enabling internationalization prof.=sesses in Georgian univerities: [Nastase, 2000]

1. Higher Education as a Tool for Political Agenda - the political will for alignment with Western nations and particularly with the European Union.
2. Higher Education as an Export Product - the desire to attract EU funding for projects and mobilities and the income brought by foreign students paying high fees.
3. Quality Enhancement Benefitting Local Students - the desire to offer degrees recognized for quality education forGeorgian students.
4. Restauration of Past Traditions – the pre-Soviet tradition of having an elite educated abroad.
5. Professional Development of Faculty - the desire of faculty to catch up with the trends in their fields.
6. Sense of Duty Towards Students - the duty to offer opportunities they had in the 1990s and 2000s to the students.
7. Support for Research - internationalization is essential in developing research.
8. Other, eg. Internationalization is a mean to fil a gap resulting from the decrease in population.

# Unit 2. International academic cooperation network

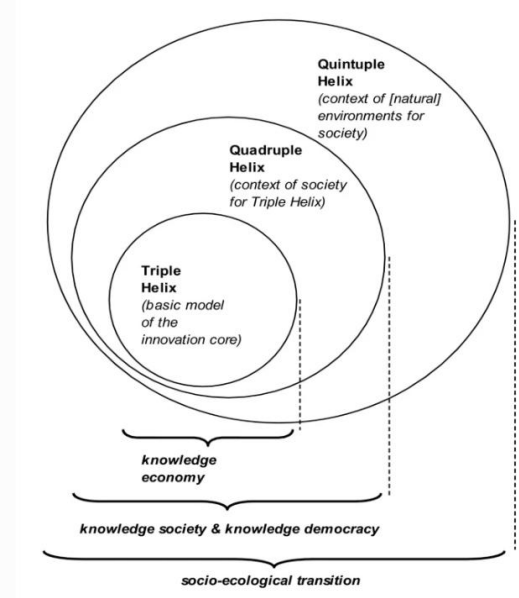
## 2.1. Academic cooperation

The process of internationalisation varies from institution to institution. It can be viewed in several aspects, i.e. networking, mobility and collaboration, which will be considered in this section.

All these aspects require the creation of conditions to build relationships with both the internal and external environment.

The potential for cooperation is determined, among other things, by the relationships between different stakeholder groups. This topic, especially in the context of building a model of innovative management that includes the complex relationships occurring in the knowledge creation process, was addressed by L. Leydesdorff and H. Etzkowitz (2001) creating the concept of the triple helix. The essence of this model was the assumption that innovations are created as a result of dynamic cooperation between scientific centres (understood as universities, research and scientific centres, support institutions), industry (enterprises) and public administration (including local government institutions). The Triple Helix involves transformations in internal institutional spheres as well as external relations. As Carayannis and Campbell (2010) argue, through this model, the non-linear interactions taking place between the three helixes can be analysed in terms of potential synergies. The recognition of the Triple Helix as an insufficient model in long-term innovation growth, the desire to emphasise the importance of media and culture [Afonso, Monteiro, Thompson, 2012], as well as the significant role of society in innovation systems, resulted in the development and subsequent rise in popularity of a new concept based on the Quadruple Helix. Presented by E.G. Carayannis, T.D. Barth and D. Campbell (2012), the model develops theories of innovation based on the Triple Helix model by incorporating media and civil society into the innovation system. The Quadruple Helix model - emphasises collaboration between four key sectors (academia, industry, government, civil society) to drive innovation, economic growth, and societal development [Sharma, Himani Kaushik 2022].

*FIGURE 3. TRIPLE AND QUADRUPLE HELIX*




*SOURCE: ELIAS G. CARAYANNIS, THORSTEN D. BARTH & DAVID FJ CAMPBELL, KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND INNOVATION. KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY, KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY (KNOWLEDGE DEMOCRACY), AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS OF SOCIETY. THE QUINTUPLE HELIX INNOVATION MODEL: GLOBAL WARMING AS A CHALLENGE AND DRIVER FOR INNOVATION, JOURNAL OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP VOLUME 1, 2 (2012)*

One of the key stakeholders referred to in the above concepts is academia.

Academic cooperation is viewed from different perspectives:

- enhances student and faculty growth, knowledge sharing, and resource exchange, benefiting higher education institutions and their stakeholders (Kumar, Kaushik, 2022);
- academic cooperation between Higher Education Institutions and Enterprises is crucial for regional economic development and academic spin-off creation, fostering knowledge transfer and professional competences [Pacheco, Franco, 2024].

We can deal with **inter and intra cooperation**:

- Inter cooperation refers to the collaboration between different HEIs, which can be within the same country or across international borders. This type of cooperation helps institutions to expand their reach, improve the quality of education and research, and engage with global challenges (academic partnership, research collaborations, capacity building).
- Intra cooperation refers to collaboration within a single HEI, across different departments, faculties, or administrative units. This internal cooperation enhances interdisciplinary learning, improves operational efficiency, and fosters a more

cohesive academic community (interdyscyplinary programmes, administrative collaboration, faculty collaboration, student collaboration).

Academic collaboration can also take many forms. The most common ones include: joint research projects, student and faculty exchanges, dual or joint degree, programs, conference and workshops, collaborative online learning, shared research facilities (Figure 3).

*FIGURE 4. FORMS OF ACADEMIC COOPERATION*

| **Form of academic cooperation** | **Description** |
|---|---|
| Joint Research Projects | Researchers from different institutions or countries collaborate on a specific research project. This can lead to shared publications, new discoveries, and advancements in a particular field |
| Student and Faculty Exchanges | Programs like Erasmus+ or Fulbright facilitate the exchange of students and faculty members between institutions. This promotes cultural exchange and broadens the academic experiences of participants |
| Dual or Joint Degree Programs | Institutions may partner to offer joint or dual degree programs where students earn degrees from both participating universities. This enhances the academic credentials of the graduates |
| Conferences and Workshops | Academic institutions often collaborate in organizing conferences, workshops, and seminars that bring together experts, researchers, and students to discuss current issues in various academic fields |
| Collaborative Online Learning | With advances in technology, institutions can offer joint online courses or MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), allowing students from different parts of the world to participate in the same learning experience |

| | |
|---|---|
| Shared Research Facilities | Institutions may agree to share specialized equipment, laboratories, or libraries, enabling researchers to access resources they might not have at their home institutions. |

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

**Benefits of academic cooperation**

Academic cooperation can bring numerous benefits. These include:

- Enhanced Learning Opportunities: the ability to access to a wider range of courses, faculty expertise, and resources
- Diverse Perspectives: collaboration brings together diverse viewpoints, leading to more comprehensive research and innovative solutions
- Increased Funding Opportunities: joint projects may attract funding from international organizations or governments that support academic cooperation
- Networking and Career Development: participation in international networks can open up career opportunities and professional growth for both students and faculty

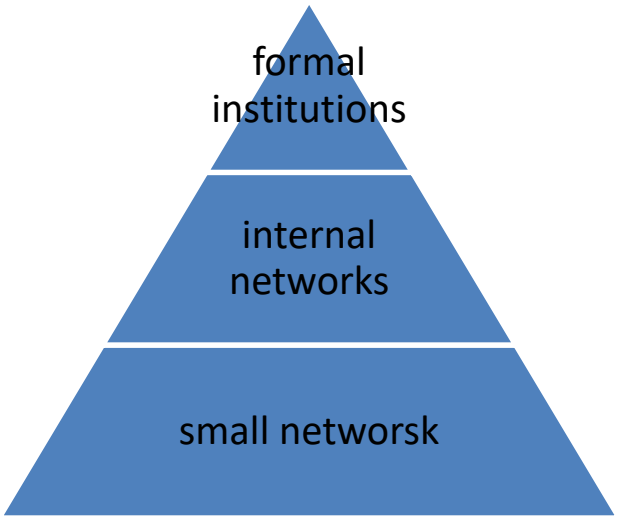
## 2.2. Networking of HEI

Networking is crucial for facilitating international collaborations, student and faculty exchanges, joint research projects, and the overall global engagement of institutions. Refers to the process of building and maintaining connections between universities, educational institutions, international organizations, government bodies, and other stakeholders involved in the internationalization of higher education.

According to the Organisation for Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition, a network is a link between different actors involved in a project that is based on cooperation and trust, as well as interdependencies of e.g. legal-administrative or economic nature .

In science, networking is also common and can bring many benefits to both individual researchers and entire organisations. This can be represented as a pyramid (Figure 4).

*FIGURE 5. TYPES OF NETWORKS*




*SOURCE: OWN STUDY BASED ON: HTTPS://TRENERNAUKI.PL/SIECI-WSPOLPRACY/*

A distinction is therefore made between:

- **formal institutions**: clusters, technology parks, federations or associations. Within the largest structures, it is possible to obtain centrally or internationally awarded funding - consortium grants for innovative projects with international reach. Example: Alliance of European Universities set up by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme, bringing together more than 500 higher education institutions from (more: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative);
- **internal networks** formed by separate units within an organisation. In cooperation between units, non-competitive central funds or projects can be acquired in competition with other networks. These are development programmes tailored to the scientific specialisation, to the field of research or to the nature of the cooperation between units. Example: institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences or units co-existing within the same university;
- **relatively small "networks"** created by individuals or small teams. At the team level, work efficiency can be increased within relatively small, although often ambitious and groundbreaking projects. Networks strengthen the personal brands of individual scientists, enhance career development and provide wide opportunities for individual activities, especially research internships[4]. Example: networks created within one laboratory or a small structure of several laboratories.

[4] https://trenernauki.pl/sieci-wspolpracy/

A distinction can also be made between three types of network[5]:

- **Personal** – network of individuals whom we trust and share similar 20uropean with (friend, family and acquaintances). These people are 20uropean20 outside of the workplace and provide help and advice when dealing with professional dilemmas
- **Operational** – this is the network of individuals we need to do get our jobs done efficiently. These people are typically collegues who depend on us
- **Strategic** – this netwok is about 20uropean. It helps us to define what the future looks like, and drivers us to succeed in that future

Networking also allows the exchange of experience, analysis of examples of good practice, broadening of participants' competences, creation of new solutions to meet the needs of the participating schools and teachers, networking and cooperation between universities, and the use of methodological and content-related expert support.

The key aspects of networking include:

- Building partnership,
- Facilitating student and faculty mobility,
- Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding,
- Supporting International Research Collaboration,
- Engaging with Government and Policy Makers,
- Enhancing Institutional Reputation and Visibility,
- Capacity Building and Professional Developmen,
- Alumni Networks.

**International networks of HEI:**

- are collaborative platforms where universities and colleges from different countries come together to achieve common goals related to education, research, and global engagement. These networks facilitate cross-border cooperation, enhance the quality of education, and promote the internationalization of higher education,
- are essential for fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and addressing global challenges. These networks facilitate the internationalization of education, enhance research collaboration, and promote sustainability initiatives,

[5] https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/academic-networking-156017574/156017574#8

- networks and associations for HEI internationalization provide platforms for universities to integrate globally, negotiate with local governments, and manage mobility programs effectively [Aponte, Ramírez, 2017],
- they serve as spaces for articulating shared goals and negotiating resources, which is crucial for enhancing the global presence of institutions [Aponte, Ramírez, 2017],
- these collaborations are vital for addressing complex educational challenges and enhancing the quality of research outputs [Chih Fu at al., 2022].

**Benefits of international networks of HEI**

International networks of HEI bring numerous benefits to both universities and the entire academic community. The most important benefits of participating in international cooperation networks include:

- **Enhanced knowledge, information and resource sharing** – allows for the exchange of knowledge, sharing of good practices, research results and experiences. Cooperation creates access to the latest research results and enables the use of laboratories, technologies and resources that are not available locally;
- **Connections** – allows for building relationships between institutions, teams and individuals;
- **Promotion** – activities with foreign partners affect the image of the university and its positioning on the global education market;
- **Credibility** – the credibility of a university depends on many factors, including the ability to establish and maintain valuable partnerships and the scope of influence on the international arena;
- **Self-steem** – participation in international projects increases the self-esteem of cooperation participants. By gaining experience in an international environment, they gain greater self-confidence, develop soft skills, and build a sense of belonging to the global academic community;
- **Global visibility** – cooperation with foreign partners increases the visibility and attractiveness of the university on the international arena. It often raises the university's results in international rankings, which in turn affects its recognition among scientists and students from all over the world;
- **Support system** – international cooperation influences the development and improvement of the support system, which is a key element of effective functioning in the global academic environment. It includes various forms of assistance (e.g. academic, administrative, student, financial, language, research and technological support for scientists) allowing for adaptation, development and effective cooperation;

- **Policy influence** – international cooperation can influence the shaping of policy at the national and international level (including, e.g. educational, research and innovation, foreign, ecological, etc. policy). Educational and research activities can influence the creation of new regulations and strategies in various areas of socio-economic life;
- **Cultural exchange** – participation in international projects teaches understanding of cultural and social differences, which develops intercultural skills and promotes acceptance and openness.

**Types of International networks of HEI**

International higher education networks are a platform for cooperation between universities from different countries aimed at exchanging knowledge, research results, mobility of the academic community and development of innovation. These networks are differentiated depending on the objectives and areas of activity or geographical scope.

The main types of international networks of HEI include:

- **Research networks** – created to promote collaborative inter-institutional research. Example: League of European Research Universities (more: https://www.leru.org/), European Cooperation in Science and Technology (more: https://www.cost.eu/);
- **Academic consortia** bring together universities to cooperate on educational programs, exchange students and lecturers, and develop joint curricula. Example: Universitas 21 (more: https://universitas21.com/), European Network of Innovative Higher Eduaction Institutions (more: https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/innovation-in-education/22uropean-network-of-innovative-higher-education-institutions) European University of Cities in Post-Industrial Transitio UNIC (more: https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/unic);
- **Regional University Associations** – concern cooperation between higher education institutions in a specific geographic region, responding to regional educational and research needs. Example: European University Association (more: https://www.eua.eu/);
- **Global University networks** – networking of universities from all over the world in order to cooperate in a wide range (including the quality of education and scientific research). Example: Global University Network for Innovation (more: https://www.guninetwork.org/);
- **Thematic networks** – focus on specific topics or disciplines, bringing together institutions that share common interests in a given field. Example: Association of European Schools of Planning (more: https://aesop-planning.eu/aesop/about-aesop);
- **Mobility networks** – support the mobility of students and faculty, often creating conditions for credit transfer, joint programs and cultural exchange. Example: Erasmus+ Program: A European Union initiative that supports education, training,

youth, and sport, facilitating mobility and cooperation among HEIs across Europe (more: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/);

- **Quality assurance and accreditation networks** – work to ensure and enhance the quality of higher education. They collaborate on e.g. accreditation standards, quality assurance practices and policy development. Example: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (more: https://www.inqaahe.org/), Eurydice (more: https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/poland/quality-assurance-higher-education).

## 2.3. Alumni networks in HEI

Alumni networks play an important role in the functioning and development of higher education institutions.

Alumni refers to graduates of higher education institutions, former employees, and associates of universities or similar educational institutions [Rohlmann, Wömper, 2009]. An alumni association is seen as a community that unites former students, helping them stay connected to both the institution and other alumni[6].

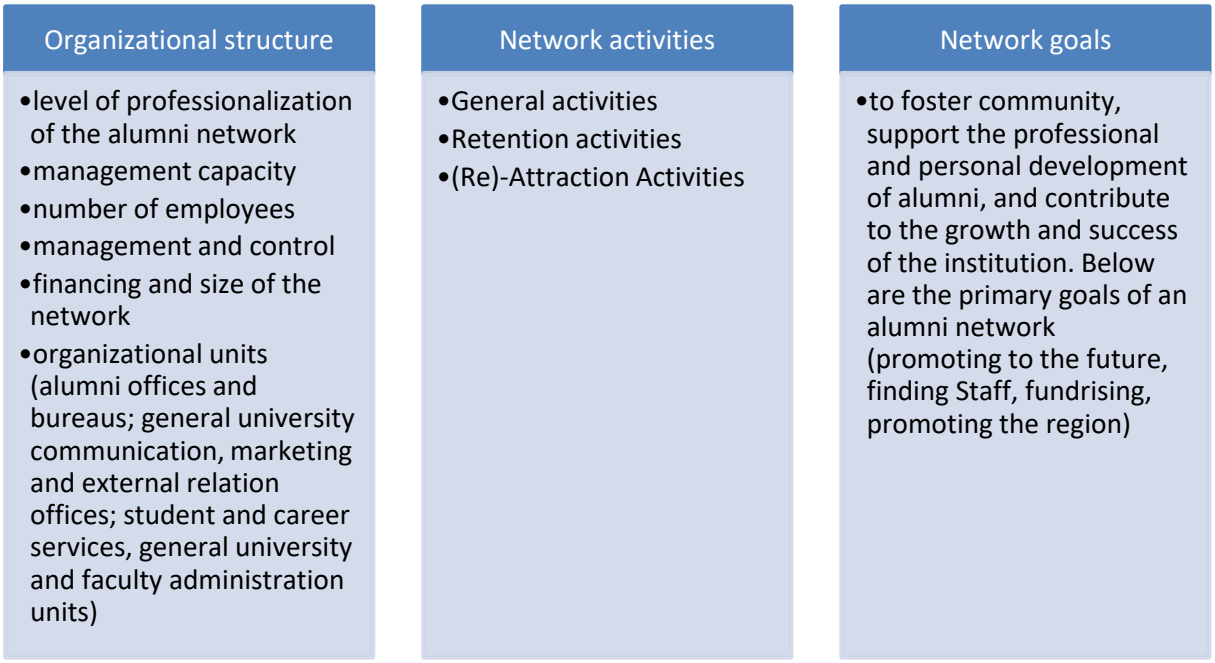
According to practitioners, "How institutions define their alumni is a decision made individually by each institution" – Sara Telfer, Director of Alumni Engagement at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU)[7] and "building relationships with students not just throughout their years of study, but rather throughout their lives, yields lifelong benefits for both the institution and the graduates" [Aponte, Ramírez, 2017].

Alumni networks have proven beneficial for graduates of any age. Alumni groups provide ample opportunity for networking connections, career insight, professional support, and more. Alumni associations hold events that benefit current students and alumni alike, and give opportunities for volunteer service[8].

The main aspects characterizing alumni networks include: organizational structure, network activities, network goals (Figure 6).

[6] https://www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/community/what-does-alumni-mean
[7] https://www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/community/what-does-alumni-mean#:~:text=An%20alumni%20network%20connects%20you,other%20graduates%20from%20your%20university.
[8] https://crummer.rollins.edu/resources/what-is-an-alumni-network/

*FIGURE 6. ALUMNI NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS*




*SOURCE: OWN COMPILATION BASED ON: ALEXANDRA DAVID, FRANS COENEN, ALUMNI NETWORKS – AN UNTAPPED POTENTIAL TO GAIN AND RETAIN HIGHLY-SKILLED WORKERS?, HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES; VOL. 4, NO. 5; 2014*

Maintaining alumni networks occurs in two channels - it involves creating and maintaining connections between: 1. graduates and their alma mater, and 2. among graduates themselves.

Maintaining the network in the long term requires implementing a strategy that promotes engagement (active participation). The strategy for maintaining the alumni network consists of a set of actions taken in various spheres of the university's functioning (Figure 7).

*FIGURE 7. THE STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING ALUMNI NETWORKS*

| | |
|---|---|
| Communictation | social media, e-mail campainges newstetters and magazines |
| Events and reuninions | annual reunions, etworking events, virtual events |
| Sense of Community | alumni chapters, interest groups, online platforms |
| Career Support and Development | career services, mentorship programs, professional development |
| Institutional Activities | guest lectures and panels, volunteer opportunities, alumni awards and recognition |
| Fundraising and Philanthropy | donor engagement, scholarships and funds, crowdfunding campaigns |
| Lifelong Learning Opportunities | continuing education, alumni library access, knowledge sharing |
| Gather and Utilize Feedback | surveys and polls, alumni advisory committees |
| Institutional Ties | keep alumni informed, alumni involvement in governance, celebrate institutional milestones |
| Personalized Engagement | segmented communication, alumni stories, milestone acknowledgments |

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

## 2.4. International communication

An important aspect for higher education institutions operating in different countries and cultural contexts is the development of an international communication strategy. Effective international communication requires clear and understandable messages, respect for cultural differences and maintaining relationships in the long term.

International communication refers to the exchange of information across national borders and between people from different cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds. It encompasses a wide range of practices, strategies, and challenges, particularly as globalization, digital technology, and multicultural interactions increase.

When designing an international communications strategy, the following elements should be taken into account:

- Understand cultural differences,
- Tailor messaging for different audiences,
- Choose the right channels,
- Develop global brand consistency,
- Engage local stakeholders,
- Training and capacity building,
- Use technology to bridge gaps,
- Monitor and evaluate communication,
- Crisis communictation,
- Language consideration.

# Unit 3. HEI management towards international cooperation

## 3.1. The higher education model

The higher education model, by setting the framework for external and internal academic management, defines the goals and activities of the university. The concept of the university model is perceived as a whole:

- academic obligations of the university: its essence (mission and goals),
- relations between the basic areas of its activity,
- relations with the environment,
- its internal organization.

Universities are evolving towards third-generation universities, which gives rise to a lively discussion on the direction and pace of this evolution, as well as its justification (the third-generation university model is blamed for the unfavorable processes that can be observed in higher education, especially the decline in the quality of education and the dependence of universities on various groups of market stakeholders) (Piotrowska-Piątek, 2019).

*FIGURE 8. EVOLUTION OF UNIVERSITIES*

| Feature | Model of Humboldt University | Model of entrepreneurial university |
|---|---|---|
| Mission and essence of existence | Spreading through knowledge while maintaining elitism of education; community of professors and students; discovery of truth; guarantee of freedom for research and education. | Education for labour market needs in mass education conditions; interdyscyplinary research; transfer of knowledge to the environment; getting involved in developmental processes of societies; a significant role of the third mission. |
| Role of university in public order | Element of national, three-tier education system. | Element of national and regional systems of innovation and social and economic development. |
| Orgaization and structure | Autonomy; isolation from the environment; apart from departments, the structure includes laboratories and research institutions. | A strong management centre; stakeholders' participation in managing a school; co-existence of strong organizational units and research centres; peripheral segments (e.g. academic technological parks). |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Source of finance | Public, school's budget, independent of the state. | Diversified sources (public, private, so-colled third stream). |
| Relations of environment | Do not occur. | Intensive, formal and informal, multi-layered. |
| Organizational culture | Parthership of professors and students. | Corporation type (target-oriented, responsibility and accountability); considerable role of grass-roots initiatives. |

*SOURCE: AGNIESZKA PIOTROWSKA-PIĄTEK, ARE POLISH HEIS ON THE WAY TO THE THIRD GENERATION UNIVERSITY?, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT VOLUME 18 (2019) NUMBER 2, PP. 27–45.*

The third-generation school model is close to the concept of the entrepreneurial university formulated by Clark in 1998 [Clark, 1998].

Clark distinguishes five characteristics of entrepreneurial universities, including the following:

- **development of peripheral segments** (i.e. units created primarily with the school or with external stakeholders, necessary to break down traditional divisions between knowledge disciplines and develop cooperation with the environment in research, knowledge transfer, contacts with business and alumni, fundraising, protection of intellectual property and continuing education);
- **diversification of sources of financing** (as public financial outlays on higher education decrease, it is necessary to seek research financing from the third stream, i.e. external partners) [Piotrowska-Piątek, 2019].

The entrepreneurial university model places great emphasis on innovation, commercialization of knowledge and close cooperation with the economic environment. Within this model, international cooperation plays a key role because it increases the possibilities of development, technology transfer, and acquiring knowledge and resources from other countries.

Due to, among other things, the complexity of regulations, cultural differences, the specificity of individual institutions, the multitude and complex nature of the undertakings (projects) undertaken within them, as well as different goals and interests, international cooperation requires careful planning. Key management areas to focus on when planning international cooperation in higher education institutions include:

- **institutional strategy and mission** - international cooperation should be aligned with the mission and goals outlined in the institutional strategy. It should be clearly stated how the cooperation fits into the university's long-term vision;
- **international relations management** - it is important to designate units/offices/teams in the organizational structure of the university responsible for managing international cooperation. The scope of their activities should be adapted to the

specifics of the university, but in general their role is to coordinate activities, establish contacts and maintain relations with international partners;

- **human resources management** - it is important that academic and administrative staff have experience in international work and language skills;
- **financial management** - providing adequate financial resources to finance the activities of scientific and administrative staff is crucial from the point of view of international cooperation. In this context, proper management of financial resources is important, including obtaining funds from international grants and programs such as Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ and others;
- **project management** - international cooperation often involves joint projects. Proper management of these, including planning, implementation, monitoring progress, evaluation, reporting and risk management, is essential. Other aspects specific to the project should also be taken into account, such as intellectual property management (important in international projects in the case of joint publications or patents);
- **legal and regulatory management** - actions undertaken by HEI must comply with international and national legal regulations. Cooperation should also be regulated by separate agreements (international agreements), which should specify in detail the terms of cooperation, including financial arrangements, obligations and dispute resolution;
- **marketing and recruitment management** - interest in the university's offer among foreign students and employees is crucial for promoting the university in the international environment. Successful recruitment depends on an effective marketing strategy. Universities should include support for foreign students in their activities, allowing for proper and quick adaptation in a new country.

## 3.2. Institutional strategy and mission

The contemporary challenges facing hEIs require balancing traditional educational functions with research, innovation, and community engagement. Essential to increasing global engagement, improving academic quality, and expanding the reach and impact of institutions are:

- **Evolving Missions of HEIs**

Teaching, Research, and Community Service: HEIs are increasingly recognized for their three core missions: teaching enhances human capital, research fosters innovation, and community service bridges academia with societal needs [Compagnucci, Spigarelli, 2020].

- **Strategic Alignment and Governance**

Vision and Governance: Effective governance aligned with the institution's vision and mission is crucial for achieving educational excellence and student development [Nethravathi, Maiya, 2022]. HEIs are also focusing on internationalisation to enhance their global presence and educational offerings, which involves strategic planning and implementation of various activities [Hawawini, 2011].

- **Addressing Societal Challenges**

Sustainability Initiatives - Institutions like the University of Aveiro are integrating sustainability into their missions, addressing climate change through community engagement and innovative practices [Leal at al., 2024].

The international strategy:

- must take into account the specificity of the institution, the external environment, internal conditions and available resources,
- adopting a strategic approach to internationalization allows for better and more effective implementation of goals in this area. It helps to organize activities, define long-term goals and ensure their consistent implementation,
- internationalization strategies allow for overcoming weaknesses resulting from the changing term of office of university authorities,
- adopting long-term internationalization priorities and recording them in a strategy or other strategic document allows for stable and consistent development of internationalization processesadopting and implementing an internationalization strategy is an important element of the development of internationalization processes in universities [Górak-Sosnowska, Katarzyna Kacperczyk, 2020].

Preparing a strategy requires a well-planned process involving various resources. The individual stages of the process consist of:

- analysis of external conditions,
- analysis of internal conditions,
- defining the mission and vision of the university,
- setting strategic goals,
- developing an action plan,
- defining measures of individual goals,
- defining flagship programs, projects or initiatives,
- identifying risks,
- defining the organizational framework for strategy management and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

International cooperation should be closely linked to the university's development strategy, because internationalization can significantly strengthen its position, prestige and innovation. International cooperation must be an integral part of the university's overall strategic goals, which is why it is often included as a key pillar of the strategy.

**Local needs and realities in the strategy**

The internationalisation of universities often focuses on global partnerships and international standards, but it is equally important to adapt these activities to local realities and needs. Taking into account the cultural, social and economic specificities of the university's country of origin can significantly increase the effectiveness of internationalisation processes and their acceptance in the local community.

When preparing the strategy, it is worth taking into account the local context by, among other things:

1. **analysing local needs**: carrying out a detailed diagnosis that identifies key challenges and priority areas for the region or country, such as the shortage of specialists in specific fields, the needs of local businesses or social issues (e.g. environmental protection, public health).
2. **integration of local resources and heritage**: integrating local culture, language and traditions into curricula and research projects as a way to enrich the experience of both domestic and international students.
3. **local sustainability**: designing international education and research initiatives that support the development of the region, e.g. through collaboration with local businesses or NGOs.

The assumptions of each strategy are further developed with specific actions. To ensure that local needs and realities are taken into account, universities:

- prepare programmes to support local businesses (e.g. by creating courses of study in cooperation with local companies that enable students to acquire the skills needed in the region's labour market),
- implement research that addresses local challenges by planning and carrying out research projects in international teams that focus on country-specific problems (e.g., management of natural resources, protection of cultural heritage).
- organise knowledge exchange with a local perspective by organising seminars and workshops in which foreign experts interact with local communities to share their experience in solving similar problems.

## 3.3. International relations management

International Relations Management (IRM) is the management of all aspects of international cooperation and relations with foreign institutions, organizations, students and employees, the aim of which is to take actions supporting the internationalization of universities. The following should be regarded as important

- activities aimed at developing and maintaining international relations and cooperation at the academic level,
- successful strategies focus on relationship marketing, data management and international collaboration to improve the international student experiences and foster academic partnerships,
- the implementation of Relationship Marketing (RM) strategies significantly improves the experiences of international students, enhancing their satisfaction and retention rates in UK HEIs [Omoruyi, Rembielak, 2019],
- RM fosters essential connections between students, alumni, and faculty, which are crucial for creating a supportive educational environment [Han, 2021].

## 3.4. Human resources management

Human Resources Management (HRM) is the management of academic, administrative and other staff within an institution. In the context of the university's international cooperation, it is the management of diverse teams, staff mobility and recruitment. It encompasses a range of activities related to the recruitment, development, motivation and support of staff to

ensure the effective functioning of the university and the high quality of teaching, research and administrative services.

- involves evaluating, placing, developing, compensating, and retaining employees within organizations. It encompasses staffing, training, compensation, and legal considerations to optimize workforce effectiveness [Kammeyer-Mueller, 2015];
- involves strategic HR practices to attract, motivate, and retain qualified employees within an effective organizational structure, going beyond traditional administrative roles to support company goals [Gutterman, 2023];
- in higher education HRM plays a crucial role in enhancing educational quality and institutional effectiveness. The integration of HRM with digital competencies is essential for adapting to technological advancements, fostering innovation, and improving operational efficiency [Rohayati, 2024]. HRM practices significantly influence employee performance and educational outcomes [Pham, 2024].

## 3.5. Financial management

Financial management is also an important aspect of international cooperation. This is the process of planning, organizing, controlling and monitoring all financial aspects of HEI to ensure its stability, effective operation and achievement of strategic goals. It includes managing both current expenses and investments so that the institution can develop its teaching, research and administrative activities.

*FIGURE 9. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FINANCIAL*

| | |
|---|---|
| budget planning | • budgeting<br>• long-term planning |
| revenue management | • tuition fees<br>• subsidies<br>• research grants<br>• funds from commercial activities |
| expenditure management | • employee salaries and benefits<br>• operating costs<br>• infrastructure investments |
| financial control and audit | |
| financial risk management | • changes in public funding<br>• changing operating costs, related to infrastructure maintenance |
| investment and development | • campus expansion<br>• technology investments |

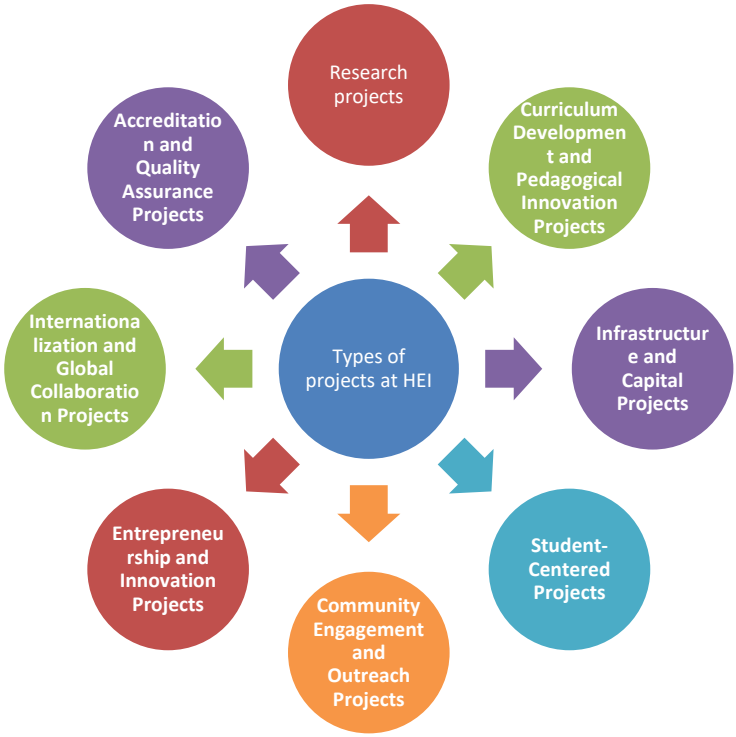
| | |
|---|---|
| | • international development - investments in exchange programs, research cooperation with foreign partners attracting international students |
| strategies for obtaining additional funds | • fundraising and donations<br>• cooperation with the private sector<br>• EU and international programs, including Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and other international initiatives |
| debt management | • loans<br>• issuing bonds to finance investments |

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

## 3.6. Project management

Project management is a structured approach to planning, executing, and overseeing projects to achieve specific goals efficiently. It encompasses various methodologies and practices that ensure effective resource allocation, risk management, and stakeholder engagement. At HEI various types of projects are carried out, reflecting the diverse missions of teaching, research, and community engagement. These projects often involve multiple stakeholders, including faculty, students, industry partners, and government bodies

*FIGURE 10. TYPES OF PROJECTS AT HEI - EXAMPLES*




*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

**Research projects**: basic research, applied research and interdisciplinary research, collaborative/consortia research, grant-funded research

**Curriculum development and pedagogical innovation projects**: new program development, e-learning and blended learning projects, curriculum internationalization, teaching innovation

**Infrastructure and capital projects**: campus development**,** technology upgrades**,** sustainability projects

**Student-centered projects**: capstone projects**,** internship programs**,** student research projects**,** service-learning projects

**Community engagement and outreach projects**: public policy and social impact projects, community development projects, cultural and arts projects

**Entrepreneurship and innovation projects**: startup incubation, innovation hubs and maker spaces, industry collaboration projects

**Internationalization and global collaboration projects:** student exchange programs, collaborative research with global partners**,** dual degree and joint programs.

**Accreditation and quality assurance projects:** program accreditation projects, quality assurance systems

**Project management methodologies**

Project management methodology encompasses a variety of structured approaches to planning, executing, and monitoring projects, ensuring they meet their stated goals within defined constraints. It helps teams effectively plan, execute, and monitor projects. There are many project management methodologies. Each methodology has its own principles, tools, techniques, and processes that help manage time, budget, risk, and resourcesu. Using the right methodology can significantly increase a project's chances of success because it introduces structured and proven practices. Key methodologies include: waterfall, agile, scrum, kanban, PRINCE2, Lean, PMBook.

**Agile project management methodology**

It is iterative and flexible project management method, especially popular in the IT industry, which allows for quick response to changes, delivery of partial solutions and constant interaction with the client.

Application – projects in which requirements may change during implementation (e.g. software development).

*FIGURE 11. AGILE METHODOLOGY*




*SOURCE: HTTPS://ASANA.COM/PL/RESOURCES/AGILE-METHODOLOGY*

This methodology can be used in HEI:

- can be implemented in the context of managing educational, research and administrative projects,
- application: research projects, curriculum development, IT projects management, organizational change implementation, student project management, innovative initiatives, international initiative management.

The application of this methodology in universities can bring benefits such as: faster implementation of innovations, better collaboration between teams, greater flexibility in project management. It is a methodology that supports universities in adapting to a rapidly changing environment.

Universities may consider using tools that facilitate the management of proposals, documentation and communication in international projects. This catalogue may include:

1. **Project management tools**

- Trello - an easy-to-use tool based on Kanban boards that can be used to track the status of requests, assign tasks to a team and manage schedules.

- Asana - a more powerful solution that allows project progress tracking, task scheduling and reporting. It can create separate projects for each Erasmus+ application.
- Microsoft Planner integrated with Microsoft 365 - Enables easy organisation of work in academic teams. Ideal if your university uses the Microsoft suite.
- Monday.com - a platform that allows you to manage multiple projects simultaneously, with extensive reporting options, integration with calendars and other applications.

2. **Specialised software for managing international programmes**
   - Mobility Tool+ - an official tool provided by the European Commission to manage participant data, reports and settlements of Erasmus+ projects.
   - MoveON - a tool dedicated to universities that facilitates the management of international cooperation, including mobility programmes. It integrates with university data management systems (e.g. USOS).
3. **Collaboration and communication tools**
   - Slack - an excellent tool for rapid communication in project teams. Allows the creation of channels dedicated to different projects.
   - Microsoft Teams - integrates with Office 365 and offers chats, video meetings, file sharing and integration with other applications.
   - Google Workspace - includes tools such as Google Drive, Google Calendar and Google Meet. Useful for managing project files and schedules.
4. **Document management tools**
   - Dropbox / Google Drive - make it easy to share and store project documents.
   - DocuSign - a tool for quickly signing contracts and electronic documents, which is particularly useful for international collaborations.
   - SharePoint - ideal for universities using Microsoft 365 and allows central management of documentation and projects.
5. **Financial planning and reporting tools**
   - Excel with add-ons (e.g. Solver) - used for advanced project budget planning and billing.
   - SAP Concur - solution for expense management, business travel and cost reporting.

- Grant Management Software - systems such as Cayuse or Fluxx support grant management, from application to reporting.

If the university uses a student services system (e.g. USOS in Poland), it is worth implementing integration with MoveON or other specialised systems.

The efficiency, effectiveness and effectiveness of the process depends on training the team to use the new tools. Regular updates and customisation of systems are also important.

## 3.7. Legal and regulatory management

refers to the processes and practices organizations use to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, standards, and ethical guidelines that govern their operations. This is essential to avoid legal penalties, ensure ethical conduct, and protect an organization's reputation. In HEIs effective legal and regulatory management helps navigate complex and constantly evolving legal frameworks.

In the context of international cooperation in higher education institutions, key elements include:

- international collaboration agreements,
- student mobility and visa compliance,
- research compliance and ethics,
- cross-border data and privacy laws,
- accreditation and quality assurance.

## 3.8. Marketing and recruitment management

refers to the strategies, processes, and practices used to attract international students and faculty, build global partnerships, and promote the institution's brand on a global scale. International marketing and recruitment strategies are key to attracting talent, increasing international presence, and increasing competitiveness in the global education market.

In the context of international cooperation at universities, elements of marketing and recruitment management include:

- international marketing strategy,
- global branding and positioning,
- targeted recruitment strategies,

- international partnerships and collaborations,
- digital and social media marketing,
- international recruitment events,
- admissions and visa suport,
- alumni networks and ambassadors.

International cooperation among universities, especially in the context of university alliances and academic exchanges, comes with many benefits, but also with a variety of risks related to visa issues, legal issues and international regulations.

The main risks and compliance aspects that may occur in this type of cooperation include:

1. Risks related to visa issues
    - Lengthy visa processes: international exchanges, especially between universities from non-EU countries (e.g., Georgia), may involve difficulties related to long visa waiting times. Predictability and timeliness of obtaining a visa can affect the implementation of exchange programs.
    - Visa restrictions: some countries may impose restrictions on student or research visas, particularly in situations of political or economic tension. This may affect the availability of academic mobility and international cooperation.
    - Lack of uniform regulations: due to the lack of uniform visa regulations and the diversity of national requirements, students and academics may face difficulties in obtaining a visa, especially for non-Schengen countries.
2. Compliance with immigration laws and EU regulations
    - Rules on student and staff mobility: international cooperation must take into account the principles of free movement of people, which are guaranteed within the European Union. Universities must comply with regulations for incoming exchange students, especially in terms of registration in the host country and access to health insurance.
    - Rules on the employment of foreigners: if academics from non-EU countries (e.g., Georgia) come to lecture or do research work, institutions must comply with regulations on the employment of foreigners. This may involve obtaining appropriate work permits.
    - Recognition of academic qualifications: international cooperation also involves the recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications. These issues are regulated by the Bologna Process regulations, but can be problematic when national regulations are not sufficiently consistent or understandable.
3. Data protection risks
    - RODO compliance: when exchanging students, researchers or administration between EU and non-EU countries, universities must comply with data protection regulations

(RODO). There may be challenges associated with different data protection standards in non-EU countries.

- Data exchange: international cooperation may involve the exchange of data between universities in different countries, which can pose risks if data security requirements are not met.

4. Migration policy risks
   - Changes in visa policies: visa and migration policies can change in response to changes in governments, political decisions or other factors. Such changes can affect the fluidity of academic exchange and mobility.
   - Refugee and migrant protection issues: when working with countries affected by refugee crises (e.g., Ukraine), there may be additional challenges related to ensuring access to education, legal residency and mobility under such programs.
5. Risks associated with the interpretation of the law
   - Lack of clear regulations: for countries outside the EU, such as Georgia, there may be difficulties in ensuring compliance with European regulations on recognition of qualifications, freedom of movement of students and employees, and data exchange.
   - Diverse laws: each country has its own interpretation of international education regulations, which can lead to difficulties in coordinating exchange programs between different countries.

To achieve compliance, ensure:

- Cooperation with legal professionals: universities should cooperate with lawyers specializing in international education law and visa regulations.
- Monitoring changes in regulations: universities should regularly monitor changes in visa, immigration and data protection regulations in both the EU and partner countries.
- Staff training: regular training for administrative and academic staff on international mobility rules, visa procedures and employment policies for foreigners can help minimize legal risks.

## 3.9. Practical aspects of project management (institutional perspective)

depending on the nature of the institution, its size, structure, organisational culture, etc., projects can be prepared and implemented at several levels:

- **faculty level** – prepared on the initiative of the faculty staff. The authors of the projects are most often academic and teaching staff and PhD students. The initiative is often dispersed between different faculty units. If a team/unit operates at the

faculty to support the project, it is possible that the idea for the project will also arise there;

- **central level** – the key role in the initiative process is played by the established unit (e.g. international cooperation office, research centre). Mobility projects are usually implemented at this level (e.g. within the Erasmus programme). This level plays a key role in the case of interdisciplinary research/innovation projects that require the involvement of several faculties/entities from external institutions
- **external institutions** (e.g. public sector entities or enterprises) – such an initiative takes place especially in the case of projects with high commercial potential or important from the point of view of public interest.

Projects are developed and implemented in a turbulent environment, which means that at each stage of the project life cycle, it is important to be aware of the problems / barriers / risks that may translate into implementation. The main ones include:

- knowledge dispersion at HEI (including dispersion of knowledge about projects),
- unfavourable legal status,
- limited time capacity of scholars,
- limited staff capacity of HEI,
- lack of experience in the planning and execution of projects (poor project planning),
- funding and resource constraints,
- administrative and bureaucratic hurdles,
- collaboration and team dynamics,
- risk management failures,
- intellectual property and legal issues,
- time management and deadlines,
- stakeholder engagement,
- knowledge transfer and capacity building,
- ethical and social considerations,
- sustainability and long-term impact,
- data management and analysis,
- evaluation and feedback challenges,
- communication breakdown,
- cultural differences,
- language barriers,
- regulatory and legal compliance.

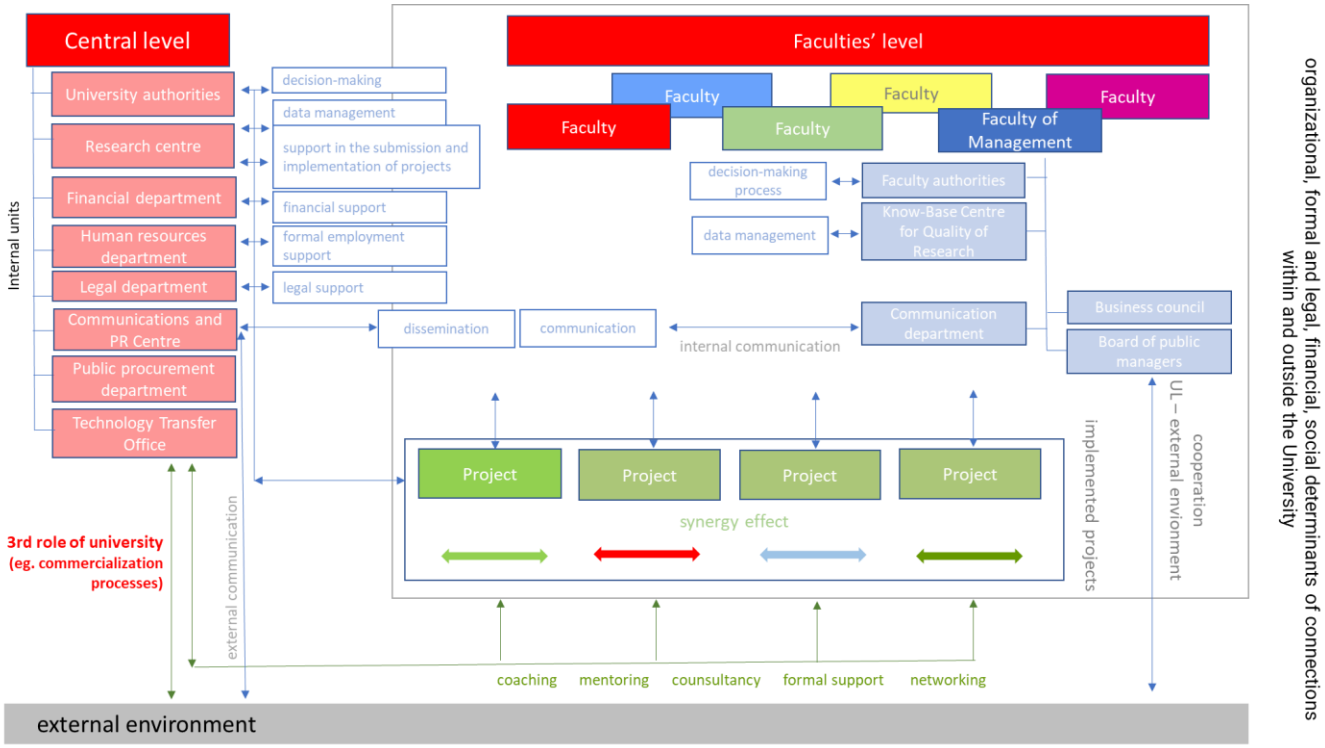


## 3.10. Internal structure of HEI and management of international cooperation

the internal structure of the HEI and the management of international cooperation include a central system as well as internal divisions into departments, units and staff responsible for supervising activities. The internal structure of the university should be transparent and allow for full mobility support.

This structure will depend, among other things, on the size of the institution. For example, the structure of the University of Łódź, with 3,400 employees and approximately 30 students, is described in Figure 12.

*FIGURE 12. THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ*




*SOURCE: BARTOSZ KALINOWSKI, MAGDALENA WIŚNIEWSKA, MAŁGORZATA ŻAK-SKWIERCZYŃSKA, POST-PROJECT ACTION PLAN FOR FURTHER IVAP INSTITUTIONALIZATION, RIECOLAB | PROJECT EIT KAVA ID: 21307, 2023*

One of the important internal units in the context of international cooperation are the offices of cooperation with foreign countries. They play a dual role. First, they implement strategic activities related to internationalization in a professional and consistent manner. Second, they implement tasks such as recruiting foreign students or handling international student exchange.

The functions performed by the international cooperation offices include:

- **strategic function** – managing the internationalization of the university,
- **regulatory function** – preparing orders and other documents within the scope of the tasks performed
- **coordinating function** – strengthening contacts with foreign partners and integrating the international activities of the university
- **marketing function** – promoting the university's offer outside the country
- **design function** – handling international educational and scientific projects
- **recruitment and service function** – recruiting candidates from abroad for studies, organizing technical support and events for foreign guests [Górak-Sosnowska, Kacperczyk, 2020].

However, the relationship between central units and projects can vary greatly. This depends on the current conditions, including the structure of the university, the number and scale of projects, their nature (institution-wide projects / departmental projects), etc. In the case of mobility projects, the preparation and implementation of the project is handled by the University of Lodz central units. In the case of strategic or scientific projects, the situation is different.

The scale of support depends on the project's current phase, expectations of the project initiator (often resulting from the person's previous experience), and the time capacity of the central unit's employees participating in the project support works. At the preparation stage of a research project, especially in the case of projects not requiring a big project team, the greatest burden of both academic and financial work falls on the scholar. Planning the budget is the most difficult part. In such cases, central units support the prospective project coordinator in terms of formalities (analysis of project's compliance with the call's requirements, collecting essential approvals and signatures), often also consulting how the project is planned, especially when it comes to finances and the project implementation schedule.

If the project initiative is created at the university units' level (e.g. the UL Research Centre or the Projects' Support Team), the units participate in various stages of project works, including the preparation of descriptions for the purpose of application forms. Their involvement often consists in work coordination for academic teams responsible for developing the concept of the project. These units also play the key role at the stage of negotiating projects and signing grant agreements.

During the project execution phases, the scope of the support varies as well. It depends on:

- the scale of the project and financial capacity for employing a project team – in case of large-scale projects with a significant budget, project leaders decide to hire external persons (dedicated only to the project) or to give positions to the already existing university staff members who are (as a rule) experienced in implementing projects and are seconded to the new venture in a part-time work frame;
- staff capacity of the University – the implementation of large-scale projects results in limited possibility of employing the existing university staff for new endeavours. In such a situation, employing external team members becomes a necessity.

Thus, the involvement of internal faculty units depends on the above-mentioned conditions. It happens that university staff from these units partake in the implementation of projects (e.g. in the administrative or/and financial area) – the rules of engagement are usually established at the project planning stage;

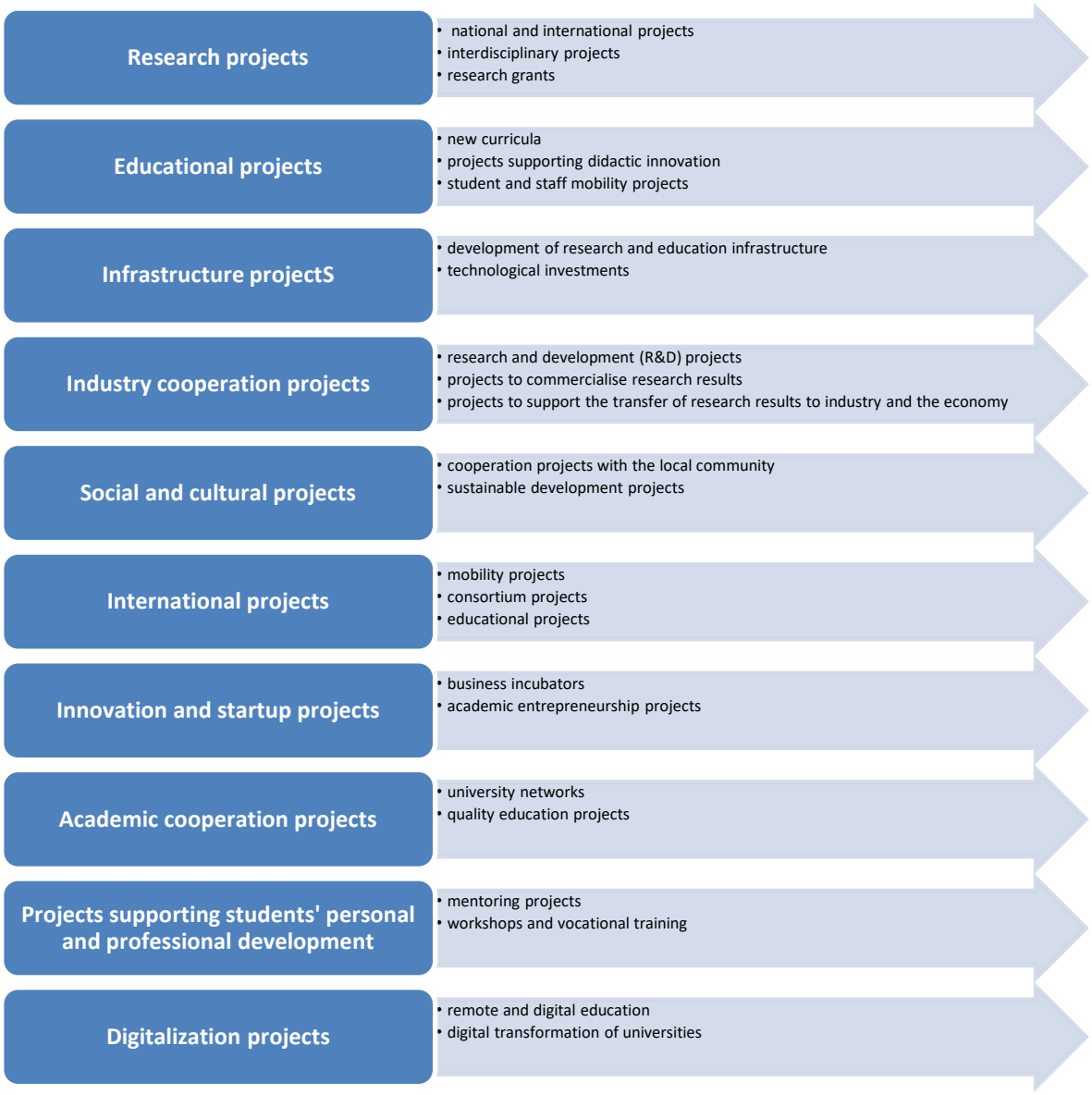
In the case of the UL Research Centre, the situation is different – at the stage of project implementation, all financial and accounting documents as well as payments run through this unit. The Centre appoints a project supervisor for each project. This unit is also responsible for monitoring the project implementation in terms of cost control. During the execution of a project, other units may be involved, too, e.g. those responsible for promotion or public procurement (if the project requires tenders). Again, the conditions of cooperation are established at the project planning stage.

# Unit 4. Mobility and cooperation partnership

## 4.1. Higher education projects

As indicated earlier, there can be different higher education projects at the university.

*FIGURE 13. TYPES OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECTS.*




*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

Mobility and Cooperation Partnerships (MCP) - initiatives that promote international cooperation and mobility, usually between different countries, regions, institutions or

organisations. Depending on the context, they can cover different areas, such as education, work, research, culture or economy

- Mobility - refers to the ability of people, resources or ideas to move between different countries or institutions. It can include exchange programs for students, staff, researchers, healthcare workers etc. Example: Erasmus+ program, which enables mobility of students and researchers between universities in different countries
- Cooperation Partnership - cooperation between different entities (e.g. countries, international organizations, universities or companies) aimed at achieving common goals. It can include research projects, technological innovations, joint economic ventures, exchange of experience or development of human resources.

Examples of MCPs may include, but are not limited to: research programmes to support cooperation between universities in different countries, staff exchange programmes for upgrading skills in different sectors of the economy, joint projects between countries or regions to improve infrastructure or education.

## 4.2.Erasmus+

It is the most popular educational programme aimed at, among others, higher education institutions. It is a European Union programme that supports educational exchanges. It is a continuation of the European education programmes that have been running since 1998 in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The aim of this programme is to support pupils, students, teachers, lecturers and volunteers in the implementation of international projects for the development of competences. The programme is open to public and private institutions and organisations promoting formal education and non-formal and informal learning for all ages.

**Erasmus+ general objective**

*to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to driving innovation, and to strengthening European identity and active citizenship.*

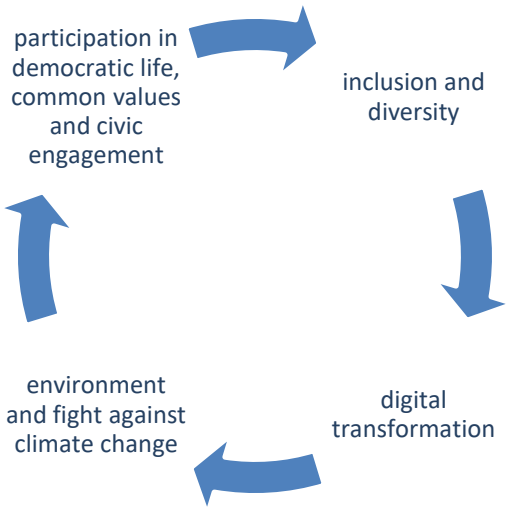
The Programme shall be a key instrument for building the European Education Area, supporting the implementation of the European strategic cooperation in the field of education and training with its underlying sectoral agendas. In addition, it is key in advancing

youth policy cooperation under the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and developing the European dimension in sport

**Erasmus+ specific objectives**

- to promote learning mobility of individuals and groups, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training
- to promote non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of youth
- to promote learning mobility of sport staff, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of sport organisations and sport policies

*FIGURE 14. ERASMUS+ PRIORITIES*



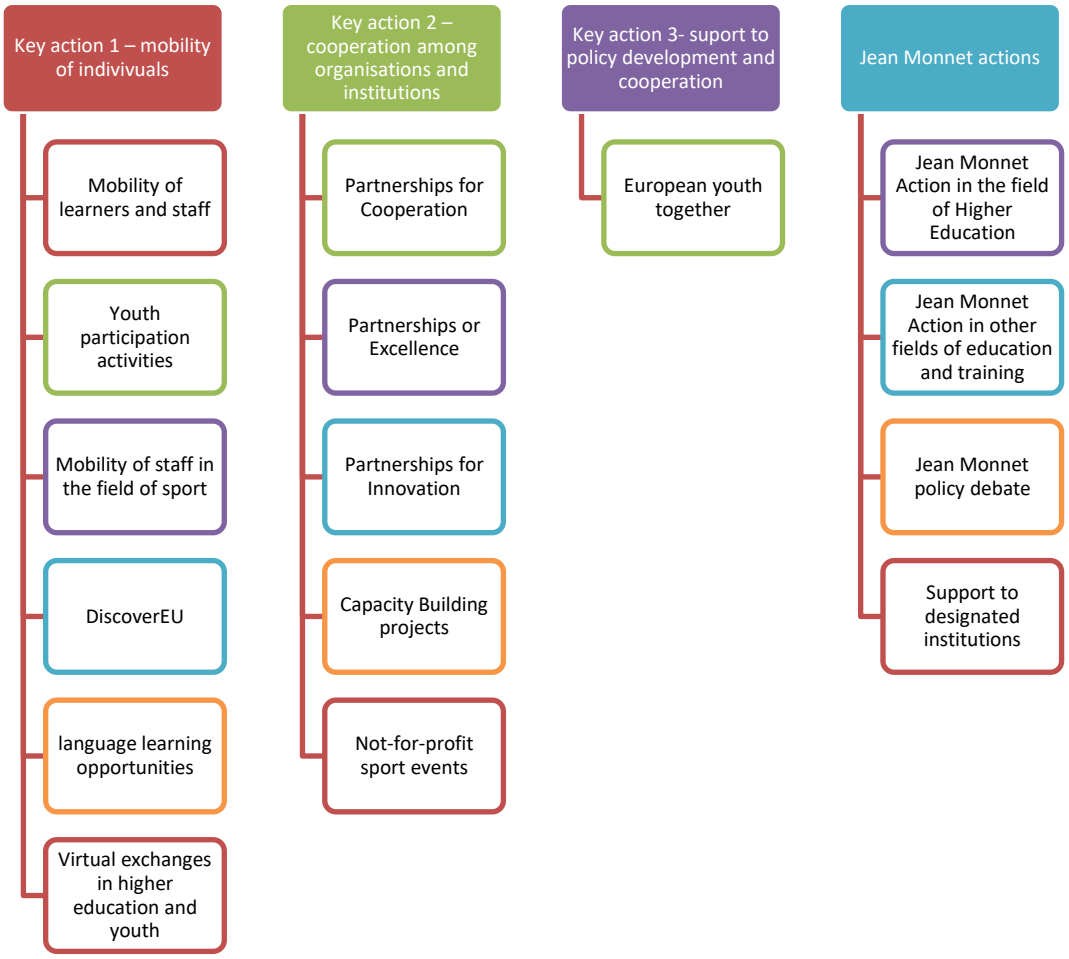

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

**Erasmus+ structure**

The structure of the programme can be considered at two levels:

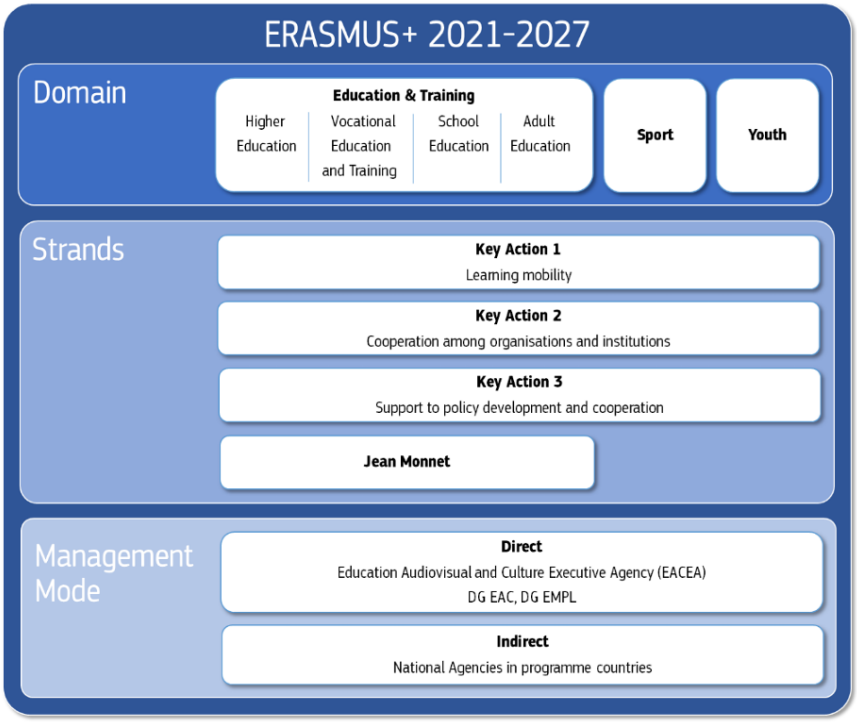
- the individual actions which make up the programme - the programme components (Figure 15)
- the organisational structure, which is multi-level and includes the various institutions managing the programme at European and national level. The programme is managed by the European Commission, but implementation and delivery is carried out at local level by the so-called National Agencies and institutions at international level (Figure 16).

*FIGURE 15. ERASMUS+ COMPONENTS*




*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

*FIGURE 16. ERASMUS+ MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE*




Source: Erasmus annual report 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9020d5f5-8f3a-11ee-8aa6-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

The Erasmus+ programme is a complex programme in terms of organisation and content. A description of the individual components is available at: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/.

This paper will focus on one of the most popular programmes, i.e. mobility projects and cooperation partnership.

This paper will focus on one of the most popular programmes, i.e. mobility projects and cooperation partnership projects.

## 4.3. Mobility projects

This higher education mobility action supports physical and blended mobility of higher education students in any study field and cycle (short cycle, bachelor, master and doctoral levels). Students can either study abroad at a partner higher education institution or carry out a traineeship in an enterprise, a research institute, a laboratory, an organisation or any other relevant workplace abroad. Students can also combine a study period abroad with a traineeship, further enhancing the learning outcomes and development of transversal skills.

This action also supports higher education teaching and administrative staff to take part in professional development activities abroad as well as staff from the world of work to teach and train students or staff at higher education institutions. These activities may consist of teaching as well as training periods (such as job shadowing, observation periods, training courses).

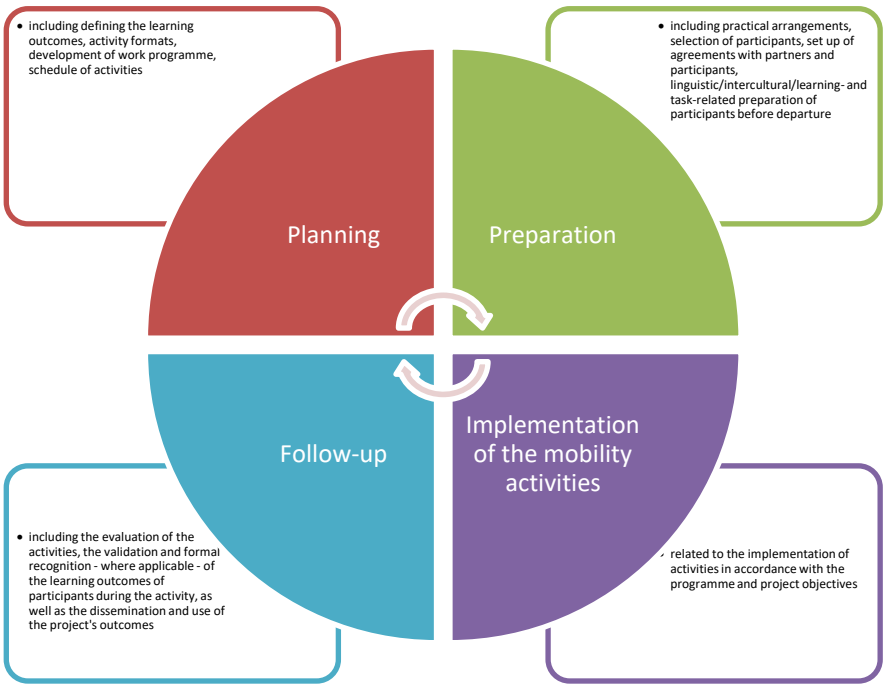
Furthermore, this action supports blended intensive programmes, allowing for groups of higher education institutions to jointly develop blended mobility curricula and activities for students as well as academic and administrative staff.

More: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/mobility-projects-for-higher-education-students-and-staff

A mobility project consists of the following stages:

- **Planning** (including defining the learning outcomes, activity formats, development of work programme, schedule of activities);
- **Preparation** (including practical arrangements, selection of participants, set up of agreements with partners and participants, linguistic/intercultural/learning- and task-related preparation of participants before departure);
- **Implementation** of the mobility activities;
- **Follow-up** (including the evaluation of the activities, the validation and formal recognition - where applicable - of the learning outcomes of participants during the activity, as well as the dissemination and use of the project's outcomes).

*FIGURE 17. STAGES OF MOBILITY PROJECTS*




*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

Depending on the profile of participants involved, the following types of mobility projects are supported under Key Action 1 of the Erasmus+ Programme:

In the field of Education and Training:

- Mobility projects for higher education students and staff
- Mobility projects for VET learners and staff
- Mobility projects for school pupils and staff
- Mobility projects for adult education learners and staff

In the field of Youth:

- Mobility projects for young people - Youth exchanges
- Mobility projects for youth workers
- Youth participation activities
- DiscoverEU Inclusion Action

In the field of Sport:

- Mobility of staff in the field of sport

## 4.4. Cooperation partnership

The primary goal is to allow organisations to increase the quality and relevance of their activities, to develop and reinforce their networks of partners, to increase their capacity to operate jointly at transnational level, boosting internationalisation of their activities and through exchanging or developing new practices and methods as well as sharing and confronting ideas. They aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level. Results should be re-usable, transferable, up-scalable and, if possible, have a strong transdisciplinary dimension. Selected projects will be expected to share the results of their activities at local, regional, national level and transnational level.

Cooperation Partnerships are anchored to the priorities and policy frameworks of each Erasmus+ sector, both at European and national level, while aiming at producing incentives for cross-sectoral and horizontal cooperation in thematic areas.

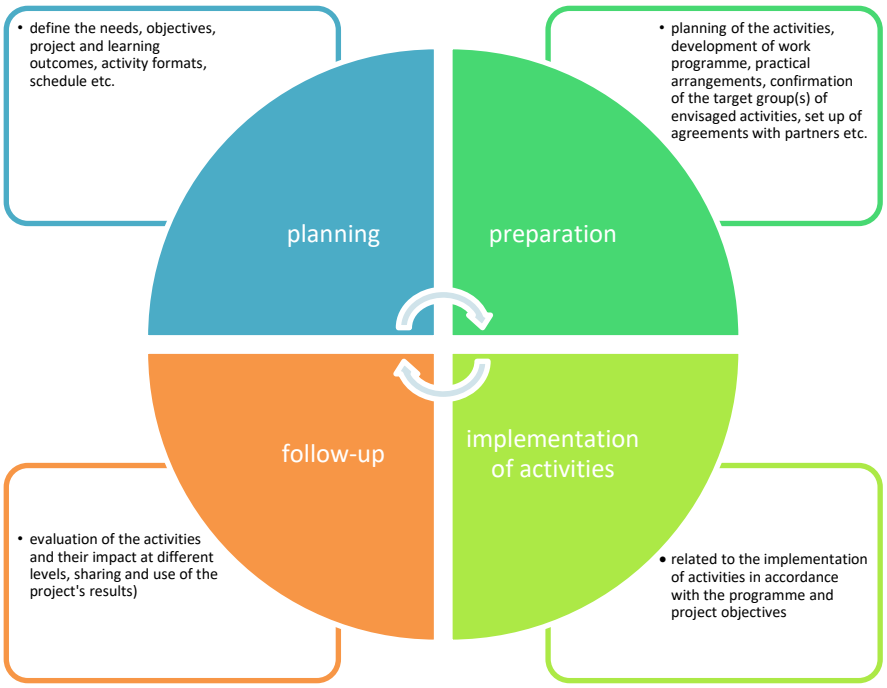
Depending on the field of the project proposed or on the type of applicant, Cooperation Partnerships are managed either by the National Agencies or by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). For more information in this respect, please refer to the section “where to apply” under the eligibility criteria.

Cooperation Partnerships aim at:

- Increasing quality in the work, activities and practices of organisations and institutions involved, opening up to new actors, not naturally included within one sector;
- Building capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors;
- Addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport;
- Enabling transformation and change (at individual, organisational or sectoral level), leading to improvements and new approaches, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

A Cooperation Partnership project consists of four stages, which start even before the project proposal is selected for funding: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up. Participating organisations and participants involved in the activities should take an active role in all those stages and thus enhancing their learning experience.

*FIGURE 18. STAGES OF COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP*




More: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/cooperation-partnerships

In practice, there are various risks associated with the implementation of mobility and cooperation partnership projects (Figure 19).

*FIGURE 19. THE MAIN RISKS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MOBILITY AND COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS*




*SOURCE: OWN WORK*

These risks require specific actions to be taken (risk management) at different stages of the project life cycle.

## 4.5. Erasmus+ platforms, tools and networks

The Erasmus+ programme uses a variety of tools and platforms that support the implementation of activities, project management and facilitate collaboration between participants. These tools are available for students, teachers, education staff, organisations and institutions involved in the programme, as well as for those seeking information on Erasmus+ opportunities.

*FIGURE 20. THE MAIN ERASMUS+ TOOLS AND PLATFORMS*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Erasmus+ Project Results Platform | provides access to information and results concerning all projects funded under the Erasmus+ Programme | https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects |
| European School Education Platform (ESEP) and eTwinning | the meeting point for all stakeholders in the school education sector spanning every level, including initial vocational education and training | https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en |
| Electronic Platform for Adult Learning (EPALE) | • offers up-to-date news on developments in the field and interactive networks, enabling users to link with others all around Europe, engage in discussions and exchange good practice<br>• offers instruments of specific interest for Erasmus+ (potential) beneficiaries | https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en |
| Self-reflection on Effective Learning by Fostering the use of Innovative Educational technologies (SELFIE) | a free, multilingual, web-based, self-reflection tool to help general and vocational schools develop their digital capacity. | https://education.ec.europa.eu/selfie |
| HEInnovate | offers higher education institutions (HEIs) in the EU and beyond the opportunity to examine their innovation and entrepreneurship capacities through self-reflection in one or several of eight dimensions | https://heinnovate.eu/en |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The European Youth Portal | ofers European and national information and opportunities that are of interest to young people who are living, learning and working in Europe | https://youth.europa.eu/home_en |
| European Student Card Initiative | aims at simplifying learning and training mobility by digitalising all the main components necessary for the organisation of student mobility, from information provision to application processes and settling into the host community while abroad | https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/european-student-card-initiative/ewp |

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

The Erasmus+ programme has several specific initiatives and networks that support expert cooperation, knowledge exchange and innovation in education. The aim of these networks is to bring together experts and institutions from different countries to work together to improve the quality of education, training and youth in Europe.

*FIGURE 21. EXAMPLES OF NETWORKS*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Eurydice network | focuses on the way education in Europe is structured and organised at all levels and aims at<br>contributing towards a better mutual understanding of education systems in Europe. | https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/ |
| Youth Wiki National Correspondents Network | an interactive tool providing information on the situation of young people in Europe and on national youth policies in a coherent, updated and exploitable way | https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki |
| Network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) | In third countries not associated to the Programme served by National Erasmus+ Offices, the National Teams of Higher Education Reform Experts provide a pool of expertise to local authorities and stakeholders to promote reform and enhance progress in higher education. | |
| National Teams to support the implementation of EU VET tools | The purpose of the national teams of VET experts is to provide a pool of expertise to promote the application of EU VET tools and principles in EU funded projects supported by the Erasmus+ Programme. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Network of EQAVET National Reference Points | are established by national authorities and bring together existing relevant bodies involving the social partners and all stakeholders concerned at national and regional levels, to contribute to the implementation of the European framework for quality assurance in VET as defined in the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience | |
| EQF, Europass and Euroguidance - National centres | For each country, these three networks of national centres are supported through a single or several grant agreements: European Qualifications Framework National Coordination Points (EQF NCPs), Europass National Centres, Euroguidance network | |

*SOURCE: OWN STUDY*

## 4.6. European Universities Alliances

The European University Alliances is a European Union initiative that supports transnational cooperation to create common curricula, research and mobility for students and academics. These alliances seek to enhance educational and scientific integration and build a common European identity. The aim of the initiative is to strengthen cooperation between universities in Europe by creating transnational networks of universities that work together for quality education, research and innovation.

Main aims and objectives:

- **Networking of universities:** universities work together in a network, creating common study programmes, conducting joint research and sharing resources and knowledge.
- **Mobility development:** supporting the mobility of students, staff and researchers between universities belonging to a network.
- **Joint educational activities:** developing integrated study programmes (e.g. joint degrees) that are recognised across Europe.
- **Cooperation in research and innovation:** conducting research projects together and solving global challenges.
- **Integration of institutions:** facilitating the exchange of experience and resources between universities.

The main programme funding activities under the European Universities Initiative is the Erasmus+ programme. Alliances can also be supported under Horizon Europe, which focuses on research and innovation.

Examples illustrating cooperation within alliances include:

- The Una Europa Alliance, which brings together eight prestigious European universities, including Jagiellonian University, the University of Heidelberg and the University of Edinburgh. The aim is to create the so-called 'University of the Future'.
- The ECIU (European Consortium of Innovative Universities) alliance, which brings together universities with an emphasis on solving real social and economic problems
- The 4EU+ Alliance, which brings together six universities, including the University of Warsaw, Charles University in Prague and the Sorbonne. It focuses on integrating research and education.
- The ARQUS alliance of seven universities, including the University of Granada and the University of Graz, with a focus on promoting mobility and multilingualism.

Universities from Georgia can now participate in European university alliances as associate partners, thanks to the extension of the Erasmus+ initiative to countries outside the European Union, including those participating in the Bologna Process. Georgia, as one of these countries, has the opportunity to cooperate with European universities within these alliances, although it does not act as a full member. This is part of a strategy to increase integration within the European Educational Area by 2025, supporting transnational cooperation at the academic level.

Examples of such cooperation include programmes involving student mobility, joint research and interdisciplinary research projects that allow for a better understanding of European values and support the development of education in EU border regions. Through alliances such as these, Georgia and other countries in the region can benefit from access to EU know-how and innovation in education.

Some European university alliances in which universities from Georgia participate or are linked to countries outside the EU (e.g. the Balkans and Ukraine) include:

- EULiST (European Universities Linking Society and Technology) - this alliance focuses on sustainability, technological cooperation and social innovation. Universities from various European countries, including Greece, the Czech Republic and Spain, are members of this alliance. It includes a variety of institutions offering joint educational programmes, which may indicate inclusivity for non-EU countries such as Georgia or other Bologna Process countries.
- Alliances based on Erasmus+, such as the European Universities project, are funded by the European Commission and include a total of 44 alliances. These alliances work

with universities from Bologna Process countries, such as Georgia or Ukraine, allowing for extensive cooperation in research and international education.

It is worth adding that Georgia is one of the countries associated with the European Union within the European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process (EHEA), which allows its institutions to cooperate with European universities, if only in the framework of joint research and academic programmes. Examples of such cooperation are projects related to the recognition of academic qualifications and the introduction of flexible learning pathways, supported by Erasmus+.

There are a number of higher education institutions that successfully implement the principles of alliance cooperation, including those that operate in similar contexts to Georgian institutions. Noteworthy alliances include:

- CIVIS - A European Civic University: focuses on cooperation with EU neighbouring countries and promotes civic engagement and innovation. It includes universities from countries that may have similar development challenges as Georgia, such as Romania and Greece.
- EUNICE - European University for Customised Education: brings together universities from different regions of Europe and emphasises a personalised approach to education, which could be an inspiration for institutions in Georgia. Partners include technical and practical universities.
- SEA-EU (European University of the Seas): focuses on trans-regional and maritime cooperation and partners include universities from coastal countries, which may reflect some of Georgia's geographical and strategic challenges.
- EC2U - European Campus of City-Universities: is an alliance of city-universities that integrates different European cities, offering a space for cooperation between universities from regions with similar development needs.

## 4.7. Erasmus Charter for Higher Education

The Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) provides the general quality framework for European and international cooperation activities a higher education institution may carry out within Erasmus+.

The award of an ECHE is a pre-requisite for all higher education institutions located in a programme country and willing to participate in learning mobility of individuals and/or cooperation for innovation and good practices under Erasmus+.

For higher education institutions located in Partner countries, the ECHE is not required and the quality framework will be established through inter-institutional agreements between higher education institutions.

One of the key aspects of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) is the university's commitment to certain quality standards and principles related to the implementation of mobility and international cooperation projects. This includes: ensuring the quality of mobility activities, facilitating the recognition of academic credits gained abroad for students (ECTS - European Credit Transfer System), a commitment to ensuring equal treatment, access and opportunities to participate in programmes for all participants, regardless of gender, age, background or disability.

Thanks to the Charter, universities can participate in Erasmus+ student and staff mobility programmes, as well as carry out international cooperation projects (including, for example, strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, joint educational programmes or innovation-related activities).

The benefits of having an ECHE include:

- access to funding,
- internationalization of the university,
- increased prestige.

The Eramus Charter has also been prepared by the University of Lodz. it is updated in subsequent programming periods. It is available at: https://www.uni.lodz.pl/wyjazdy-zagraniczne/erasmus-studia

## 4.8. Gaining knowledge of mobility and cooperation

Higher education institutions can now widely update their knowledge of the latest trends in education, research and EU policies by participating in various online resources, seminars, courses and continuous learning platforms.

Educational materials and events may include:

1. Educational platforms
   This catalogue can include, among others, the Erasmus+ Platform, the European Commission's Education and Training Website, EPALE (Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe), as mentioned in the Erasmus+ section: platforms, tools and networks
2. Webinars

- Digital Education Hub is a platform offering webinars and courses on digital education and online learning support tools
  https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan/european-digital-education-hubd
- Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is an initiative that enables participation in online educational exchanges to support international interactions. It also offers webinars and training courses
  https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/virtual-exchanges
- European Training Foundation (ETF) - organises webinars and conferences on vocational education and skills development
  https://www.etf.europa.eu/en

3. Forums for continuous learning
   - the Erasmus+ Projects Results Platform, as mentioned in the Erasmus+ section: A platform where the results of Erasmus+ projects are presented
   - Knowledge Centre on European Sectoral Skills Forecasting: A platform for educational institutions to track skills forecasts in different sectors of the European economy to help them plan courses and training. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/skills-forecast
4. Other online resources
   - MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses): many European universities offer free online courses through initiatives such as FutureLearn, edX and Coursera. These are courses that can support learning in the areas of university management, educational policy and much more
     https://www.mooc.org/
   - EU Open Data Portal: An EU open data portal that provides access to a wide range of data related to education, research and other EU policies. It can serve as a basis for analysis and updating knowledge on trends in higher education
     https://data.europarl.europa.eu/en/home
5. Educational networks and communities

- EUN (European Schoolnet): A network working with Ministries of Education and educational institutions in Europe, offering educational resources and organizing events and seminars
  http://www.eun.org

## 4.9. Engaging with Erasmus+ - practical aspects

Engaging in the Erasmus+ programme is a key element of any university's international strategy.

Engaging in the Erasmus+ Programme requires:

1. Analysis of the university's needs and opportunities:

- Defining international objectives - start with an analysis of needs and opportunities in the context of international cooperation. This includes defining what goals we want to achieve through Erasmus+ (e.g. number of exchange students, number of staff participating in projects, expansion of cooperation with foreign universities).
- Assessment of infrastructure - the resources available (e.g. international teams, technology to support student mobility) should be examined and areas that need to be strengthened in the context of Erasmus+ should be identified (e.g. improving the student support system, increasing the number of partnerships with foreign universities).

2. creating and implementing an Erasmus+ strategy:

- Define the types of Erasmus+ projects - choose the types of projects that best match the objectives of the HEI, such as student mobility, academic staff mobility, cooperation with partners from third countries, development of innovation in teaching.
- Preparation of funding applications - detailed project proposals should be prepared for submission to Erasmus+ programmes. This will require contacting Erasmus+ National Agencies and identifying relevant competitions, applications and administrative requirements.
- International partnerships - cooperation with universities abroad should be established and developed. Potential partners from EU and non-EU countries should be identified to match the objectives of Erasmus+ projects.

3. Coordination and implementation of mobility:

- Organisation of student and staff mobility - a team should be created to be responsible for the organisation of mobility (recruitment of participants, logistics, visa procedures, insurance). It is important to provide administrative support and adequate educational resources for the programme participants.
- Cultural integration support - orientation programmes, language support and mentoring for incoming students from other countries should be provided so that they can integrate more easily into the university and the local environment.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of Erasmus+ projects:

- Data collection and reporting - Data should be collected regularly on the number of participants, expenditure, achievements and results of the mobility. This will be helpful both to monitor progress and to evaluate the effectiveness of projects.

- Evaluation of the impact of Erasmus+ - the impact of mobility outcomes on the development of students' and staff's skills, the increase in international cooperation and the impact on the university's reputation and image should be analysed.

## 4.10. Erasmus+ - University of Lodz - good practices

The University of Lodz actively participates in programmes co-financed from the EU budget, including the Erasmus+ programme. It implements numerous projects promoting mobility, innovation in education and international cooperation. Students, staff and other institutions have the opportunity to participate in a variety of initiatives that improve competences and enable international exchange of knowledge and experience.

Erasmus+ activities and projects implemented by the University of Łódź include: student and staff mobility (Action 1 - Learning Mobility), strategic partnerships (Action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices), Jean Monnet projects, international cooperation within Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility (ICM), Erasmus+ in adult education and vocational training. Administrative support is provided in particular by the Office for International Cooperation of the University of Łódź, which is responsible for the coordination of Erasmus+ activities and support for students and staff participating in the programme. It assists in the application process, the organisation of trips, contacts with partner universities and the settlement of grants. Individual Faculties of the University of Łódź, depending on their specialisation, also implement projects within Erasmus+, which allows to develop international cooperation and didactic innovation.

More:

https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/international-mobility/erasmus-studies

https://www.wz.uni.lodz.pl/strefa-studenta/wyjazdy-krajowe-i-zagraniczne/erasmus

https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/international-mobility/bip-blended-intensive-programmes

https://www.uni.lodz.pl/en/international-mobility/erasmus-traineeships

https://www.uni.lodz.pl/wyjazdy-zagraniczne/erasmus-caly-swiat

https://www.uni.lodz.pl/wyjazdy-zagraniczne/bip-blended-intensive-programmes

# Unit 5. University brand management

## 5.1. University brand management concept

University brand management refers to the strategic process of developing, maintaining, and enhancing a university's image, reputation, and identity. It involves creating a consistent and positive perception of the university through its values, academic programs, culture, achievements, and overall student experience. This process includes efforts to differentiate the institution from other universities, attract prospective students, engage alumni, and strengthen relationships with faculty, staff, and the broader community.

Brand management is one of the essential elements of managing a modern university. A strong brand attracts high-quality students, ambitious faculty, and valuable partnerships. It also drives enrolment and fundraising efforts. Widely recognised university brand strengthens the university's position in rankings and competitive standing. It also builds trust among students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

The Core Elements of University Brand Management consist:

1. **Brand Identity** – refers to visual identity, mission, and values.
2. **Brand Awareness** – refers to promoting visibility and recognition.
3. **Brand Positioning** – refers to the way the university is perceived in the market.
4. **Brand Consistency** – refers to the uniformity across communication channels.
5. **Brand Equity** – refers to the value of the brand in the minds of stakeholders.

University Brand Identity consists of the tangible and intangible aspects that represent the university's core values, mission, and vision. Its' key components are:

1. Logo, colors, and typography.
2. University motto or tagline.
3. Values and culture.

The process of establishing a strong brand identity consists major steps:

1. Define the Mission: What is the core purpose of the university?
2. Visual Identity: Design consistent logos, color schemes, and messaging.
3. Brand Personality: Establish tone and voice in communications.

**Case of University of Lodz - rebranding**

In 2016-2017, the University of Lodz (Poland) carried out a comprehensive rebranding. The logos and the visual identity system of the university and all its components were changed. The worn-out symbols, which were a conglomeration of different elements, each representing a completely different style, were changed.

*FIGURE 22. OLD AND NEW LOGOS OF UNIVERSITY OF LODZ*




The new image of the University of Łódź refers to the university's mission and the values that underpin it - community, innovation for development, openness or unity in diversity. The community of individual faculties and units is strongly emphasised. The old logos of each of the 12 faculties of the University of Łódź were created in a different way - the new ones mark the differences while emphasising the community.

*FIGURE 23. OLD AND NEW LOGOS OF CHOSEN FACULTIES OF UNIVERSITY OF LODZ*

| | **OLD logos** | **NEW logos** |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty of Management |   |   |
| Faculty of Chemistry |   |   |

At present, the logos of the various faculties of the university are identical with regard to the shapes and font used in the logo. However, they differ in colour - each faculty has an individualised colour identity.

*FIGURE 24. VISUAL UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF UNIVERSITY OF LODZ FACULTIES*




## 5.2. University Brand Positioning in a Market

Brand positioning defines how the university stands out compared to competitors and how it is perceived by stakeholders. It consist of following steps:

- Identify the university's strengths (unique programs, faculty, campus culture).
- Understand audience needs (students, alumni, donors).
- Create a value proposition (what makes your university different?).

## 5.3. Brand Awareness and Visibility

Brand awareness measures how well-known the university is among potential students, faculty, and external partners. There are some tactics to increase brand awareness:

1. Digital Presence: Optimize the website and social media for engagement.
2. Physical presence: branding placed on documents, books, in university premises and elsewhere.

3. Content Marketing: Publish success stories, faculty achievements, and student testimonials.
4. Public Relations: Build relationships with media to cover university milestones.

It is important to keep brand consistency across all platforms. It builds trust by ensuring uniform messaging, but also reinforces the university's values across all communication channels. Areas to Ensure Consistency:

1. Website and Social Media: Visuals and messaging.
2. Printed Materials: Brochures, admissions guides, and campus signage.
3. Events and Outreach: Campus tours, open houses, and alumni events.

Enhancing Brand Equity - brand equity refers to the value added by the brand beyond its functional benefits. It encompasses the perception of the university's quality, trustworthiness, and reputation. How to build brand equity:

1. Deliver consistent and high-quality student experiences.
2. Promote research excellence and faculty expertise.
3. Foster strong alumni relations.

## 5.4. University brand - students and alumni

Student experience can be regarded as a pillar of brand loyalty. It matters because the student journey directly impacts long-term brand perception. Positive experiences lead to alumni advocacy and repeat engagement.

Key Focus Areas:

1. Quality of teaching and learning environments.
2. Support services and extracurricular opportunities.
3. Post-graduation success (careers, networking).

One of the distinctive features of universities is that they have a wide range of (growing annually) alumni who possess the qualities of a community. These are individuals who, over time, progress up the career ladder and can achieve high social status. They represent a potentially significant resource for branding the university. Alumni are important:

- Alumni can act as brand ambassadors

- Former students with current high social status can be active in alumni associations
- Engaged alumni are more likely to promote the university.

University may use some tools to facilitate alumni activity:

- Regular communication (newsletters, social media)
- Alumni events
- Alumni participation in mentorship programs.

It is important to undertake the activities related to university brand monitoring. It refers to the ongoing process of tracking, analyzing, and managing the reputation and perception of a university's brand across various channels, both online and offline. It involves keeping an eye on how the university is perceived by key stakeholders, such as students, faculty, alumni, employers, and the general public, and ensuring that the brand aligns with the institution's values, mission, and goals. Two issues should be highlighted:

1. Continuous tracking of how the university is perceived in the public eye.
2. Use feedback to measure the effectiveness of brand management strategies.

Monitoring Tools:

1. Surveys and Feedback: From students, alumni, and faculty.
2. Social Listening: Monitoring social media for mentions and discussions.
3. Media Tracking: Following press coverage of university achievements.

University brand success can be measured. The list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) may look like:

1. Enrollment Rates: Are branding efforts driving applications?
2. Engagement Metrics: Website traffic, social media engagement, and event participation.
3. Alumni Engagement: Event attendance, social media activity and mentoring involvement.
4. Media Coverage: Positive press and academic recognition.

5. Employer and Industry Reputation
6. Event Attendance and Engagement

The list of tools can be used in KPIs measurement:

- Dedicated Surveys
- Social media engagement metrics – Website Traffic
- Graduate Employment Rates
- Events attendance
- Students Application Numbers – and conversion rates
- Others…

## 5.5. The University Brand Personality Scale (UBPS)

The University Brand Personality Scale (UBPS) is a tool developed to measure and assess the brand personality of a university. The concept of 'brand personality' has been developed and described by Rauschnabel et al. (2016) and refers to the set of human characteristics attributed to a brand, in this case, a university. The UBPS helps academic institutions to better understand how they are perceived by students, applicants, lecturers and other target groups, enabling them to adapt their marketing and communication strategies to build a stronger and more positive brand identity.

Within UBPS six university brand personality dimensions can be identified:

1) **prestige** (accepted, leading, reputable, successful, considerable)
2) **sincerity** (humane, helpful, friendly, trustworthy, fair)
3) **appeal** (attractive, productive, special)
4) **lively** (athletic, dynamic, lively, creative)
5) **conscientiousness** (organized, competent, structured, effective)
6) **cosmopolitan** (networked, international, cosmopolitan,)

Results of their research shows that the scale strongly relates to brand love, positive word-of-mouth, and students' intention to support their university as alumni.

## 5.6. Brand Strategy Over Time

University brand strategy should be adapted and adjusted over time. There are a number of factors that influence the need for changes in branding policy. Among the most important are:

1. Market trends, competition and student expectations change over time.
2. Aligning your brand strategy ensures continued relevance and competitiveness.

There are also important warning signs that indicate that change is needed:

1. Decline in student engagement.
2. New competitors or changes in higher education trends.
3. Feedback indicating a mismatch between brand and audience expectations.

One effective tool to keep the positive impact of an university brand at a good level is strategic partnerships. Within a university, partnerships can be established for this purpose in at least three fields:

1. Collaborations with businesses and other institutions

When a university partners with respected companies or industry leaders, it strengthens its credibility in certain fields, such as technology, business, or research. These partnerships reflect positively on the university, signaling to stakeholders (students, parents, faculty, employers) that it is aligned with leading experts.

2. Academic Partnerships

Collaborations with other universities, especially top-ranked or internationally recognized institutions, enhance the university's academic reputation. Joint research projects, exchange programs, or collaborative degree offerings demonstrate academic excellence and innovation.

3. Internships and Job Placement

Partnering with businesses and organizations to provide internships, co-op programs, or job placements for students boosts the university's appeal. Students value practical experience, and such partnerships enhance the brand by showing the university's commitment to career development and real-world opportunities.

## 5.7. Crisis Management in University Brand Strategy

It is important to remember that some negative events can damage the brand and reputation of the university. There are basic strategies to be prepared for them, respond effectively to them and minimize their negative impact:

1. Prepare in Advance: Develop a crisis communication plan.
    - This applies to all levels of university management - not only the level of the rector and deans but also individual units.
2. Transparency: Address issues promptly and honestly.
3. Consistent Messaging: Ensure all public-facing communication reflects the brand's values during a crisis.

**Social media** today is one of the main and most powerful tools used to manage the university's brand:

1. It provides a platform for direct interaction with students, alumni, and the public.
2. It is the fastest running communication platform.
3. Content shared on social media shapes public perception of the university.

Best Practices:

1. Regularly post engaging content (student stories, faculty research).
2. Interact with comments and inquiries promptly.
3. Use different platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube. Remember that different target groups may use different communication channels.

## 5.8. Brand management indicators – practical aspects

Managing the university's brand is a process that requires a strategic approach, adequate resources and continuous monitoring. To this end, the following steps should be considered:

1. Defining the objectives of the brand:

- Defining the university's mission and vision - it is necessary to determine what values the university's brand is supposed to represent, what goals it wants to achieve internationally and which target groups are most important (e.g. future students, academics, international partners).
- Market segmentation - the educational market segments of interest to the university should be identified, e.g. foreign students, researchers, students from specific regions.

2. Image and reputation management:

- Development of a unique value proposition (UVP) - a unique value proposition should be developed to differentiate the university from its competitors. This could include, for example, high quality teaching, access to international research networks, unique mobility programmes.
- Communication strategy - communication channels should be identified, such as the university's website, social media, international conferences and partnerships with other universities. It is worth ensuring that communication is consistent and regular.

3. Create brand management indicators - a catalogue of relevant and collectable indicators should be identified, including e.g:

- Brand awareness indicators, e.g. number of visits to the university's website (especially from abroad), increase in number of followers on social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), position of the university in international academic rankings (e.g. QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education).
- Engagement indicators, e.g. number of applications from international students (e.g. from Erasmus+ partner countries), increase in the number of signed cooperation agreements with foreign universities and organisations, university participation in international conferences, research projects and academic networks.
- Satisfaction and loyalty indicators, e.g. satisfaction of students participating in mobility (surveys and feedback after Erasmus+ programmes), number of students returning after the exchange (e.g. continuation of cooperation with the university), opinions and recommendations of students and university staff on educational platforms and online forums.

4. Evaluate results and adjust strategies:

- Monitor the effectiveness of marketing activities - regularly assess how marketing activities and communication strategies affect the perceived brand value of the university. It is worth analysing data from campaigns promoting Erasmus+ programmes and other initiatives.
- Market research and feedback - it is worth conducting regular market research, conducting interviews with staff, students and international partners to find out opinions about the university brand and to identify areas for improveme

5. Brand sustainability:

- Work with brand ambassadors - it is useful to involve alumni, academics and international partners in promoting the university. Use their success stories, experiences from Erasmus+ programmes and other initiatives to reinforce the university's image.
- Long-term evaluation - it is worth monitoring the effectiveness of activities over a number of years to assess how the university's brand position in the international market is changing and how this is affected by involvement in the Erasmus+ programme.

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