

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

Policy on Internationalization

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Policy Implementation	
1. Overall	Director, International Education and Partnerships
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4. Policy Advice	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The vision of the University of Botswana is to be a leading centre of academic excellence in Africa and the world. The University's Values Statement advocates 'Internationalism through participation in the global world of scholarship, by being receptive and responsive to issues within the international environment as well as the recruitment of international staff and students.' The University's vision and its value of internationalism make it imperative that students and staff internationalize all their intellectual inquiries and analyses. To achieve this end, all members of the University of Botswana community need to foster an environment of active research, teaching and other interactions on a regular basis with intellectuals and societal leaders from around the globe. Only by so doing will the University of Botswana community obtain the cutting edge knowledge and skills required both to serve the best interests of Botswana and to undertake study and research on equal terms with peers from outside of Botswana.

1.2 Whilst on the one hand the University's vision inspires its staff and students to reach out to the world, on the other hand, the University is fast becoming a most attractive destination for students and scholars in many countries seeking to study and undertake research in Africa. There are several reasons for this trend. Particularly important is that the University is one of the best resourced and staffed institutions on the African continent. Another significant reason is the University's location in a country with a strong international reputation for its rapidly developing economy and stable political system.

1.3 From a global perspective the world itself is changing with increasing rapidity. National borders are being reduced in significance by the mass media, corporate investment, human migration, labour movement and improved transportation, a process that is summed up in the concept of globalization. Africa itself is reorganizing to become more unified and focused in its response to this new context through the strengthening of political organizations like the African Union and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and academic organizations like the Association of African Universities (AAU) and the Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA). Especially important to the University of Botswana is the SADC Protocol on Education and Training. If they are to prosper, universities in small countries like Botswana must be particularly proactive in relation to these major structural transformations of the international system.

1.4 In response to these global realities, University of Botswana academic staff have taken many important initiatives on their own. However, to keep up with the pace of the changes occurring, the University must launch a major coordinated endeavor to enhance the international nature of its policies, operations, partnerships and curriculum. To achieve this end, the Office of International Education and Partnerships was established in January 2006 to drive the process and to strengthen existing activities. However, much more is required. This policy statement elaborates a set of objectives, activities, and operational principles to guide the process of outreach to the international community and the opening up of the University to scholars, students and communities from outside Botswana.

2 DEFINITION

2.1 For purposes of this policy document, **internationalization** means: “*incorporating international dimensions throughout the curriculum; enriching the international diversity of cultural and sports activities; expanding the number of international students and scholars participating in scholarly activities at the University of Botswana; and enhancing opportunities for University of Botswana students and staff to experience and study other countries and cultures.*”

3 INTERNATIONALIZATION OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

3.1 The University of Botswana’s Policy on Internationalization seeks the realization of three major objectives specified below. Under each objective, a list is provided of the principal activities by which staff and students may realize each objective. Additional means could prove equally useful as experience with the internationalization process grows. It is expected that each faculty, department and centre will review the objectives and activities below to determine the particular objective(s) and activities on which it will focus at any given point in its strategic planning. It is envisaged that all divisions will participate in the internationalization process. Benchmark data for each objective is specified to enable monitoring of institutional performance with respect to internationalization.

3.2 OBJECTIVE 1 - *Expand International Student and Staff Exchanges*

Activities

- Provide opportunities for UB students to spend a semester or year abroad through exchanges;
- Facilitate academic staff to undertake study and research outside of Botswana for time periods as appropriate to their professional objectives;
- Recruit visiting scholars who bring needed research or teaching capacity on campus;
- Promote short and long term study opportunities at UB for international students;
- Develop partnerships which will facilitate the expansion of staff and student exchanges.

Benchmark Data

- Office of International Education and Partnerships keeps an updated list of Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement and of active exchange partnerships;
- Office of International Education and Partnerships compiles report on students abroad every semester;
- Office of International Education and Partnerships reports annually on the proportion and distribution of international students enrolled in long term study at UB;
- HoDs report annually on visiting scholars attached to the department for research purposes and special duties they have in the department;

- HoDs report annually on study abroad programs planned or operating for international students;
- HoDs report annually on academic staff undertaking research and study outside of Botswana.

3.3 **OBJECTIVE 2 - *Expand International Research Cooperation***

Activities

- Engage in more collaborative and comparative international research;
- Recruit visiting research scholars to mentor and/or lead departmental and faculty research projects;
- Establish mechanisms for cooperative supervision of graduate students enrolled at UB and partner institutions by UB scholars and partner colleagues;
- Encourage students with research skills from outside of Botswana to participate in UB research projects;
- Present more scholarly papers at international meetings;
- Provide venues for UB staff to inform colleagues of papers and discussions at international meetings;
- Develop partnerships which will expand international research cooperation.

Benchmark Data

- Office of International Education and Partnerships keeps an updated list of Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement and of active research partnerships;
- Office of International Education and Partnerships reports annually on international students participating in research projects on campus;
- HoDs provide report annually on staff members who attend scholarly meetings outside of Botswana and on important outcomes;
- HoDs report annually on international scholars (including graduate students) working with department members on collaborative research for the semester;
- HoDs report annually on staff publications resulting from international collaboration;
- HoDs report annually on scholars outside Botswana participating in graduate supervision.

3.4 **OBJECTIVE 3 – *Enhance the Internationalization of All Curricula***

Activities

- Augment international and comparative subject matter in both general education and disciplinary courses;
- Develop curricula that make UB graduates more competitive in the international labour market;
- Enhance faculty and student appreciation of international diversity;
- Encourage foreign language studies;
- Establish joint and/or dual degree programs with universities outside of Botswana when such programs are not available or cannot be sustained at UB;
- Provide internships for UB students outside of Botswana;

- Participate in on-line courses offered outside of Botswana and offer such courses at UB for students in other countries;
- Implement flexible approaches to the transfer of credits from accredited universities outside of Botswana.

Benchmark data

- Office of International Education and Partnerships reports annually on measures of international diversity on campus including number of countries from which international students come, international diversity of academic staff, and courses with explicit international content;
- Office of International Education and Partnerships evaluates credit transfer practices annually for their flexibility and ease of use by students;
- HoDs report annually on curriculum changes bringing increased internationalization in their programmes;
- Language Departments report annually on the number of students taking each language offered;
- HoDs report annually on number of participants in on-line courses offered to students outside Botswana and number of UB students taking such courses offered outside of Botswana;
- HODs report annually on any international dual or joint degree programs established and thereafter number of students enrolled.

4 POLICY GUIDELINES

A number of operating principles will guide the process of internationalization at the University of Botswana. The most important are the following:

- **Motivating Staff:** The success of this policy requires that a number of staff members make significant contributions to internationalization beyond their normal duties. *Such staff members should receive special recognition through the PMS system and in the promotion process; sabbatical and research leave should encourage international inquiries and dialogue; and special support should be available to those seeking competitive international grants.*
- **Role of Faculties, Departments and Centres in the internationalization process:** *Each faculty, department and centre is to develop a plan of internationalization.* It is to include discussion of such issues as staffing needs, curriculum change, research objectives, student recruitment, outreach, internships, centers of excellence, and special programs. Effective international programming is almost always interdisciplinary. All units should make sure they take this matter into consideration in their planning. Departments and Centres should also make provision for involvement of affiliated scholars and students in their organization and programming.
- **Development and Approval of International Partnerships:** The faculties, departments and centres have primary responsibility for identifying international

partner institutions. *Partner institutions and programs should have an international reputation for excellence relative to the areas of cooperation. In addition, partnerships must: a) have clearly stated objectives which support the strategic goals of faculties, departments, centres and the University; b) be mutually beneficial to the University of Botswana and other universities participating; c) have one or more identified staff members with primary responsibility for the University of Botswana side of the relationship; d) be financially sustainable; and e) have written agreements articulating operational principles and practices to govern the relationship.* Before the Vice Chancellor or other university official signs a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement, the Office of International Education and Partnerships will determine that the foregoing criteria are fulfilled.

- **Geographic Distribution of Partnerships:** Currently, most of the University's formal partnerships are with institutions in Europe and North America. But it is important that the University meets its vision of being a leading centre of excellence within Africa, and also that it forms strategic partnerships with higher education institutions in countries which are the economic superpowers of the future. *Whilst continuing to seek partnerships in Europe and North America, the University intends to expand its relationships especially with SADC universities and institutions in other parts of Africa, and to establish a limited number of partnerships with universities located in major countries within Asia, namely China, India, Japan and Korea.*
- **Financing of Internationalization Activities:** Several new directions in funding will be required by this policy. First, the Office of International Education and Partnerships will manage special budgets concerned with a) promoting international linkages; and b) scholarships for student exchanges. Both will be funded initially with University funds. Second, the Office will begin to mobilize additional funds to finance such linkages and exchanges. These funds will come from sources such as international grants, donations within Botswana, endowment funds, fees charged to international students, income from special programs, and revenue from commercialized research with international partners. In addition to these new directions in funding, it is expected that faculties, departments and centres will continue to seek their own sources of funds to support their international activities.
- **Administrative Organization for this Policy:** The Office of International Education and Partnerships shall provide leadership and support to staff activities serving to implement this internationalization policy. In addition, the Office is expected to advise, monitor and assist individual departments, faculties and centres in their internationalization activities. In order that the Office can best perform these latter responsibilities, all units of the university shall keep the Office informed of new initiatives and progress being made on existing international relationships and projects. As a general rule, the following division of

responsibility should be observed with respect to the administration of international activities at UB:

a) *In the case of activities related to research and teaching, primary responsibility for identifying, designing and implementing initiatives rests within the faculties, departments and centres.* The faculties, departments and centres shall organize visits to and from the campuses involved in partnerships with UB. In the case of researchers coming from outside of Botswana to undertake research under the aegis of a University unit, it shall be that unit's responsibility to make the researcher aware of the need to obtain a research permit and to assist the researcher in so far as is possible in dealing with the permit approval process. Also, faculties, departments, and centres should keep the Office of International Education and Partnerships informed of the general nature of international partnerships being developed and activities implementing partnership agreements.

b) *The Office of Research and Development (ORD) shall have primary responsibility for the development and supervision of international research grants.* It is expected that the Director of ORD will in appropriate circumstances request assistance from the Office of International Education and Partnerships on the development of particular international research grant proposals although not in the management of the implementation of such grants when funding has been obtained.

c) *The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) shall be responsible to ensure that programs developed and implemented under this policy are evaluated according to the University's quality assurance policies.* The Office of International Education and Partnerships shall assist CAD in gathering the relevant data for such evaluation.

d) *The Office of International Education and Partnerships shall only take primary responsibility for those international service functions which are better administered in a collective manner and are of utility to all academic units.* The following functions are most appropriate for such a collective approach:

1. Advise all units of the University on their internationalization activities.
2. Recruit international students.
3. Manage international admissions in collaboration with academic and admissions staff.
4. Manage international student services.
5. Fund raise and administer the international linkages budget.
6. Manage partnerships in which numerous academic units have an interest.
7. Support the writing and implementation of official agreements.
8. Assist in the development of international research grant applications.
9. Provide HoDs with necessary reporting protocols for international activities.
10. Monitor progress relative to the benchmarks delineated above.
11. Submit an annual report to Senate in August on progress relative to benchmarks.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of both the Office of International Education and Partnerships and the various faculties, departments and centres. Each faculty, department and centre should discuss which of the above objectives will be their focus in terms of resources and staff time. The choice should be consistent with the strategic objectives of the University and the unit involved. *It is expected that within five years each faculty, department and centre will have successfully undertaken at least one major international initiative.*