



St Patrick's
Pontifical University

Internationalisation Policy

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Document Code	
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References/Supporting Documentation	None

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the internationalisation strategy of St. Patrick's Pontifical University, a university committed fostering international collaboration and providing a diverse and inclusive educational environment for students.

As a pontifical university, St. Patrick's has long acknowledged the advantage of the international character of Higher Education. The College, founded in 1795 was originally staffed by French and Irish Émigré clergy from the University of Paris. In its over two-hundred-year history, graduates of Maynooth (among them between 10,000 and 11,000 priests) have gone to work in all parts of the world.

2. Scope

This policy and any associated procedures apply to the work of the International Committee and the work of the Pontifical University as a whole in furtherance of internationalisation. It can be summed up in its vision and mission:

Vision:	Mission:
To be recognized as a place of academic excellence and innovation, attracting students, faculty, and partners from around Europe and the wider world.	To enrich the educational experience of its students; to advance research and international collaboration among its staff and faculty; and to and foster cultural understanding through international engagement and collaboration.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Principles

The University upholds the following six principles of internationalisation:

3.1.1. Expand Global Research Collaborations:

Strengthen international partnerships to enhance research quality, innovation, and impact. Encourage cross-border knowledge exchange, joint projects, and shared expertise. Collaborations should be equitable, sustainable, and aligned with institutional priorities, enabling researchers to address global challenges and increase the visibility and reach of the institution's work.

3.1.2. Promote Mobility and Exchange Programs:

Increase opportunities for students, faculty and staff to participate in international mobility and exchange initiatives. Such experiences broaden cultural awareness, strengthen academic and professional skills, and foster global networks. Mobility programmes should be accessible, well supported, and aligned with educational goals to enhance personal growth and institutional international engagement.

3.1.3. Enhance Academic Quality and Reputation:

Strengthen academic standards by integrating global perspectives, adopting international best practices, and engaging in high-quality cross-border partnerships. Continuous improvement, rigorous quality assurance, and global benchmarking help elevate institutional credibility, attract diverse talent, and position the organisation as a leader in an increasingly competitive international education landscape.

3.1.4. Diversify Student Population:

Attract and support a diverse international student body to enrich the learning environment and promote intercultural understanding. A varied student population strengthens global perspectives, enhances classroom dialogue, and prepares all learners for internationalised contexts. Recruitment, admissions, and support services should foster equity and inclusion while broadening global reach and impact.

3.1.5. Integrate Global Perspectives in Curriculum:

Embed international and intercultural dimensions across the curriculum to prepare students for a connected world. Incorporating global case studies, comparative approaches, and diverse viewpoints enriches learning, develops critical thinking, and fosters cultural awareness. This approach ensures that graduates are globally competent, adaptable, and ready to address international challenges.

3.1.6. Strengthen Institutional Capacity for Internationalization:

Develop robust structures, policies, and resources to support sustainable internationalisation. Invest in staff training, strategic planning, and effective governance to manage global partnerships, mobility programs, and international initiatives. Strengthened capacity ensures coordinated, high-quality international engagement, enhances institutional reputation, and enables the organisation to achieve long-term global objectives efficiently.

4 Areas of Focus

Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies are not disciplines offered at every institution. The university limits its international partnerships to universities with faculties of theology, religious studies and philosophy, and it sees its international policy realized in three particular strands:

4.1 The Erasmus+ mobility programme from the European Community

St. Patrick's Pontifical University accepts the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education and is committed to their implementation: the universal right to education and to be open and welcoming of all.

4.1.1 In signing inter-institutional agreements, we honour the scholarship, teaching and learning of our partner universities and institutions of higher learning. We recognise, endorse, and validate all activities, courses and modules undertaken by our outgoing students.

4.1.2 to be fully compliant regarding mobility activities, cooperation projects and visibility. SPPU also accepts the *Code of Practice for Provision of Programmes of Education and Training to International Learners* (2015) and is committed to its implementation:

4.1.2.1 Learner integration and its importance in fostering a sense of community.

4.1.2.2 Comprehensive information provision, which is transparent, clear, and up to date.

4.1.2.3 Feedback mechanisms which enable the provider to identify issues and respond proactively.

4.1.2.4 Opportunities for the forming of academic and social networks.

4.2 Membership of the International Federation of Catholic Universities and the Federation of Catholic Universities of Europe

St. Patrick's is committed to the work of these organisations in the promotion of Catholic Higher Education and the role of IFCU (<http://fiuc-ifcu.org/en/who-we-are/>) and the goals of FUCE (https://www.fuce.eu/article5_en.html) are aligned with the international policy of St. Patrick's.

4.3 International Recruitment in parts of the world beyond Europe – America, Africa and South-East Asia.

Aside from the 10,000-11,000 priests who have been ordained from Maynooth since its foundation, and who ministered in Ireland and throughout the world, Maynooth has witnessed the establishment of two religious congregations – the Society of Saint Columban, once known as the Maynooth Mission to China and the St. Patrick's Missionary Society (Kiltegan Fathers), once known as the Maynooth Mission to Africa. The university maintains ties with these and other congregations in recruiting postgraduate students.

5 Strategic Areas

The university has identified the following strategic areas as essential in the creation of an internationalization policy. Each of these will be considered in terms of actions, objectives and performance. Each area begins with a narrative of what is currently being done at the university in terms of internationalization.

5.1 Academic Partnerships

St. Patrick's currently has agreements with thirty-four universities and institutions in Europe. Most are agreements around staff and student mobility in either general or specific situations. In signing inter-institutional agreements we honour the scholarship, teaching and learning of our partner universities and institution of higher learning. We recognise, endorse and validate all activities, courses and modules undertaken by our outgoing students. We have built up a reputation of hospitality and care among our partners, as well as commendation for the level and quality of our academic programmes and the attention and care given to international students.

5.1.1 Objectives

5.1.1.1 Establish and nurture strategic partnerships with universities and research institutions worldwide.

5.1.1.2 Develop research projects, and academic exchanges.

5.1.2 Actions

5.1.2.1 Identify Potential Partners: Focus on institutions with complementary strengths and strategic geographical locations.

5.1.2.2 Formalize Partnerships: Create Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Inter-Institutional Agreements (IIAs) to outline the scope and terms of collaborations.

5.1.2.3 Develop joint research initiatives, and shared course offerings.

5.1.3 Performance Indicators

- 5.1.3.1** Number of MOUs/IAs signed with international institutions.
- 5.1.3.2** Number of collaborative research projects and publications.

5.2 International Student Recruitment

The university has begun to recruit international students mostly at postgraduate level. It has always had a regular stream of clergy and religious from some of the African countries where Irish missionary congregations worked. The university is committed to increasing its international student population for full academic programmes, along with students attending for semesters and academic years.

5.2.1 Objectives

- 5.2.1.1** Increase the enrolment of international students to 10% of the total student population within five years.
- 5.2.1.2** Diversify the international student body to include a wider range of countries and regions.

5.2.2 Actions

- 5.2.2.1** Targeted Recruitment Campaigns: Conduct recruitment campaigns in key regions and countries.
- 5.2.2.2** Scholarships and Financial Aid: Offer scholarships and financial aid packages to attract high-quality international students.
- 5.2.2.3** Information: Maintain an easily accessible and up-to-date website that includes comprehensive information about the institution, programs, admission requirements, and application procedures.
- 5.2.2.4** Develop a comprehensive marketing plan using digital marketing, social media, and content marketing to reach a global audience.
- 5.2.2.5** Identify target markets and countries, analyse the demand for specific courses or qualifications, evaluate competitors offering similar programs.
- 5.2.2.6** Streamlined Admission Processes: Simplify and expedite admission procedures for international applicants.

5.2.3 Performance Indicators

- 5.2.3.1** Growth in the number of international students enrolled.
- 5.2.3.2** Diversity of international student population by country of origin.
- 5.2.3.3** Satisfaction rates among international students.

5.3 Student and Staff Mobility

As with many Irish universities, the population of Erasmus students coming to Maynooth far exceeds those Irish students and staff who go abroad. New initiatives and opportunities within the Erasmus programme is assisting to redress this imbalance. Apart from long term Erasmus mobility, staff and students have been more recently availing of short term mobilities and opportunities to create relationships and collaborations with similar institutions. An initiative of FUCE has created a summer programme which

Maynooth has been part of since its inception and is a valuable and contributing member of the programme.

5.3.1 Objectives

5.3.1.1 International Staff and Faculty Recruitment

5.3.1.2 Increase opportunities for student and staff mobility.

5.3.1.3 Foster cultural exchange and enhance global competencies.

5.3.2 Actions

5.3.2.1 Exchange Programs: Develop and promote bilateral and multilateral exchange programs with partner institutions.

5.3.2.2 Funding and Grants: Secure funding and grants to support mobility initiatives.

5.3.2.3 List available partnerships with international universities and colleges for student exchange programs.

5.3.2.4 Recognition of Mobility: Ensure academic credits and professional development gained through mobility programs are recognized and valued.

5.3.3 Performance Indicators

5.3.3.1 Number of students and staff participating in exchange programs.

5.3.3.2 Positive feedback and outcomes from mobility experiences.

5.3.3.3 Recognition and integration of mobility credits and professional development.

5.4 Curriculum Internationalization

In teaching subjects like theology and philosophy, one cannot but teach from an international, intercultural and global dimension. In the delivery of our programmes, we are increasingly aware of the inter-religious and intercultural landscape of Irish society, which is the world that many of our Irish graduates will work. However, we are acutely aware of students who will graduate and work in a globalized world.

5.4.1 Objectives

5.4.1.1 Integrate global perspectives and content into the curriculum.

5.4.1.2 Prepare students for careers in a globalized society.

5.4.2 Actions

5.4.2.1 Curriculum Review: Conduct regular reviews of curricula to identify opportunities for internationalization.

5.4.2.2 Global Competence Courses: Develop and offer courses focused on global issues, languages, and cultures.

5.4.2.3 International Guest Lectures: Invite international experts to deliver lectures and seminars.

5.4.3 Performance Indicators

5.4.3.1 Number of courses with integrated global content.

5.4.3.2 Student enrolment in global competence courses.

5.4.3.3 Student feedback on internationalized curriculum.

5.5 Support Services for International Students and Staff

Being a small university, we have always prided ourselves in being able to get to know students and this extends to the needs of international students. This support begins before students arrive and we endeavour to assist from the time students have been accepted onto academic programmes.

5.5.1 Objectives

5.5.1.1 Develop an efficient admissions process, including online applications provide comprehensive support services to ensure the successful integration of international students and staff, including orientation programs, academic advising, and counselling services.

5.5.1.2 Create a welcoming and inclusive campus environment.

5.5.1.3 Showcase success stories and testimonials of international students.

5.5.2 Actions

5.5.2.1 Orientation Programs: Implement orientation programs tailored for international students and staff.

5.5.2.2 Cultural Integration Activities: Organize cultural events, workshops, and activities to promote intercultural understanding.

5.5.2.3 Support Centres: Establish dedicated support centres to address the unique needs of international students and staff.

5.5.2.4 Offer language support and cultural integration programs.

5.5.3 Performance Indicators

5.5.3.1 Participation rates in orientation and integration activities.

5.5.3.2 Satisfaction surveys of international students and staff.

5.5.3.3 Retention and success rates of international students and staff.

5.6 Research and Innovation

In the faculties of theology and philosophy research and innovation is multifaceted and academics explore new interpretations, ethical frameworks, and existential questions, while integrating contemporary issues and interdisciplinary approaches. In recent years collaborations with colleagues in a number of European universities have led to fruitful exchanges which have enhanced the learning experiences of students. Recent international conferences in the theological and philosophical disciplines have also helped increase the international reputation of Maynooth and its academics.

5.6.1 Objectives

5.6.1.1 Promote international research collaborations and enhance the university's research profile.

5.6.1.2 Encourage innovation through global partnerships.

5.6.2 Actions

5.6.2.1 Research Networks: Join and actively participate in international research networks and consortia.

5.6.2.2 Collaborative Grants: Apply for collaborative research grants from international funding bodies.

5.6.2.3 Knowledge Transfer: Facilitate the transfer of knowledge through international research collaborations.

5.6.3 Performance Indicators

5.6.3.1 Number of international research collaborations and publications.

5.6.3.2 Amount of international research funding secured.

5.6.3.3 Research conferences and inter-institutional collaborations.

5.7 Governance and Leadership

Senior leadership and management at St. Patrick's Pontifical University have been committed to internationalization and are willing to facilitate the steps necessary in terms of placing it in the strategic vision of the university, and by allocating resources to the project.

5.7.1 Objectives

5.7.1.1 Strengthen the governance and leadership structure to support internationalization efforts.

5.7.1.2 Ensure alignment of internationalization activities with the university's strategic goals.

5.7.2 Actions

5.7.2.1 Internationalization Board: Establish a faculty board dedicated to coordinating and supporting international activities.

5.7.2.2 Leadership Training: Provide training for university leaders on global education trends and internationalization strategies.

5.7.2.3 Policy Development: Develop and regularly update policies to support and regulate international activities.

5.7.3 Performance Indicators

5.7.3.1 Establishment and effectiveness of the Internationalization Board.

5.7.3.2 Participation in leadership training programs.

5.7.3.3 Regular updates and implementation of internationalization policies.

5.7.3.4 Implementation and Monitor

6 Implementation Plan

6.1 Phase 1 (Year 1-2): Focus on laying the groundwork, including establishing partnerships, developing policies, and launching pilot programs.

6.2 Phase 2 (Year 3-4): Expand and scale successful initiatives, increase student and staff mobility, and integrate international elements into the curriculum.

6.3 Phase 3 (Year 5 and beyond): Evaluate progress, refine strategies, and aim for continuous improvement and sustainability of international activities.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 Annual Reviews: Conduct annual reviews of progress towards internationalization objectives and adjust strategies as needed.

- 7.2** Performance Metrics: Use the performance indicators outlined in each strategic area to measure success.
- 7.3** Stakeholder Feedback: Regularly gather feedback from students, staff, and partners to inform ongoing improvements.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 While the priority for the implementation of this policy rests with the Pontifical University, the process is led by the International Committee, as listed below.

8.1.1 Ex Officio

8.1.1.1 The Erasmus Coordinator/Head of International Education (who shall act as chair).

8.1.1.2 President

8.1.1.3 Registrar

8.1.1.4 The Finance Officer

8.1.1.5 QAE Manager

8.1.1.6 RSA Manager

8.1.1.7 Marketing Director

8.1.2 Other

8.1.2.1 Member of the academic staff of each faculty (nominated by the faculty).

8.1.2.2 Representative of the student body elected by the students.

8.1.2.3 Other member of staff co-opted as required.

9 Policy Owner

The International Committee is responsible for the oversight and periodic review of this policy.

10 Supporting Documentation

None

11 Approval Process

12 Access level(s)

This policy is publicly accessible and is available to all members of the University community on the SPPU website and in the policy repository.

13 Policy Review

Three-year cycle

14 Contact

international@spcm.ie

15 Conclusion

St. Patrick's Pontifical University is committed to advancing its internationalization agenda to enhance academic quality, foster global collaborations, and create a vibrant and diverse campus community. By implementing the strategies outlined in this

document, the university aims to achieve its vision of becoming a globally recognized institution of higher learning.

This policy document provides a comprehensive framework for internationalization, tailored to the unique context and goals of St. Patrick's. It should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changing circumstances and emerging opportunities in global education.

16 Version Control

Version Control and Tracking Changes				
Version	Section number and details of change	Approved by	Date of approval	Relevant stakeholders informed¹
1	Initial Document	International Committee	10.03.2026	Yes
2	Submission Check	Academic Council	23.03.2026	Yes

¹ Stakeholders informed of a new or revised policy and any embedded procedures etc. that impact on, or influence their practice