

Internationalising the Curriculum

Strategies for academic staff

Context and key issues

Internationalisation is core to the values of Griffith University, which recognises the importance of preparing its students as global citizens. Griffith has adopted a working definition of Internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post secondary education” (Knight, 2003, p. 2-3). The aim is to prepare our students to live and work anywhere in the world by providing them with the skills, expertise and cultural sensitivity to do so. Best practice for internationalisation builds on principles of effective teaching in higher education and is underpinned by a commitment to cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence can be understood as the capacity and orientation to accommodate and adapt to diversity in open, productive and harmonious ways.

An internationalised curriculum includes practices that:

- Value diversity and internationalisation as integral to all programs
- Ensure that international perspectives inform curriculum design and content
- Use relevant international examples integral to learning activities
- Provide an inclusive learning environment within the Australian tertiary education context
- Construct culturally sensitive learning and teaching activities
- Enhance personal and academic communication amongst the University's culturally diverse communities
- Encourage and support the use of multi-cultural cohorts to facilitate formal and informal learning by encouraging heterogeneous rather than homogeneous groupwork
- Include development, review, and self-evaluation mechanisms

The following five areas are designed to give you a few starter ideas for a range of ways in which you might internationalise your curriculum. Implementation of these strategies may vary according to the discipline and the nature of the course.

Strategies for success

1. **Broaden subject areas through international or intercultural approaches**
 - Include international content in the curriculum wherever it is educationally possible and desirable (e.g. inclusion of international as well as national case studies).
 - Provide specific references to contemporary international and Australian content where possible.
 - Include examination of ethical issues in globalisation such as social justice, equity, human rights and related social, economic and environmental issues.
 - Compare and contrast international and national case studies.
 - Include historical accounts of the development of current international discourses/practices.
 - Discuss studies of professional practices in other nations/cultures.
 - Compare and contrast studies of how knowledge is constructed differently across cultures in the subject area concerned.
 - Use student/staff diversity in the classroom/course/program to facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas.
 - Facilitate dialogue and collaborative learning activities to reflect cultural preferences and increase the potential for deep learning and cross-cultural critique by creating a safe environment for intellectual enquiry.

2. Encourage interactive cross-cultural exchanges
 - Incorporate or encourage international student exchanges within the program.
 - Actively encourage students to engage with others from different backgrounds in their study activities (e.g. work in multi-cultural teams or make contact with international students from their disciplines in overseas universities via email, chatrooms, or listserves).
 - Encourage students to join international associations that are affiliated with their disciplines.
3. Align course content, learning activities and assessment
 - Ensure that assessment is aligned with concepts, issues and events from the coursework that are relevant to the development of international and intercultural perspective.
 - Include learning activities and related assessment items that draw on cultural contexts as well as disciplinary knowledge.
 - Include internationally comparative activities in assessment exercises.
4. Encourage and model inclusive strategies and openness to diversity
 - Demonstrate mutual respect:
 - actively acknowledge the cultural heritage and home languages of international and Australian students (migrants, indigenous, bilingual, etc)
 - correctly pronounce the names of international students
 - understand the importance and significance of sacred days or religious holidays, (e.g. fasting days).
 - Encourage all students to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of at least one other culture's customs, history, language, literature, philosophy, economics, and politics.
 - Encourage students and staff to learn a second language as a basis for appreciating the challenges of self-expression in language other than one's mother-tongue.
 - Encourage students to complete a course in cross-cultural communication or international studies
5. Demonstrate sensitive and inclusive teaching practices
 - Actively discourage language or behaviour that is ethnocentric or racist, and avoid cultural stereotyping.
 - Avoid monolithic descriptions of other nations and cultures.
 - Include materials from international and intergovernmental organisations (including international research) to broaden the learning experience and knowledge base of students and academic staff.
 - Make use of diversity of students and staff in courses to exchange knowledge and ideas.

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This document draws on concepts from the Griffith University Definition of Internationalisation of the Curriculum <http://www62.gu.edu.au/policylibrary.nsf/rupdateweek/3ac564ad2be055224a25737f0063e4fa?opendocument> and the Griffith University Internationalisation Strategy <http://www.griffith.edu.au/internationalisation/intranet/pdf/internationalisation-strategy.pdf>