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## Internationalization at Home

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### Introduction

The concept of internationalization at home (IaH) developed in Europe during the late 1990s. It arose as an alternative to “study abroad,” which was being widely promoted at the time through the Erasmus mobility program. The University of Malmö (Sweden) was without a partner network in 1998 and so could not send students abroad. Therefore, international and intercultural learning opportunities were sought locally in the city by the then-Vice President for International Affairs, Bengt Nilsson, also known as “the father of internationalization at home.”

### Synonyms and Related Concepts

There are no synonyms for internationalization at home. “Internationalization of the curriculum” is a related but broader concept and in fact, the two terms are often used interchangeably. However, the key difference is that internationalization at home is limited to the domestic learning environment, while internationalization of the curriculum

may include mobility (see Leask 2015). Other terms often used in similar contexts include the “international classroom,” which emphasizes intercultural learning in diverse classroom settings, and the virtual classroom, for example, through collaborative online international learning (COIL), or other international and intercultural engagement using digital media. In the US context, internationalization at home has been considered a key element of comprehensive internationalization, while sharing characteristics with campus internationalization.

### Definition

Internationalization at home was first defined in 2001 as: “Any internationally related activity with the exception of outbound student and staff mobility” (Crowther et al. 2001, 8). It was redefined in 2015 as “[. . .] the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen and Jones 2015, 76).

### Development

As a result of the initiative in Malmö, a Special Interest Group was formed within the European Association for International Education (EAIE), which published a position paper in 2001, as well

as a special issue of the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (volume 7, issue 1) and a conference on the subject in 2003. One of the members of this group was Josef Mestenhauser (1925–2015), who advocated a systemic approach to internationalization by stressing that international and intercultural dimensions should be integrated into teaching and learning in order to have an effect (Mestenhauser 2006). The EAIE started delivering training courses on internationalization at home in 2006 and published an IaH “toolkit” in 2007 (Beelen 2007).

### Positive and Negative Views of Internationalization at Home

Internationalization at home is usually considered a concept. However, some have called it a “movement” (Brandenburg and De Wit 2010, 16) or an “activist network” (Rizvi 2007, 391). It has been criticized for shifting into “instrumental mode,” for focusing on tools and means rather than on achieving the aims of international education and for limiting itself to “activity and not results as indicators of quality” (Whitsed and Green 2013). Others have noted cases in which universities have used IaH to advocate the high moral principle of providing internationalization to all students, while not actively pursuing that principle (De Wit and Beelen 2014). IaH has been approached with criticism by some African scholars, who perceive it as a western and therefore neo colonial concept (see Brewer and Leask 2012, 247).

However, internationalization at home has mostly been favorably received, as it offers international and intercultural dimensions of teaching and learning to all students, including those who do not have the opportunity or the resources to study abroad. As the changing global environment increasingly requires all students to have personal and professional understanding of the international and intercultural aspects of their field of study, so internationalization at home has grown in importance as an instrument to internationalise curricula more generally.

Recent studies, such as the *Erasmus impact study* (European Union 2014), have confirmed that student mobility leads to the acquisition of transversal or employability skills valued by employers. At the same time, these studies have focused on the need for home curricula to ensure that the nonmobile majority of students also acquire these skills (Jones 2013, 2016).

### Characteristics

Internationalization at home differs according to discipline and context and makes use of a range of international and intercultural learning opportunities in and around the university. In this respect, it aligns with internationalization of the curriculum, but it differs by limiting itself to the local context and does not include education abroad. Internationalization at home is not a didactic concept in itself, but it makes use of existing teaching and learning methods, such as collaborative and experiential learning. Just as with internationalization of the curriculum, cases and perspectives from domestic and international contexts become an everyday part of the learning environment, while guest lectures offer alternative cultural and national perspectives, as does engagement with local cultural groups. The diversity of the student body (which may or may not include international students) can be used as a tool to encourage and foster learning through cross-cultural interaction. As noted above, online collaboration is increasingly deployed to create virtual international and intercultural classrooms.

The IaH Expert Community of the European Association for International Education outlined the following ten characteristics in advance of the EAIE conference 2017, stating that internationalization at home:

1. Offers all students global perspectives within their program of study, whether or not they spend time abroad.
2. Moves beyond electives or specialized programs.
3. Involves developing international and intercultural perspectives through

internationalized learning outcomes in the formal curriculum.

4. Is supported by informal (co-)curriculum activities across the institution.
5. Makes purposeful use of cultural diversity in the classroom for inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practice.
6. Creates opportunities for student engagement with “cultural others” in local society.
7. Involves all staff, not only academics and international officers.
8. May or may not include teaching in English or another lingua franca.
9. Can include virtual mobility through online work with partner universities.
10. Fosters purposeful engagement with international students.

## Dissemination

Partly through the activities of the Special Interest Group within EAIE, the concept of internationalization at home found early resonance across Europe, particularly in the Nordic countries, The Netherlands, and in Flanders. In the countries with more widely spoken languages, such as France, Germany, and Italy, the uptake has been slower. In 2013, the European Commission included internationalization at home in its educational policies (European Commission 2013).

Beyond Europe, networks for international education have played a significant role in the dissemination of information about both internationalization at home and internationalization of the curriculum. The International Education of Association of Australia (IEAA) founded a special interest group on internationalization of the curriculum in 2005. The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) did the same in 2012. In Latin America, the Columbus Network facilitated online training on internationalization at home for its members from a range of Latin American countries in 2012 and 2015. The Brazilian Association for International Education (FAUBAI) started offering preconference workshops on internationalization at home in 2013. The Mexican Association for International

Education (AMPEI) did the same. These networks are connected and collaborate through conference sessions and joint publications.

## Current Issues and Challenges

A number of misconceptions form key obstacles to the implementation of internationalization at home, including:

- Internationalization at home means teaching in English.
- International students are needed to internationalize teaching and learning.
- Internationalization at home is a “second best” option for nonmobile students.
- Internationalization at home serves to prepare students for mobility.
- The main purpose of internationalization at home is to accommodate international students.
- Offering internationalization in electives for a minority of students constitutes internationalization at home.

Some of these obstacles are shared with internationalization of the curriculum more broadly, and one in particular is that academics lack the skills to internationalize teaching and learning since they have not been sufficiently trained in curriculum development and teaching methodology. While many universities include internationalization at home in their policies, very few offer professional development that enables academics to tackle the complex task of internationalizing teaching, learning, and assessment. A main challenge is therefore to create the circumstances in which academics are supported and encouraged in their internationalization efforts.

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