

Global Perspectives (Internationalisation of the Curriculum)

What is it?

The OECD (1996) defines an internationalised curriculum as: “A curriculum with an international orientation in content and/or form, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally/ socially) in an international and multicultural context and designed for domestic and/or foreign students.”

ECU promotes the design of units that encompass global perspectives and provide ECU students with opportunities to learn with and from each other in order to prepare graduates for an internationally competitive workplace.

In an increasingly globalised society, an internationalised curriculum encourages staff and students to be critical, self-reflective practitioners who have:

- an openness to their own local and indigenous cultures, and cultures of other communities;
- an openness to intercultural differences;
- a capacity to engage with language and cultural difference;
- the ability to live and work harmoniously and effectively with and in different cultures; and
- the capacity to draw on and engage with the global diversity of knowledge.

Features of an internationalised curriculum

At the course level
▸ Regular reassessment the relevance of the national and international content in courses.
▸ Provision of study abroad and exchange programs in eligible overseas institutions as a fully credited option in the program and encourage domestic students to go on these exchanges.
▸ Incorporation of language, cultural studies or international studies units as course electives.
▸ Recognition sought for the academic program by international accreditation bodies.
At the unit level
▸ Cultural sensitivity and accessibility to a wide spectrum of diverse learners and teachers
▸ Inclusion of explicit references to both international and local subject matter, through the use of examples and case studies from other countries and from culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
▸ Issues addressed such as social justice, equity, human rights and related economic, social and global environmental issues.
▸ Challenging of accepted orthodoxies and dominant cultural views.

At the course level

- Assessment tasks require students to explore and analyse cultural similarities, differences and perspectives in their enquiry processes.
- Use of the experiences of international students as a tool to inform learning of all students in the class.
- Group tasks set where members are from different cultures / nationalities, and which draw on their different backgrounds and values.
- Inclusion of authentic enquiry-based assignments involving contact and communication (face-to-face or electronically mediated) with people from different cultural backgrounds and/or located in other countries.
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- Organisation of lectures and presentations from guest lecturers to showcase international experience and expertise.

Resources for learning

To realise internationalisation, instructional materials, media and resources should have diverse authorship and cultural origin and, where appropriate, optimise the development of global perspectives.

Resources could, where appropriate:

- promote diverse cultural and international perspectives;
- challenge accepted orthodoxies and dominant cultural views;
- be reviewed before adoption to identify and eliminate cultural stereotypes and biases;
- relate to international professional best practice standards where they have been developed;
- include accounts of the historical background to current international practices;
- explore how knowledge may be constructed differently from culture to culture; and
- include learning materials that have an international perspective, e.g. use electronic resources to accompany local resources.

How can global perspectives be assessed?

Assessment strategies should measure the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with global and intercultural perspectives. How these are discerned is dependent on the design of the assessment task that has been set.

Authentic assessment tasks that have been contextualised in real world situations can make the assessment of global perspectives easier. For example, if an assignment required the design of a solution to a water contamination crisis in a West African community, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their attention to cultural awareness, sensitivity and appropriateness while analysing the problem, researching and devising solutions, anticipating necessary cultural considerations and/or barriers, hypothetically sourcing materials and labour and liaising with local authorities or the community, and evaluating the appropriateness and worth of their proposed action plan.

Alternatively an assessment task may require that the student's work includes reference to relevant non-Australian perspectives, research and workplace practices pertinent to the task.

