What is it about?

The OECD (1996) defines an internationalised curriculum as: “A curriculum with an international orientation in a 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.”

This is not just about off-shore teaching. The cultural and linguistic diversity of ECU students and staff provide opportunities which can be used to enhance the quality of all students’ learning experiences. Learning with and from each other will prepare them for an internationally competitive workplace.

Internationalisation involves provision of curricula, pedagogies and assessments that foster an understanding of national and global perspectives. It enables reflection on how these diverse views intersect with students’ personal perspectives.

In other words, it is not just about catering for international students in our classes, but enabling all our students to acquire a global outlook and learn to respond accordingly.

Why is it important?

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.
What does the ECU policy say?

The ECU policy on internationalisation of the Curriculum states that: “The delivery of all academic programs at ECU will involve deliberate planning to include the integration of elements supporting internationalisation throughout the curriculum. Internationalisation will form an integral component in the design and development of a course. It will be evident in the learning and teaching strategies, resources and materials and assessment strategies employed in unit delivery.”

Ideas for embedding internationalisation in teaching, learning and assessment

The ideas below for internationalising the curriculum apply to on campus, off shore as well as flexibly delivered learning programs. (It is an adaptation of the guidelines on internationalising the curriculum developed by Monash University and used with permission.)

Course and Unit Design

Course and Unit content descriptions should reflect diverse local and international perspectives on economic, political, environmental, social, ethical and health issues of global significance.

For example:

- be culturally sensitive and accessible to a wide spectrum of diverse learners and teachers;
- include explicit references to both international and local subject matter, e.g. through using examples and case studies from other countries and from culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
- address issues such a social justice, equity, human rights and related economic, social and global environmental issues;
- regularly reassess the relevance of the national and international content in courses;
- provide 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;
- incorporate language, cultural studies or international studies courses as course electives; and
- seek recognition for the academic program by international accreditation bodies.

Learning and Teaching Strategies

Learning and Teaching Strategies should be culturally inclusive, support diverse modes of learning and engage local students appropriately with international students.

For example:

- set tasks that require students to discuss, analyse or evaluate information from a range of international sources;
- use the experiences of international students as a tool to inform learning of all students in the class;
- set group tasks where members are from different cultures / nationalities, and which draw on their different backgrounds and different values;
Edith Cowan University
Centre for Learning and Development

- include 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; and
- organise lectures and presentations from guest lecturers to showcase international experience and expertise.

Resources and Materials

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; and
- 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.

Assessment Strategies

Assessment strategies should measure the skills, knowledge and understanding associated with global and intercultural perspectives.

For example:
- align internationalisation-based learning objectives with relevant assessment tasks;
- create assessment tasks that require students to explore and analyse cultural similarities, differences and perspectives in their enquiry processes;
- ensure that all tasks are clear and unambiguous for students from different background and in different locations; and
- review tasks to identify cultural biases and adjust them to minimise offense.

Where to find out more?

- Professional development opportunities: The new course, PDC115, addresses transnational teaching, particularly aimed at colleagues involved in off shore teaching. There is also a new guide available from CLD for coordinators and teachers of off-shore units. Please contact CLD if you require further professional development on internationalising the curriculum for on campus or off shore students.
- Contacts: ECU International promotes the internationalisation of education in teaching, learning and research, and provides leadership on the University’s international operations.
Recommended references:


ECU Policy: *Internationalisation of the Curriculum*.


Acknowledgement

This document draws on material from the ECU policy on internationalising the Curriculum, curriculum internationalisation principles and guidelines developed at Monash University (used with permission) and the Course Coordinator Handbook, available from CLD.