

Internationalising Higher Education Framework



Introduction

Internationalisation is of growing importance to higher education (HE) within the United Kingdom (UK) and across the world, driven by political, economic, educational, social and technological advances. This is evident in the diversification of academic communities and the provision on offer, as well as the content, mode, pace and place of learning. In this changing context, it is timely that the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the leading national body for learning and teaching in the UK, has developed this strategic framework with the purpose of inspiring and assisting the sector in a key aspect of internationalising HE: **Preparing 21st century graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society.** The framework has been developed for the UK sector, but may also have relevance for HE systems throughout the world.

From the outset, this framework has been driven by the vision of **promoting a high quality, equitable and global learning experience for all students studying UK programmes, irrespective of their geographical location or background,** on which the preparedness of 21st century graduates will be contingent. Its focus on the impact and contribution of learning, teaching and research on internationalising HE complements yet distinguishes this framework from other related developments¹. It has been developed in partnership with the UK HE sector; a collaborative venture intended to maximise relevance and future impact.

The process of internationalising HE within the context of learning, teaching and research is a sector-wide concern with far-reaching implications. The framework thus intends to stimulate reflection and debate; to be a prompt to action. It is designed for multiple audiences and beneficiaries who play a role in graduate preparedness in a global and inclusive context, including organisations across the HE sector, all those engaged in learning, teaching and research, as well as the formal and informal curriculum. Its content and style is deliberately aspirational as well as practical and concise in order to incite ownership and application within different HE contexts.

Preparing 21st century
graduates to live in
and contribute responsibly
to a globally interconnected society.

Promoting a high quality,
equitable and global learning
experience for all students studying
UK HE programmes, irrespective
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or background.

¹ Relevant European developments include the Indicators Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation (IMPI) project (2012) http://www.impi-project.eu/pdf/full_indicator_projects_on_internationalisation-IMPI%20100511.pdf or the Internationalisation Quality Review (1999).



Aims and objectives

The framework aims to inspire and assist in the process of internationalising HE: preparing 21st century graduates to live in and contribute responsibly to a globally interconnected society. It is driven by a vision to promote a high quality, equitable and global learning experience for all students studying UK HE programmes, irrespective of their geographical location or background.

Designed as an enhancement tool for HE, the framework strives to achieve the following objectives:

- to recognise, build on, and enhance the quality and variety of internationalisation policy and practice in HE;
- to foster collegial approaches to education, research, and partnership that transcend national and international boundaries;
- to acknowledge the on-going institutional and individual roles and responsibilities required to realise the internationalising of HE.

Aspirations

In recognising learning as socially situated, the framework aspires to having regard for:

- HE as an international community;
- the impact of cultural, individual and linguistic diversities in any given context;
- the continual enhancement of the activity, knowledge and values required for internationalising HE;
- a shared responsibility for internationalising HE between organisations, people and curriculum;
- collegial and collaborative ways of working;
- the whole academic lifecycle;
- variations in interpretation and application, which are relevant to different contexts.

Using and applying the framework

The framework is intended for multiple audiences, within HE and beyond, who play a role in, and can benefit from, the process of internationalising HE in relation to learning, teaching and research. It can be used by individuals, associates, or teams (as representative of the organisation or a particular service, function, department or faculty). It is designed to be used flexibly, with different applications in mind, as deemed relevant or appropriate for any given context. The framework invites critical engagement with a range of concepts, actions and connections that are encompassed in the process of internationalising HE. It provides a shared point of reference and common language to discuss and shape policy, practice and partnerships.

The core elements of the framework are modelled on the familiar, sector-owned UK Professional Standards Framework (HEA, 2011), to identify separate, although interrelated, strands of activity, as well as the underpinning and connected sets of knowledge and values required to implement them effectively.

Putting these into practice is recognised to be complex, with wide-reaching and long-term implications. Vignette exemplars are highlighted, from a range of providers, to illustrate each of the activity strands. To recognise different entry points and the necessary engagement of different levels of input and perspectives, the information is grouped into three principal audiences:

ORGANISATIONS

The collective level – including HE providers (or their particular functions, services faculties or departments), sector agencies, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, unions, and employers, amongst others, that influence HE. The framework can prompt mutual enquiry and development of the communal aspects of design and delivery including policies, systems and procedures to enhance the contribution and impact of organisations in internationalising HE.

PEOPLE

The individual level – including all staff, students, employees, and associates (as appropriate). The framework can be used to reflect upon, and modify as necessary, attitudes, knowledge, values and practice to enhance the contribution and the impact of individuals in internationalising HE.

CURRICULUM

The content, design and delivery of learning and teaching – including the formal (whole programmes or individual units of study) and informal curriculum. The framework can be used to review and enhance the contribution and impact of the curriculum in internationalising HE.

For each of these key audiences, there is a proposed set of related responsibilities and potential benefits of engaging with internationalising HE; the latter being related to each of the activity strands. This is followed by an operational implications section, posing a set of key questions that need to be considered. The statements and questions contained within the framework are inter-connected, prompting a holistic consideration of the interrelated role of organisations, its people, and the HE curriculum; as well as between and across activity, knowledge and values.



The framework as a whole can be used as a:

Self-reflective audit tool:

to review, benchmark or evidence current and then future progress.

Communication tool:

to help categorise and convey ways of working or information to others.

Professional development tool:

to help in the continual review or development of individuals, to define and maximise their contribution to the process.

Curriculum review tool:

to appraise, evaluate and enhance the extent to which a module, programme, or co-curriculum is internationalising or contributing to the process.

Planning tool:

to inform and enhance future policy, strategy or curriculum.

Used in such ways, the framework can build on, complement and enhance the quality and variety of existing strategies and approaches to internationalisation within the sector.

Activity



Knowledge

Global society

understand the role of HE in contributing to, and shaping, global society and addressing its challenges, as well as the reciprocal influence of global society on HE.



International contexts of higher education

understand the relevance and impact of different international contexts to your organisation, professional responsibilities and discipline area.



Diverse cultures and practices

understand the potential of diverse or divergent pedagogical approaches and cultural and social capital within the global academic community to enrich and impact upon learning, teaching and research.



Effective intercultural relations

understand cultural, linguistic, professional and personal ways of interacting, communicating and working with others.



Knowledge creation and exchange

understand various means of creating, contesting and exchanging knowledge within and across global academic communities, including the function and impact of technology.

Values

Respect

show consideration for individual, cultural and linguistic diversities.



Equity

ensure parity and fairness in approaches to, and opportunities for participation and success.



Ethical

act with integrity and transparency with regard to moral, social and legal considerations.



Openness

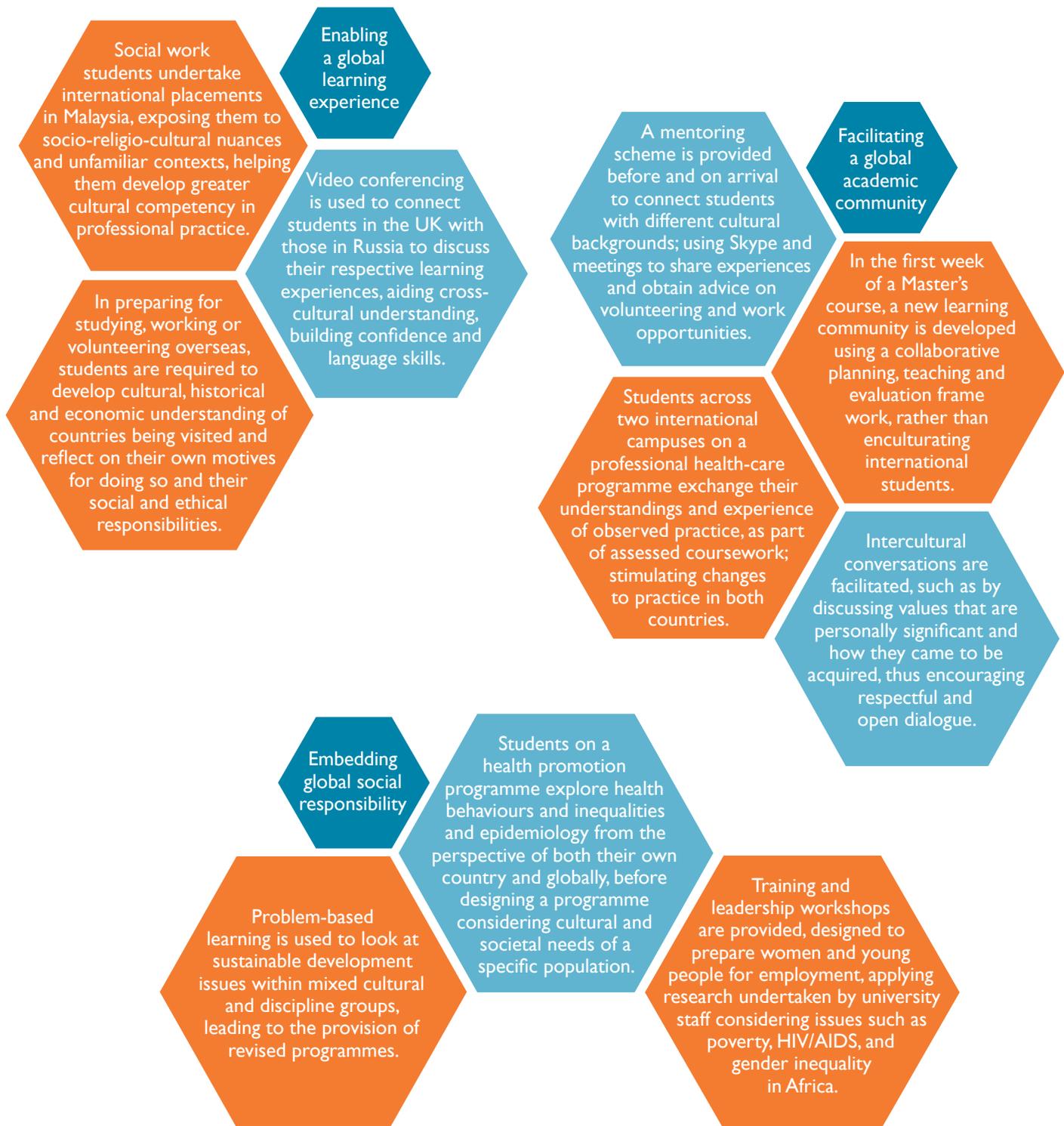
be receptive to different ideas and ways of working across cultures and learning contexts.



Reciprocity

mutually generate and exchange knowledge, ideas and resources within and across cultures and intellectual traditions.

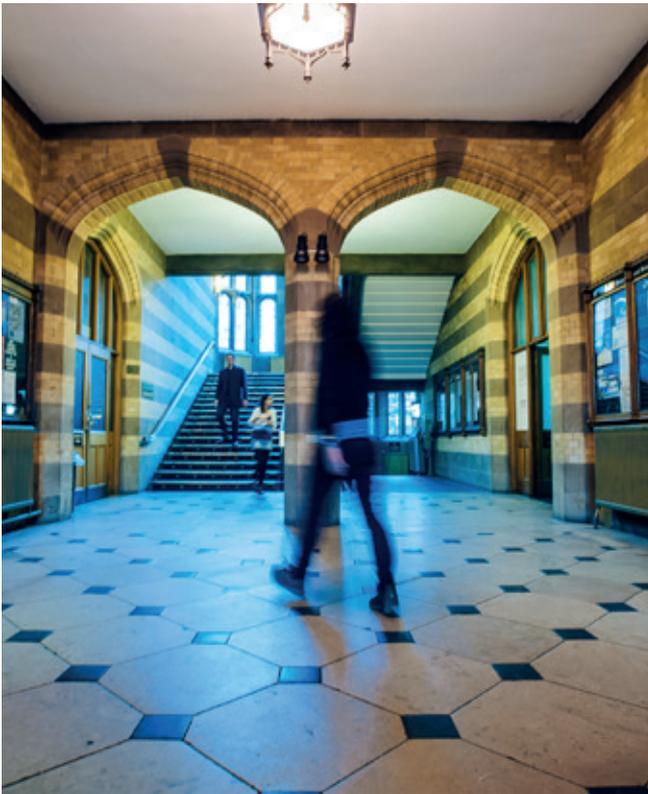




Organisations

To contribute towards internationalising HE, **organisations** (including HE providers, agencies, professional and regulatory bodies and employers), **can lead, inspire and resource the development of:**

- a global vision, for and owned by the academic community;
- an inclusive culture, valuing and embracing diversity;
- a shared commitment to the process of internationalising HE;
- a flexible and embedded approach across services and functions;
- collegiality within and across local, national, and international contexts.



Benefits for organisations

Engaging in the process of internationalising HE can benefit **organisations** and their role within HE and beyond, by providing the opportunity to:

- gain from the inclusive and global standing or reputation of the organisation, thereby attracting and sustaining successful academic communities in the future;
- realise good interpersonal relations across the organisation and globally, enhancing collective satisfaction, productivity and retention;
- exploit the associated international skills, expertise and intelligence to enhance pedagogical policy, practice and research, thereby promoting engagement and success;
- learn from and contribute to global expertise to maintain credibility and currency in learning, teaching and research, assisting academic advancement and sustainability;
- accomplish the mutual ownership and responsibility necessary to make a valuable contribution to the sustainability of global society.

People

To contribute towards internationalising HE, **all people** as individuals (including staff, students, senior managers, and employees), **can take responsibility for:**

- developing their global understanding and contribution to global society;
- drawing on core values and diversity;
- practicing ethical, inclusive and flexible approaches to learning, teaching and research;
- building social and cultural capital through experiential, scholarly and lifelong learning opportunities;
- using reciprocal and collaborative ways of working within and across local, national, and international contexts.

Benefits for students

Engaging in the process of internationalising HE can benefit individual **students** during HE and beyond, by providing the opportunity to:

- enrich and learn from the collective wealth of experience and knowledge in HE, that draws on their personal cultural and educational backgrounds and prior learning, enhancing engagement and belonging;
- make connections with people from across the world, enhancing confidence in using and developing intercultural and interpersonal skills, leading to lifelong friendships and networks;
- experience new cultures, languages, ways of working, learning and thinking, helping to widen horizons and prepare for entry into a global job market;
- be part of an academic community with international connections and networks to draw on and contribute to, thus enriching the learning process;
- critically engage with, and assist in addressing global issues (such as inequalities and sustainability), challenging personal beliefs, assumptions, and values, helping the development of global citizenship.

Benefits for staff

Engaging in the process of internationalising HE can benefit individual **staff** working within HE and beyond, by providing the opportunity to:

- value and harness the breadth of insights and experience within the organisation, demonstrate a sense of pride and belonging, helping contribute to an inclusive culture;
- critically reflect upon and understand the beliefs, assumptions and values of oneself and others, as situated within personal, cultural and national contexts;
- widen experiences and appreciation of international developments and contexts of learning, in order to enhance the quality and impact of learning opportunities, teaching and research;
- enhance the occurrence, relevance and impact of the process and products of international alliances, providing potential sources of evidence to support achievement and progression in teaching and research;
- interrogate global issues (such as inequality or sustainability) through education, thus making a personal and collective contribution to wider society.

Curriculum

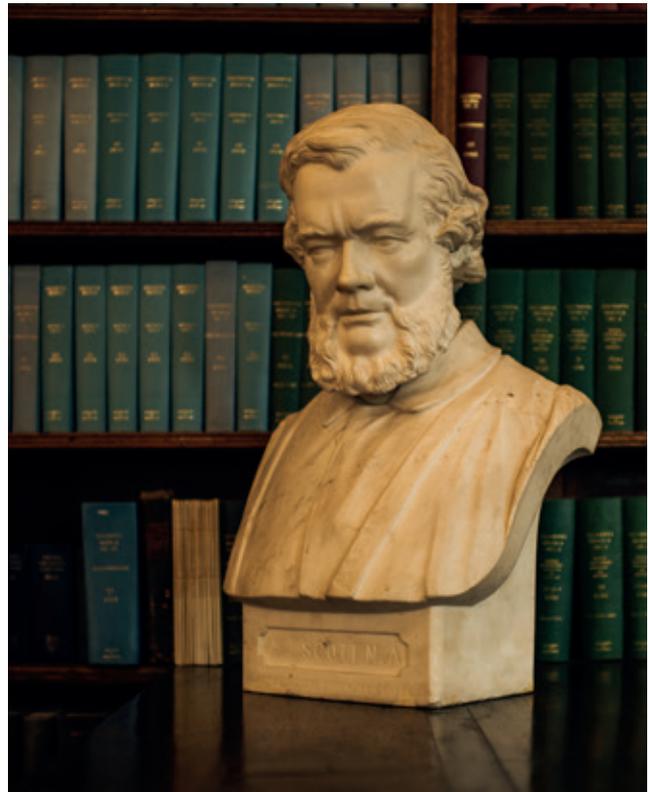
To contribute towards internationalising HE, **the design and delivery of the curriculum** (including all HE programmes, associated units of study and the informal or co-curriculum), **should be mindful of a responsibility to:**

- facilitate learning, mobility, collaboration, and recruitment in a global context;
- incorporate relevant global trends and developments;
- respond to diversity and changing demographics within the academic community;
- evidence the impact of activity associated with the process of internationalising HE to inform practice.

Benefits for the curriculum

Engaging in the process of internationalising HE can benefit the **formal and informal curriculum** within HE and beyond, by providing the opportunity to:

- capitalise on the diverse range of knowledge, experience, cultures, languages, beliefs, values, attitudes and meanings within the academic community, for academic enhancement and success;
- deepen personal and interpersonal learning and development, helping promote cohesion, a sense of belonging, participation and success within the academic community;
- broaden the range of perspectives and experiences which inform it, helping to influence future prospects;
- enrich its design and delivery, using the process and products of international connections, to enhance practice, success and future sustainability;
- surface and confront a range of inherent and complex humanitarian issues in a secure environment, as part of making a responsible contribution to global society.





Operational implications

As an **organisation**, to what extent...

are clear roles and responsibilities provided across all services and functions to clarify their contribution towards internationalising HE?

are international and intercultural experiences, partnerships and collaborations encouraged within relevant institutional policy and curriculum structures?

are cultural diversity and international experiences or knowledge regarded and used as a learning resource within the academic community?

are a diverse range of developmental opportunities provided and promoted, throughout and beyond HE, to enable the whole academic community to contribute to, and benefit from, the internationalising of HE?

are discrimination and barriers (internal or external) to participation and success eliminated within all policies, processes, systems and the design of curriculum?

are reward and recognition systems used to value and motivate individuals' contribution to internationalising HE?

are operational systems and procedures sufficiently resourced to facilitate internationalising HE ?

is a visionary approach to internationalising HE and inspiring leaders promoted across the organisation to take action?

As **individuals**, to what extent...

are you creating and seeking on-going personal and professional learning opportunities to develop global and cultural understanding through, for example, work or study abroad, language acquisition, international networks, conferences, courses, festivals, cultural events or travel?

are you drawing on individuals' diverse learning histories, narratives and experiences?

are you enhancing an understanding of the academic benefits and value of contributing to, or participating in, activities associated with the process of internationalising HE?

are you seeking opportunities to understand the social, discipline, and cultural contexts that underpin what is learned and how?

are you critically reflecting upon and responding to personal prejudices, biases and assumptions as part of your practice?

are you using flexible and inclusive approaches that appreciate and respect individual differences in knowledge, education and culture?

are you contributing to international scholarly activity and knowledge exchange?

are you leading and supporting others to reflect on and engage in continual learning and development in relation to internationalising HE?

In the design and delivery of the curriculum, to what extent...

are global exemplars and perspectives embedded and debated?

is there flexibility (such as timing and format of assessments, induction, modes of delivery) to facilitate international mobility and collaboration?

are a range of accessible opportunities for international and intercultural learning provided and promoted?

is the content, language, pace and modes of delivery and assessment adapted to the learning context(s) and the diversity of learners?

are on-going intercultural and international dialogue and partnerships facilitated?

is the diversity of the academic community (whether differences in cultural and educational backgrounds, country of origin or languages spoken) being viewed and utilised as a key learning resource?

are inclusive learning outcomes, practices, skills, and/or attitudes appropriate for diverse societies, cultures, and individuals being proactively developed?



Glossary

A list of terms used and how they are defined for the purposes of this framework.

Academic community: all those engaged in HE learning, teaching and research, including students and staff, both on- and off-shore, as well as associated bodies (such as employers, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and agencies).

Activity: the contribution that an individual or group can make to the process of internationalising HE, requiring an underpinning set of knowledge and values to be implemented effectively.

Cultural capital: a combination of knowledge, disposition and skills held by an individual, typically associated with their cultural heritage or background, and that may be passed on from one generation to another, such as ways of communicating, socialising, language practices, values and types of behaviour.

Curriculum: the content, design and delivery of learning, teaching and assessment.

Diversity: the unique range of individual identities, encompassing dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disability, religion, politics, dispositions, or other forms of diversity.

Equitable: concerning the consideration of parity or fairness in the execution of particular tasks or activity, as well as comparison of one context with another (such as between programmes).

Ethos: the characteristic spirit of the environment and culture, as manifested in the aspirations and practices of the existing academic community.

Global: pertaining to the entire globe, rather than a specific region or country, and inclusive of local, regional and national contexts.

Inclusive culture: embracing of the diverse range of knowledge, experience, languages, beliefs, values, attitudes and meanings of its community, and manifested within its approach and practice.

Intercultural: taking place between cultures, or derived from different cultures.

Knowledge: the theoretical or practical understanding, awareness, information, and/or skills acquired through experience, development, or study, which are underpinned by core values, and necessary for the effectively implementation of activity strands within this framework.

Organisations: all HE providers (or collective policy/practice of particular functions, services faculties/ departments), professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, sector agencies, unions, and employers, who contribute to as well as benefit from internationalising HE.

Pedagogy: the study of the methods and activities of teaching.

Professional: the capabilities or proficiencies of an individual manifested in the way they behave or act, which may be required or displayed within the context of an organisation or discipline.

Services and functions: the variety of operations (such as admissions, accommodation, marketing, finances, library, academic support) or structures, systems and processes (such as induction, validation, timetabling), controlled within an organisation, which potentially impact upon and thus can contribute to internationalising HE.

Social capital: a combination of knowledge, disposition and skills associated with effectively building, interacting and drawing upon formal and informal networks and connections.

Social responsibility: the moral, ethical and/or legal duty held by an organisation or individual to act in a manner that benefits society at large.

Staff: inclusive of all those employed within or associated with HE providers, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, sector agencies, or in the workplace who influence HE and can contribute to as well as benefit from internationalising HE.

Students: inclusive of undergraduates and postgraduates studying within the UK as well as those studying transnationally on UK programmes, who can contribute to as well as benefit from internationalising HE.

Values: the principles or standards of behaviour that an individual or group can embrace and exemplify in their words and actions, and in operationalizing the activities, knowledge or responsibilities of this framework.

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