

# News

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Two events took place in 2018 focused on the Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa. The first was an IEASA workshop in August, 2018, and the second, a collaborative dialogue hosted by the British Council, IEASA and DHET in November, 2018.

## The Draft Policy for Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa Workshop, August 2018

The Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa was discussed at a full day IEASA workshop in the Royal Elephant Hotel in Pretoria, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

The keynote to the workshop was presented by the DHET's Chief Director of University Education Policy and Development, Mr Mahlubi Mabizela who confirmed that the Draft Policy Framework was undergoing various processes of approval within the Presidency.

As emphasised by Mr Mabizela, internationalisation refers to the deliberate integration of international, global and/or intercultural dimensions into the formal or informal delivery of Higher Education. Internationalisation has not been pursued as a formal national imperative in South Africa. Some South African universities have independently, actively and successfully pursued the agenda of Internationalisation. The current funding crisis in South African Higher Education, reflected in declining state subsidy and increased student intake, exacerbates the situation, as, without funding, outgoing international mobility opportunities are often confined to a select group of students. This underscores the need for universities to internationalise their curricula to provide an alternative model of internationalisation at home.

The Draft Policy Framework proposed that, each university will be expected to draft its policy on internationalisation, underpinned by the overarching objective of benefitting the entire Higher Education system. Amongst its guiding principles in achieving this objective, it must: champion research output; address the challenges of education in South Africa; expose students to international contexts, and facilitate the forging of partnerships.

The Draft Policy Framework aims furthermore to boost the cross border provision of Higher Education in the SADC region, while balancing that with the need to maintain the integrity of Higher Education in the country. For example, it proposes that private universities may set up branches anywhere outside South Africa if they are accredited and recognised by the country's government. However, public universities are not allowed to establish branches abroad, and must explicitly remain within South African borders, as a matter of public policy. To give effect to its stated objectives, the Draft Policy Framework allows however for different permutations of cross-border mobility in Higher Education between South African universities and partner institutions abroad. These vary from co-badged degrees, to joint degrees and consecutive degrees; depending on the nature of the agreement between the respective institutions. However, double/dual degrees may not be offered by South African universities.

Dr Nico Jooste of Nelson Mandela University stressed that "internationalisation must not be seen as being limited to the work of the international office, but rather a broad and systemic imperative." Moreover, internationalisation efforts must not negate the current efforts geared towards curriculum transformation in the calls for decolonisation but must complement it. He reminded us that diverse knowledge paradigms must be included in the internationalisation policies of all universities, but it is the responsibility of the respective institutions to decide on how to implement.