

# THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SPAIN

REFLECTIONS AND PERSPECTIVES



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# PREAMBLE



Spanish universities have invested great efforts in their internationalisation in recent years. As a result, the number of international students in our universities has increased steadily to over 85,000 registered during the academic year 2014/2015, of which almost half (42,000) were in the framework of the Erasmus Programme, now known as Erasmus+, which celebrates 30 years in 2017.

Furthermore, Spain has been the favourite destination for Erasmus students from all over Europe since 2001 and the top country within the EU for outgoing Erasmus students (over 65,000 a year and over 625,000 since the launch of the programme), which points to the unquestionable interest, both for institutions and Spanish students, in the internationalisation of education.

However, the activities of universities to position themselves in an increasingly competitive globalised world have not been limited to student mobility. Our universities have also developed modern internationalisation programmes that go far beyond this. The greatest challenge they face is the preparation of future generations for an international and internationalised world, for which there is no question about

the need to prepare graduates with the best training. In this context, projects for the modernisation of study programmes have already been launched through the internationalisation of the curriculum and the promotion of international employability, developing internationalisation policies at the institutional level (internationalisation at home) to provide all members of the university community (students, teachers and administrative staff) with skills and talents in international matters in line with what has been called *comprehensive internationalisation*.

Within the framework of the objectives set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Spanish Government is strongly committed to internationalisation through a Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities, adopted in 2015, on the basis of two clear premises: the need for close collaboration between all the actors involved and the recognition of the huge potential of our university system.

However, these remarkable actions developed by our educational centers have not always received visibility in international forums and the challenges faced by our universities in the constantly changing and interconnected world we live in today have rarely been addressed in depth.

Therefore, in line with the recognition of the potential of our universities outlined in the Strategy for Internationalisation, in this publication twelve experts at the international level of higher education offer their vision of the internationalisation of the Spanish university system.

In this way SEPIE intends, through these different points of view, to encourage debate around the factors that, in one way or another, affect the process of internationalisation of Spanish universities and their positioning within the framework of excellence and international quality.

**Pablo Martín González,**

Director of the Spanish Service for the Internationalization of Education (SEPIE)

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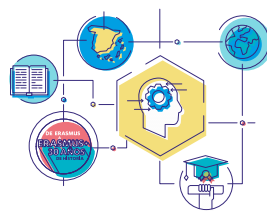
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## Introduction

Laura Howard & Adriana Perez-Encinas

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CHAPTER 01, pp. 10-15

Over the last three decades, the internationalisation of higher education in Spain has undoubtedly made considerable progress, although this has not been constant. Just over a decade ago, the majority of Spanish universities were developing their international agendas with the support of various government-backed initiatives. The authors offer their reflections on the current situation.

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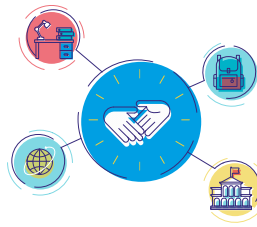


## The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities: Evaluation Two Years on

Luis Delgado

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The author summarises the evaluation of the actions and results of the strategy in its first two years, and explains some of the challenges and proposed measures for the near future. More work needs to be done to develop the potential of Spanish as a higher education language by exploring possibilities not only in the Spanish-speaking world, but also in other countries and regions with a growing interest in our language and culture.

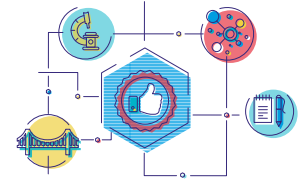


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Higher education in Spain is undergoing an intense period of internationalisation thanks to various initiatives directed by SEPIE, the Spanish Service for Internationalisation of Education. This chapter explains the diverse programs and cooperation agreements implemented with the aim to promote Spain and its education system, many of which go beyond the student mobility programs.

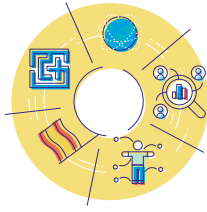


## Internationalising Quality Assurance. Building Bridges in Higher Education Areas: The Case of ANECA

Rafael Llavori & Olga Ayuso

CHAPTER 04, pp. 28-34

ANECA's Strategic Plan places particular emphasis on the relationship between the enhancement of the Spanish higher education system and the implementation of QA procedures based upon international standards. Its goal is to promote and contribute to the quality enhancement of higher education, fundamentally within the university system, through the setting in motion and implementation of programmes that place the Agency in the position of being a leader both in Spain and internationally.

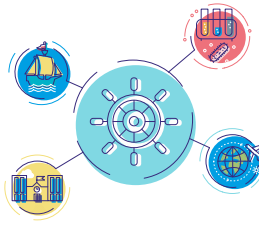


## Challenges Facing the Internationalisation of Research in Spain

José M. Martínez Sierra & César Álvarez Alonso

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More international research talent must be attracted to the Spanish university system and scientific community. It should also be made easier to give researchers and research groups structural access to the world's leading research spaces. And funds and incentives need to be generated to gain mass access to sources of inputs for global research projects.

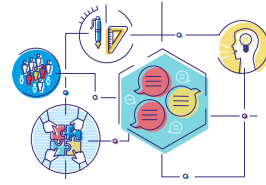


## The Idea of a "Flagship University" in the New International Context of Higher Education

Fernando Casani & Jesús Rodríguez-Pomeda

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In the new context of higher education, increased competition does not point towards the existence of a single market where universities are competing against one another to obtain scarce resources. The idea of a "new flagship university" provides a more realistic and appropriate reflection of said reality: moving up the rankings should not be an objective, but rather a way of confirming whether a university is adequately serving the interests of society as a whole.



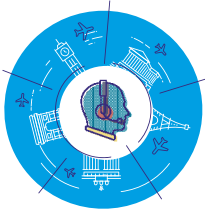
## Language Policy for Internationalisation. Spanish as an Asset

Dorothy Kelly

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This section focuses on the controversial issue of assuming that English taught programmes are always an instrument for the internationalisation of Education institutions. The author defends multilingualism as a necessary factor in a globalised system, and encourages Spanish universities to take advantage of the huge asset of having as principal language of instruction a language spoken by 567 million people around the world.





## The Internationalisation of Non-Academic Staff

Marina Casals

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This chapter analyses the important role of administrative staff in the internationalisation of Spanish education institutions, given that most strategies and analyses ignore this section as a crucially relevant component. The SUCTI Project (Systemic Universities Change Towards Internationalisation) is shown as an example of good practice to other institutions both in Spain and abroad.

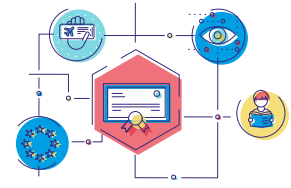


## A Short History of Marketing and Attracting International Students to Spanish Universities

Antoni Luna García & Maite Viudes

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The past few years have seen changes suggesting a future that is much more open to attracting degree-seeking students from around the world. But there is still a lot of work to be done: an international recruitment strategy on a national level strategy is essential, alongside an important allocation of resources, especially by creating a strong scholarship scheme to attract talent to our universities.

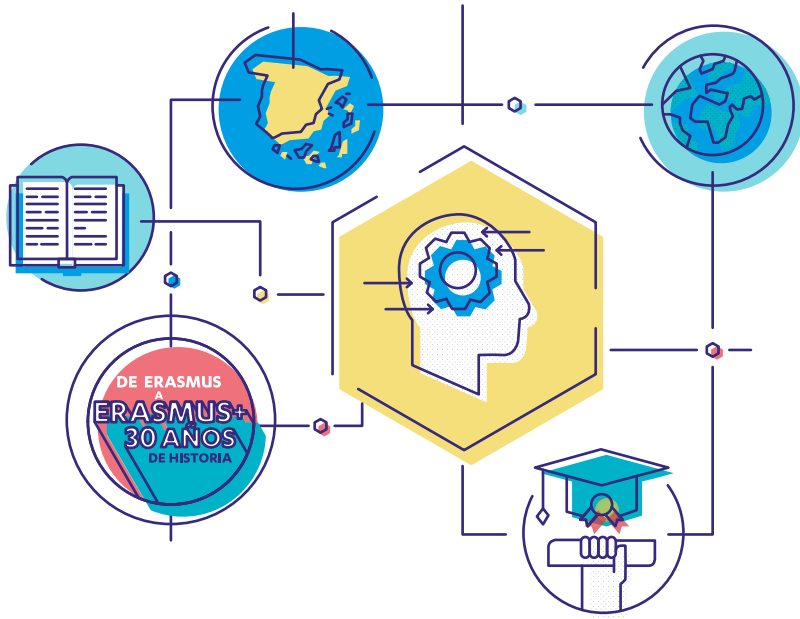


## The Internationalisation of Spanish Higher Education in Global Perspective

Hans de Wit, Laura E. Rumbley & Jeannette Vélez Ramírez

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Institutions of higher education must contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals as defined by the United Nations, to innovation and development, and to the creation of professionals and citizens with skills and sensibilities appropriate for this globalised era. In this concluding section we look at some of the main characteristics of internationalisation of Spanish higher education in that global environment: a scenario filled with opportunities.



# 01

## INTRODUCTION

**LAURA HOWARD & ADRIANA PEREZ-ENCINAS**

This publication aims to reflect on the current situation of the internationalisation of higher education in the Spanish context. It is intended for those interested in international relations and higher education affairs, as well as higher education policymakers and stakeholders within institutions of higher education who would like to know more about the current Spanish context in an international scenario.

The coordinating editors – Adriana Perez-Encinas, Laura Howard, Laura E. Rumbley and Hans de Wit – invited thirteen national experts to share their views and experiences, as well as international authors whose contributions bring a broader perspective to the Spanish international context by mapping and commenting on the influence of Spanish higher education in other regions of the world beyond the European Union.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Erasmus mobility programme, which has been an extremely successful internationalisation tool for Spanish institutions. In addition, a major event on the international higher education calendar – the 29th annual conference of the European

Association for International Education, EAIE – will be held in Spain. This is the third time that Spain has hosted the EAIE conference, after Barcelona in 1997 and Madrid in 2009.

For the above reasons, it seemed an opportune moment to take stock and reflect on the current situation of the internationalisation of higher education in the Spanish context, a topic on which very little research has been carried out to date.

In order to understand the current panorama, this introductory chapter provides a brief overview of internationalisation of higher education in the Spanish context in recent years.

Over the last three decades, the internationalisation of higher education in Spain has undoubtedly made significant progress, although this progress has not been constant. Just over a decade ago, the majority of Spanish universities were developing their international agendas with the support of various government-backed initiatives. For example, many universities were immersed in well-funded development cooperation projects with higher education institutions in regions such as Latin America and North Africa. These projects were channelled through the Inter-University Cooperation Programme (*Programa de Cooperación Interuniversitaria, PCI*), financed by the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and allowed many Spanish universities to develop strong links in those regions.

In 2008, Universidad.es first came on the scene. The long-awaited creation of this public foundation, designed to promote Spain globally as a destination for international students and scholars, was the culmination of many years' preparatory work carried out at all levels, not the least by the very active group of university representatives gathered under the umbrella of the sectorial commission for internationalisation and cooperation of the Spanish Rectors' Conference.

At roughly the same time, the finishing touches were being put to the Spanish Government's strategy, *Estrategia Universidad 2015* (EU2015), which aimed to "substantially improve" the university system and "place it at a level of international excellence." One of the tools created to do this was the International Campus of Excellence programme (ICE) initiative, designed to allow more strategic investment in the most promising campuses to cultivate international recognition in specific fields.

These are just some examples of the positive developments that were taking place a decade ago, helping Spanish universities to see themselves as truly globally engaged institutions.

The onset of the economic crisis hit the higher education sector every bit as hard

as it did other sectors of Spanish society and many universities were forced to put a significant number of their internationalisation activities on hold in response to budget cutbacks.

In 2011, funding was cut for the PCI programme. In 2013, it was announced that, as part of a streamlining process of the public sector, Universidad.es would be incorporated into the Spanish National Agency for European programmes to form a new organisation, the Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (SEPIE) which would promote internationalisation both within Europe and the rest of the world. This new body became fully effective in 2015.

Furthermore, no additional funding was provided to finance specific reforms within the ICE programme and the implementation of the EU2015 lost some of its impetus.

Despite the negative effects of the economic recession, all was not gloom and doom. One evident success story is mobility, which continued to thrive, particularly in the context of the Erasmus programme.

For some years now, Spain has occupied a privileged position in the European context as one of the main Erasmus receiving and sending countries for study purposes. For example, in the academic year 2013-2014 Spanish institutions received 39,277 students and sent 37,235 students (European Commission, 2015), occupying the first position in Europe.

In spite of this somewhat chequered history of successes and failures, Spanish institutions are aware that in the globalised world we operate in, internationalisation of higher education is fundamental to improve the quality of education and provide our students with the skills and competences they need to make a valid contribution to society.

How, then, is the higher education sector in Spain going about achieving these aims? What is the current situation as regards the internationalisation of Spanish universities?

This book presents an analysis of many aspects of internationalisation of higher education in Spain as a first step towards understanding the current Spanish internationalisation landscape. It is divided into several sections, each of which provides the reader with a general overview of the following topics:

- [Internationalisation of Education](#)
- [Internationalisation of Research](#)
- [Internationalisation Policies and Practices](#)
- [Internationalisation of Higher Education in Spain: A View from the Outside](#)

The first section brings together the voices of experts working in different national organisms, reporting on the current situation of *Internationalisation of Education* as seen from their different perspectives

The contribution by **Luis Delgado** is based on the elaboration and main ideas behind the Internationalisation Strategy 2015 drafted by the Ministry of Education of Spain in 2014. The chapter presents key points of the strategy consisting of 28 actions divided across four main strategic axes. A report on the first two years of implementation is provided, as well as some challenges encountered and suggested actions to be taken in the coming years.

**Alfonso Gentil Álvarez-Ossorio**, Head of the Internationalisation of the Spanish Higher Education Unit at SEPIE (Servicio Español para la Internacionalización de la Educación) introduces a review of their work as an entity whose role is to support the internationalisation of education in Spain. The chapter presents several initiatives and cooperation agreements with other regions of the world to promote Spain and its international dimension.

This section ends with a chapter written by **Rafael Llavori** and **Olga Ayuso Rodríguez**, from the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, ANECA. They present a review of the international activities carried out by the Agency and explain how their work can contribute to the internationalisation of the higher education sector in Spain, making the important point that collaboration between the various bodies involved is a vital part of success.

The second section provides a provocative approach to Internationalisation of Research presenting challenges, actions and policies in relation to research and flagship universities.

The chapter by **José M. Martínez Sierra** and **César Álvarez Alonso** offers an overview of the challenges to internationalising research in the Spanish context. It provides the reader with a series of actions that could be taken in order to improve the internationalisation of research initiatives in general.

**Fernando Casani** and **Jesús Rodríguez-Pomeda** discuss rankings and the role of prestige and reputation in the internationalisation process. They explore the concept of a Flagship university and its use as an alternative way to measure the impact of an institution.

The third section covers three topics related to *Internationalisation Policies and Practices*.

In chapter seven, **Dorothy Kelly** tackles the sometimes polemic issue of whether it should automatically be assumed that teaching in English will make our institutions

more international. While advocating multilingualism as a necessity in our globalised world, she analyses the role of the Spanish language as an asset in the internationalisation strategies of Spanish higher education institutions.

In the following chapter, **Marina Casals** analyses the important role of non-academic staff in the internationalisation of our institutions – a sector that is often overlooked and underestimated. The SUCTI project (Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation) is presented as an example of good practice in developing awareness of internationalisation and its importance for the institution among non-administrative staff.

Finally, **Antoni Luna García** and **Maite Viudes** provide a perspective on the attraction of international students into Spanish higher education institutions as well as several marketing initiatives developed since the start of the Bologna process. The chapter concludes with recent changes and future perspectives.

The final section, called *Internationalisation of Higher Education in Spain, A View from the Outside*, explores the Spanish international dimension with rich perspectives from international experts based in United States and Latin America, namely **Hans de Wit**, **Laura E. Rumbley** and **Jeannette Vélez**.

Of course, the perspectives presented here – from Spanish and non-Spanish contributors alike – only begin to scratch the surface on the complex panorama of the Spanish higher education experience with the phenomenon of internationalisation. Still, we hope that this volume will contribute to a broader understanding of how the higher education sector in Spain continues to evolve with respect to matters of internationalisation and global engagement. We would like to thank all those who have contributed – not only the authors of the various chapters but also the SEPIE whose financial support made it possible to bring together in one publication a range of diverse ideas. It is our sincere hope to stimulate ongoing discussion and critical analysis about this crucially important dimension of Spanish higher education in the 21st century.



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## SECTION I

# THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION





# 02

## THE STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF SPANISH UNIVERSITIES · EVALUATION TWO YEARS ON

LUIS DELGADO

### Introduction

In 2010, the Ministry of Education launched its *University Strategy 2015* (Ministerio de Educación, 2011), including the first draft of what would become an internationalisation strategy (Delgado, 2010).

Following this, the *Mobility Strategy 2020* was approved as part of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2012 and, in 2015, the *Strategy for the External Dimension of the EHEA* of 2007 was revised (European Higher Education Area, 2012, 2007). In 2013, the European Union (EU) approved its strategy for the internationalisation of higher education (European Commission, 2013). As such, Member States were invited to develop national strategies and objectives with specific measures and measurable indicators in line with the objectives and initiatives carried out at European level.

In October 2013, the General Secretariat of Universities (SGU) set up a Task Force for the Internationalisation of Universities, in order to develop its internationalisation strategy. They were able to count on the participation of other Ministries, including those for Employment and Social Security, Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Research and Development, and Industry. Participation also came from the Spanish autonomous communities and other actors within the Spanish university system, such as the Rectors' Conference, the Network of University-Business Partnerships and other associations and public agencies from the Quality and Internationalisation sectors.

The resulting strategy was presented for debate in a meeting held in September 2014 with all the Spanish and foreign experts and actors. It was formally approved in October 2014 and presented to the General Conference on University Policy and the Universities Board in December 2014.

According to the *Bologna Process Implementation Report of 2015*, of the 48 EHEA states, Spain is one of 16 countries that have a formal internationalisation strategy (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015).

## The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities

The Internationalisation Strategy (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2016) is founded upon a broad concept of internationalisation that goes further than simply promoting student mobility and signing international agreements. It also takes into account aspects such as the internationalisation of university curricula, brain circulation, the internationalisation of research, international joint qualifications, internationalisation at home, transnational campuses, quality assurance, accreditation and evaluation systems, competition to attract the best students, university rankings, international alumni associations, employability and entrepreneurship, interest in Spanish-language higher education, etc.

In order to implement the internationalisation strategy, a SWOT analysis was undertaken on Spain's universities and university system, taking into account the current context. After analysing the current challenges and the main factors of internationalisation, a system was proposed with objectives and initiatives related to four main axes: 1) a highly internationalised university system; 2) the international appeal of universities; 3) the international competitiveness of the sector; and 4) higher education cooperation with other parts of the world, defining a cooperative geostrategy with other countries.

The strategy proposes 28 specific initiatives in line with these axes, as displayed in Fig. 1, indicating the approach and people involved, as well as the expected results for each axis and initiative.

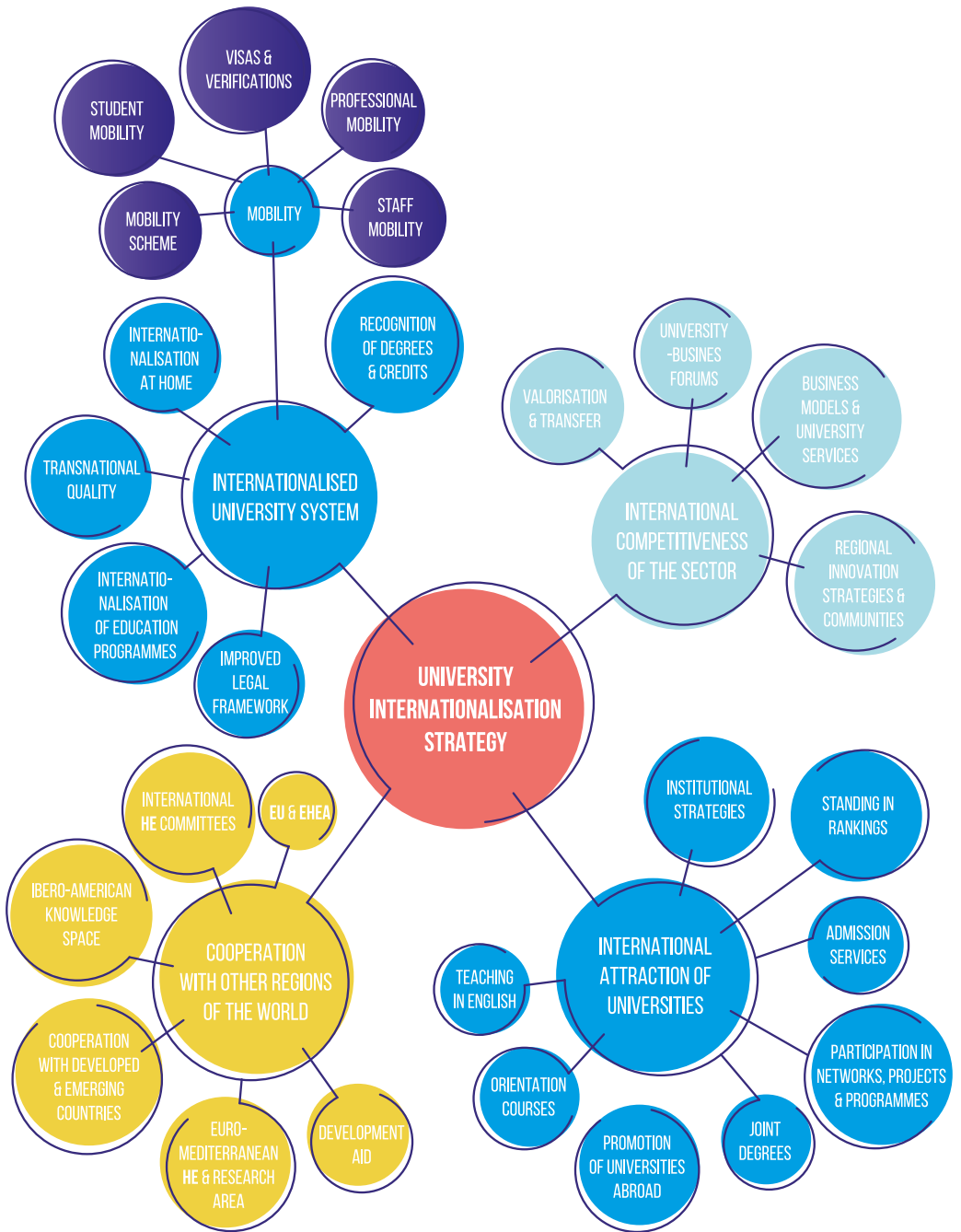


Fig. 1: Chart of actions to be taken under the Internationalisation Strategy

## Evaluation of initiatives 2015-2016

The following section summarises the evaluation of the actions and results of the strategy in its first two years, as carried out by the Strategy Evaluation Commission alongside representatives of the task force mentioned above.

The legal framework was firstly reviewed in relation to the barriers identified regarding various aspects. For example, a review was carried out on the admission process for foreign students, eliminating the need to take entrance examinations by recognising qualifications that grant students access to university study in their home countries. Likewise, institutional legislation was developed for the incoming and outgoing mobility of university staff in line with the standards outlined in the strategy.

With regard to the recognition of credits and qualifications, a review was carried out to check for compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention's provisions for the accreditation of foreign higher education programmes, following the BFUG's recommendations for automatic recognition.

The accreditation of teaching and research staff was bolstered by criteria for evaluating their international experience, and encouragement was given to refer to agencies registered on EQAR (European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies) for the evaluation and accreditation of programmes.

An international doctorate was promoted in line with the European Commission's principles on innovative doctoral training. In the Transfer of Knowledge and Innovation, legislation was developed for patents and technology-based companies.

The following provides a summary of other specific actions taken in the two years following the launch of the strategy.

### Summary of actions taken under the strategy in 2015-16

- Internationalisation manual for study programmes
- International mobility website (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2017)
- Simplification of visa application processes for students and professors
- Promotion and recommendations for the development of international joint programmes in line with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes
- Good practices guide for universities participating in global rankings
- Implementation of EHEA's instruments and tools
- Integration of the international mobility measure into the Integrated University Information System using new indicators
- Action plan for the internationalisation of university-business partnerships
- Marketing plan for Spanish universities abroad

In addition to this evaluation, the rest of the planned actions are underway. The dynamics and working models of these initiatives are bolstered by the Internationalisation Strategy Evaluation Commission, in order to ensure they work well and are launched in the current and future time frame.

## Conclusions

In the first two years of its development, it may be stated that the strategy has brought into line the internationalisation strategies and initiatives of everyone involved in the Spanish university system, such as the General State Administration, autonomous communities, universities, associations and other people concerned, introducing the first ever common strategy shared by everyone involved in the Spanish university system.

Despite having been introduced during a period of economic austerity, the initiatives and objectives have been met to a high degree by drawing on funds from programmes and activities that share the same objectives as the strategy. It has also served as an incentive for Spanish universities to attract funding from abroad, as demonstrated by the increased amount of funds gathered from programmes like the European Commission's *Horizon 2020* and *Erasmus+*.

In the time remaining before the culmination of the strategy in 2020, progress should continue to be made by implementing the outlined initiatives, such as internationalisation at home to offer the benefits of internationalisation to the majority of students who do not take part in mobility programmes, transnational quality assurance with complete reliance on agencies registered on EQAR, international mobility schemes for research and employment as well as for learning, and an increased amount of qualifications in English and other foreign languages, etc.

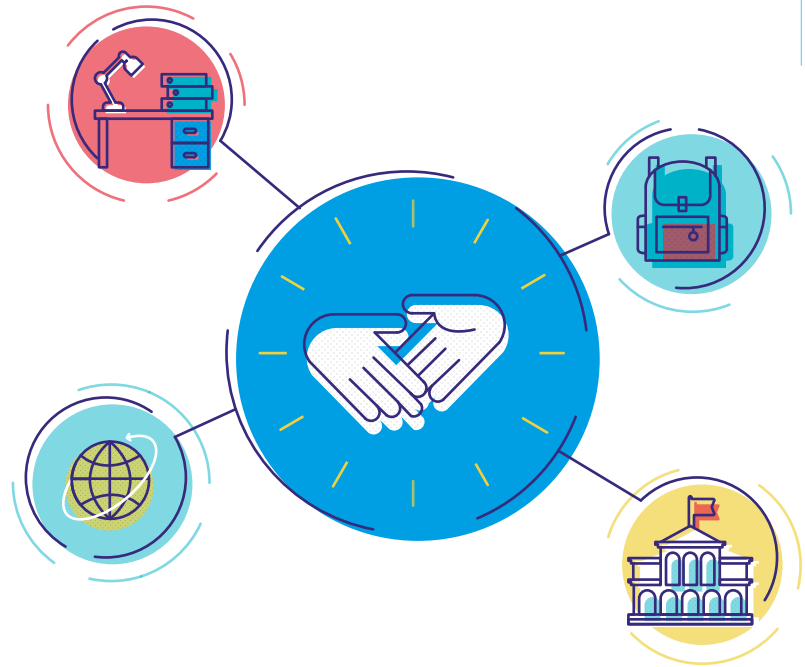
A geostrategy for internationalisation must also be consolidated to establish standards for specific international cooperation with various regions and countries of the world. Cooperation for excellence should be considered in some cases and, in others, cooperation for the development and building of skills.

More work must be done to develop the potential of Spanish as a higher education language by exploring possibilities not only in the Spanish-speaking world, but also in other countries and regions with a growing interest in our language and culture.



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# 03

## THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE SPANISH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AS PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

ALFONSO GENTIL ÁLVAREZ-OSSORIO

### Introduction

Nowadays, international relations are bringing people together, and higher education is opening people's minds and putting their thoughts in order. Spain, with its universal language, unstoppable tourism and sustained growth, continues to open up to the world, and its 84 universities are making a decisive contribution to the country's strong position as a brand.

Higher education is one of the pillars of "soft diplomacy" (Aspiroz, 2012) and has been used as such by France and the United Kingdom in centuries gone by. The Spanish higher education system has historically had a great influence on Ibero-America, and its diplomatic role is experiencing a resurgence in the 21st century, as a fresh impulse is manifesting itself not only in Latin America, but in other parts of the world as well.

## I · Student mobility as a factor behind the internationalisation of universities

The new *Strategy for the Internationalisation of Spanish Universities* promotes initiatives as diverse as the establishment of an effective system for the recognition of study periods and qualifications, support for the creation of international doctorate programmes and changes to curricula to include interdisciplinary skills and encourage their adaptation to the international landscape.

The Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Education (SEPIE), an independent body created in 2015, plays a key role in the development of this strategy by driving the internationalisation of the Spanish university system and its projection in all international areas. It also promotes opportunities to study and carry out research at foreign universities, improves the admission of foreign students, professors and researchers in Spain and of Spanish nationals abroad, and promotes the European Higher Education Area and the Ibero-American Knowledge Space. There is also a range of initiatives that give significant support to raising the international profile of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Spain.

The universities' initiatives include offering more qualifications in other languages, the growing presence of foreign professors in lecture theatres, double and joint qualifications with HEIs in other countries, and increasing their presence in countries where they would like to attract students.

SEPIE also works on training programmes for professors from various Latin American countries, organises visits to HEIs abroad to encourage the creation of networks for joint work and projects, and strengthens the Spanish university system's brand image by participating in international events and fairs.

### a · The Erasmus+ programme

The Erasmus programme has become the European Union's key instrument for cultural diplomacy, helping to create social cohesion between European countries and a European identity in young people who have crossed borders to study in another Member State. Furthermore, since 2015 the new Erasmus+ programme has also allowed students to carry out mobility schemes in countries from almost all over the world, which is the so called 'international dimension' of the programme, confirming the Union's strong backing of this form of public diplomacy, which uses academic exchanges to disseminate the values that form the foundations of our common living space.

According to the latest statistics from the European Commission, from 1987 -which is the year when the programme was created- to 2017, over 625,000 Spanish students have studied, volunteered or done work experience abroad as part of this



programme. Moreover, from 2001 Spain is the favourite destination of Erasmus+ students ahead of Germany and the United Kingdom.

Spain makes a strong commitment to the Erasmus+ programme co-financing the call with more than 30 million euros to reinforce student mobilities. Furthermore, it may also be stated that this mobility programme is the one most used by Spanish students to obtain credits away from their home universities. Therefore, it cannot be understood Spain without the Erasmus+ program and Erasmus program without Spain.

### b · Promoting other international mobility agreements

In order to promote the Ibero-American Knowledge Space, SEPIE has signed agreements with various countries in Ibero-America: one has been signed with Argentina (BEC.AR); the one developed with Ecuador (Master's Degrees and Lifelong Learning) added the aspect of blended learning, applying "digital diplomacy" to the university world; and those signed with Paraguay (BECAL, on Teacher Training) and Brazil (Science Without Borders) have attracted 7,592 students to Spanish universities and research centres.

SEPIE is also the representative and managerial body behind the *2nd Executive Plan for Cooperation and Educational Exchange* signed between Chinese and Spanish authorities for the period 2015-2019, according to which the People's Republic of China offers 15 grants every year for Spanish nationals to study there and, in turn, Spain offers the same number of grants for Chinese citizens to study at Spanish HEIs.

## II · Initiatives to internationalise the Spanish university system brand

### a · Participation in university fairs and international events

SEPIE participates in the world's most important international education events, such as NAFSA (United States) and its European equivalent organised by the European Association for International Education (EAIE). At these events, the organisation manages the participation of Spanish universities under one roof, presenting a solid brand image.

Likewise, SEPIE promotes and organises exclusively Spanish university fairs in other countries (Brazil, Morocco, Uruguay, etc.), in order to promote a unified image and export the idea that the Spanish university system is synonymous with quality and excellence.

On this work basis, the external communication policy has been strengthened with a new impulse to the institutional web, which presents new contents and the

possibility of accessing the English language version, as well as with the design of new updated information material with a more attractive format or the with the reinforcement of the brand Study in Spain, whose portal is jointly managed with TOURSPAIN and ICEX Spain Trade and Investment

### b · Collaboration with higher education organisations and institutions

SEPIE's internationalisation efforts go further than just attending university fairs and events; it also collaborates with corresponding organisations in other countries (Campus France, British Council, FAUBAI in Brazil, NUFFIC in the Netherlands) and takes part in congresses and projects with a clear international dimension. Furthermore, SEPIE collaborates with others involved in the Spanish university system (for example, the Spanish Rectors' Conference) to develop transnational projects that take the Spanish system beyond our own borders (such as the *Universidad Franco-Española* project).

## III · Other initiatives to promote the Spanish higher education system on the international stage

### a · Removing obstacles to incoming mobility students

The EU has approved legislation to facilitate the arrival of students and researchers and encourage participation in work experience, such as the Directive (EU) /801/2016, which Spain must implement by 23 May 2018. This instrument allows students and researchers to remain for up to 9 months in European territory at the end of their stay to look for work or set up a company, and it makes the visa application process more flexible by involving the host institution. Along with the Secretary General of Immigration and Emigration SEPIE has promoted meetings with the Universities so as to hear their points of view regarding the implementation of the directive in Spain. On a national level, SEPIE pushed for a Collaboration Agreement to be signed in 2015 between various ministries to facilitate the arrival of students, professors and researchers from outside the EU. This instrument allows universities to act as a registration authority when dealing with applications for Foreigners' National Identity Cards. It speeds up the visa issuing process, facilitates the formalities at Foreign National Offices and Police Stations and creates a fast track system for the admission of students onto international mobility programmes.

### b · Organising seminars and events to encourage exchanges

Over the past few years, SEPIE has intensified its communication with other organisations that promote higher education abroad. For example, it now collaborates with the Organisation of Ibero-American States to organize seminars in Argentina and Paraguay, and maintains a fluid stream of contact with the responsible bodies in Ibero-American countries. At a European level, as

mentioned before, contacts with counterpart Agencies have been intensified. On a national level, SEPIE organises workshops and seminars to promote research in various fields (for example, *Internationalisation Opportunities in Asia*, aimed at Spanish universities interested in carrying out market research in the region), or to present the international community with its functions and explore other areas for collaboration (for example, *Working Breakfasts* with education representatives from accredited institutions in Madrid).

### c · Promoting international employability through student internships

Based on the wide experience obtained from the Erasmus+ programme, which allows to fund annually more than 10,000 internships in Spain, SEPIE promotes work experience to complement classroom learning and, as such, students have been able to carry out teaching practice in Spain and even India through the BECAL Programme (Paraguay). Furthermore, SEPIE and the General Secretariat of Immigration and Emigration (Ministry of Employment and Social Security) launched their Pilot Programme for Work Experience in 2016. It was run at US-based companies for science and engineering graduates from Spanish universities, in order to offer graduates with outstanding CVs the chance to work at companies abroad.

## IV · Conclusions

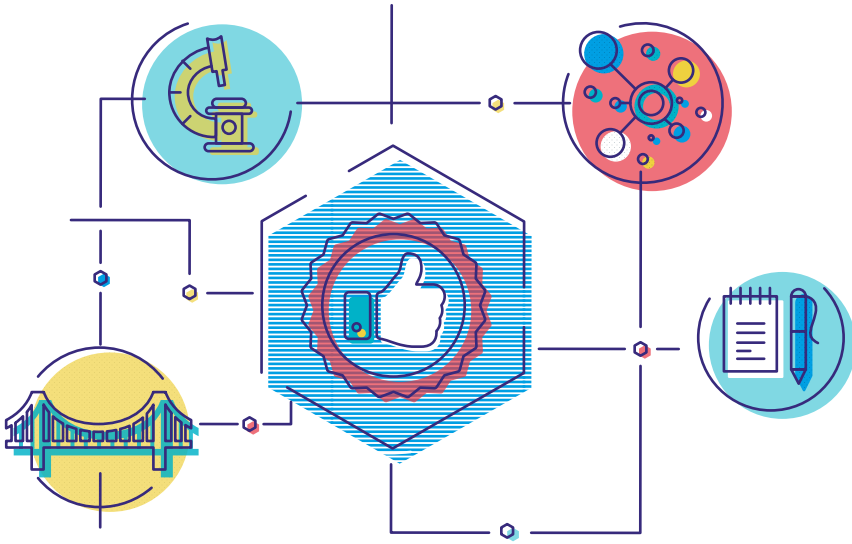
Higher education in Spain is undergoing an intense period of internationalisation thanks to various initiatives directed by SEPIE. SEPIE backs a wide range of international initiatives, going beyond the student mobility offered by the successful Erasmus+ programme. This is because mobility is not the only factor behind the internationalisation of universities, but just one of many global initiatives. Participation in world events, fairs and transnational projects, the improved regulation of international mobility and the search for new employability formulas are the defining features of a young organisation that is very active in promoting the internationalisation of the Spanish higher education system.



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# 04

## INTERNATIONALISING QUALITY ASSURANCE. BUILDING BRIDGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AREAS. THE CASE OF ANECA

RAFAEL LLAVORI & OLGA AYUSO

### Introduction

Since its creation in 2002, ANECA -the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation- has been an extremely active participant in international activities, both as a means to contribute to the internationalisation of quality assurance (QA) practices and as part of the efforts made by the Spanish higher education system to align with the European Higher Education Area. ANECA's international activities have also served to strengthen ties in areas of specific interest for Spanish higher education institutions, such as the Mediterranean and North Africa region (MENA) and Latin America.

## International strategy

ANECA's Strategic Plan places particular emphasis on the relationship between the enhancement of the Spanish higher education system and the implementation of QA procedures based upon international standards. To this end, ANECA aims, under its Strategic Objective B, to "promote and contribute to the quality enhancement of higher education, fundamentally within the university system, through the setting in motion and implementation of programmes that place the Agency in the position of being a leader both in Spain and internationally" (ANECA, n.d.a).

For this reason, the international activities of ANECA should be approached and understood as a way to contribute to strengthening the procedures designed and run by the Agency for the benefit of the Spanish higher education system. ANECA's procedures should also, however, contribute to positioning ANECA internationally in QA matters, as well as for capacity building purposes aligned to the International Agenda of the Ministry of Education 2015-2020.

According to its International Strategy, ANECA does not evaluate either programmes or institutions outside Spain. When ANECA's procedures are implemented internationally, this is done as a joint initiative with a national partner within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding in order to contribute towards the international agenda of the Spanish higher education system as a whole.

As part of its international capacities, three main international outputs can be identified:

- (i) political leadership
- (ii) technical competences and
- (iii) geographical focus.

(i) Political leadership is represented through the establishment of memoranda of understanding and mutual recognition agreements with QA bodies that are members of international networks and associations such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), *Red Iberoamericana para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad en la Educación Superior* (RIACES), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), etc.

(ii) Technical competences are represented by the main QA activities run by ANECA whose know-how is requested by other QA bodies to develop joint procedures. These include internal QA mechanisms (AUDIT), discipline-oriented accreditation procedures and evaluation of individual academic staff.

(iii) The geographical focus of ANECA's international activities plays a particularly important role in creating an interregional bridging function as part of the broader internationalisation strategy of the Spanish higher education system in the European Higher Education Area, Latin America and the MENA region. This focus is also linked to contributing to improving the recognition of foreign qualifications, a competence recently assumed by ANECA via a Royal Decree issued in December 2014.

Together, these three main lines of action provide ANECA with a clear roadmap for its international engagement, combining the necessary actions to maintain the balance between cooperation and promotion of Spanish higher education institutions.

### **Moving forward: the role of the networks**

In 2003, ANECA took part in the creation of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), focusing on mutual recognition among European QA agencies and accreditation of joint-programmes, as well as in the Ibero-American Network for Accreditation Agencies (RIACES). ANECA was also one of the first three European QA agencies to be listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) in 2008 after being reviewed against the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), coordinated by ENQA in 2007.

ANECA's international activities are based on a strong set of bilateral alliances with peer organisations in Europe, Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean Region in addition to more informally sharing collaborative spaces within the corresponding regional QA networks.

Within this framework, several strategic bilateral agreements with QA agencies should be emphasised: with HCERES in France focusing on cross-border joint evaluation procedures outside the European Higher Education Area; with the Ministry of Education and the national accreditation body of Colombia, adapting the AUDIT procedure for the Colombian higher education institutions; and with CACEI, the Mexican Engineering Accreditation Agency, to adapt the European label for engineering programmes (EUR-ACE©) for use by Mexican higher education institutions (ANECA, n.d.b).

ANECA has also been represented in the executive boards of the main international organisations: Board of ENQA between 2009 and 2015, Board and Chair of ECA between 2010-2014 and 2014-2015 respectively, Board of INQAHE 2010-2012, etc.

Involvement in these bodies has allowed ANECA to engage in a two-way process: sharing its expertise abroad and bringing the international debates and good practices into its own daily practices.

## Sharing good practices: international projects

The participation of ANECA in international projects funded by the European Commission has been crucial for this two-way process. These projects allowed ANECA to take part in the first European attempts to simplify the QA of joint programmes and their recognition in 2008, which led to the current "European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint programmes" approved in the last Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan in 2014.

Furthermore, international projects have channelled some initiatives to promote capacity building in QA practices in Latin America, the Middle East and the Mediterranean region. These include strengthening the internal QA mechanisms of higher education institutions in Jordan (EQuAM Tempus Project 2012-15), the creation of the QA Agency in Lebanon (TLQAA Erasmus Project 2010-13, which continues in 2016-2019 with the Project TLQAA+), implementing internal QA systems in higher education institutions in Colombia (AUDIT-Colombia Project 2016-2017), contributing to the Project 2016-2019 or supporting the design and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework of Jordan (NQF-Jordan Erasmus + Project 2015-2018).

As part of its long-standing collaboration with ECA, ANECA has recently participated in a European Project focused on internationalisation. The aim of the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation (CeQulnt) is to assess, enhance and reward internationalisation. It offers programmes and institutions the means to self-assess internationalisation and/or to have their internationalisation assessed by a quality assurance agency.

The European certificate attests to the fact that students achieve high international and intercultural competencies in the certified study programmes or institutions. This is a valuable orientation point for the labour market and also has the potential to facilitate cross-border recognition of the corresponding qualifications in Europe. The Faculty of Education of the University of Murcia obtained the Cequlnt Certificate in April of 2017 with ANECA as the coordinating agency for the process.

ANECA is considering incorporating this European certificate into its catalogue of international labels offered to Spanish universities, such as those related to Engineering and Information Technology (IT).

## Building regional bridges: The QACHE Project on Cross-border Higher Education

Nevertheless, the project "Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education" (QACHE Erasmus Mundus Project 2013-2015) is probably the initiative that best explains the international dimension of ANECA worldwide. This project, coordinated

by ENQA, involved the regional QA networks of the Asia-Pacific and the Arab countries. ANECA took part along with three European agencies plus Australia. The goal was to reinforce the awareness of QA agencies of the need to address the current lack of information and policy dialogue at the national level concerning QA of cross-border HE, and find ways for QA agencies and networks to cooperate and share information. To that purpose the main product of the project was the "Toolkit for QA Agencies on Cross-border Higher Education".

The Toolkit aims to provide practical guidance to QA agencies, through general principles and recommendations, on how they can improve the sharing of information regarding cross-border HE and enhance cooperation in QA in a diverse international environment, taking into account the various levels of involvement and responsibility of different stakeholders. It focuses on three main principles:

**a) Information sharing.**

QA agencies of sending and receiving countries should share information about their respective QA systems and about providers operating across borders, with a view to facilitating mutual understanding and building trust.

**b) Cooperation in QA.**

QA agencies of sending and receiving countries should seek to coordinate and cooperate in their review activity of cross-border higher education, with a view to avoiding gaps and duplication of efforts, and to lessening the regulatory burdens on providers.

**c) Networks of agencies.**

Networks of QA agencies should facilitate inter-agency cooperation and the implementation of the QACHE Toolkit.

The QACHE Toolkit works as a complementary tool for a more responsible cross-border higher education activity around the world supporting the initiatives of the higher education institutions.

## **The way forward**

ANECA's international challenge in the coming years will be to support national priorities regarding the internationalisation of the Spanish higher education institutions while maintaining its engagement and reputation in the international quality assurance theatre.

The internationalisation of quality assurance practices cannot be considered independently of the broader scope of internationalisation of higher education at the national level. For this reason, ANECA is strengthening its collaboration with the organisations in charge of such endeavours, particularly with the Spanish Service



for the Internationalisation of Higher Education, SEPIE.

Only by combining efforts and synergies from all organisations involved can a successful strategy for the internationalisation of higher education institutions be achieved.



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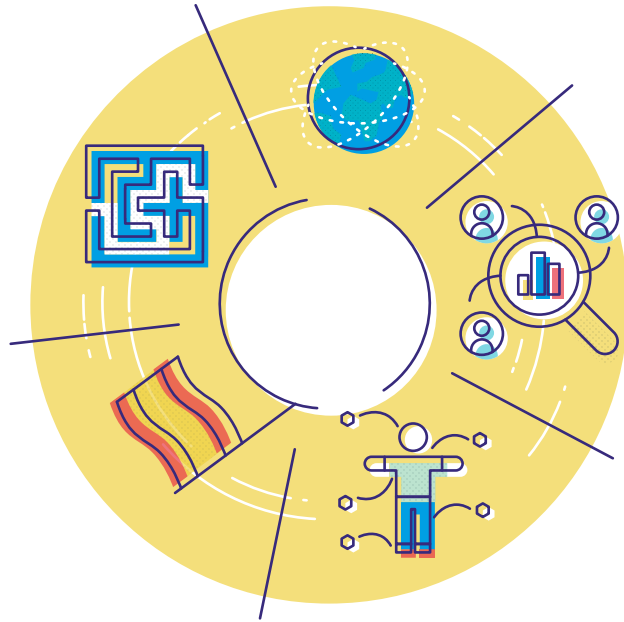
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## **SECTION II**

# THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF **RESEARCH**



# 05

## CHALLENGES FACING THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF RESEARCH IN SPAIN

JOSÉ M. MARTÍNEZ SIERRA & CÉSAR ÁLVAREZ ALONSO

The internationalisation of research is not a recent phenomenon; it is woven into the fabric of the classical university tradition as a result of the academic mobility that began in medieval Europe. This is the context in which the origins of scientific exchange and the mobility of knowledge can be placed. Respected scholars like Oleksiyenko, A. (2008) have described the internationalisation of research as a fragmented and fairly inconsistent process that is by no means founded upon a systematic, sustained and coherent system with a satisfactory course of action.

For the purposes of this article, we shall interpret the internationalisation of research as a group of elements that help to understand and develop research as a phenomenon involving global inspiration, action and ambition. This definition is made purely under the assumption that the internationalisation of research is superior to the nationalisation or

regionalisation of the same, as it generates more opportunities to solve current and future problems in society.

There are multiple factors that affect the internationalisation of research in Spain. By way of example, we may firstly mention the complexity of the vertical and horizontal distribution of jurisdiction. More specifically, the vertical distribution of jurisdiction established in Part VIII of the Spanish Constitution, leading to the formation of an Autonomous State, has prevented the emergence of a coherent and sustainable strategy and hindered coordinated efforts consistent with a state policy.

The exception to this rule is the *Campus of International Excellence*, the only programme to have always harvested the country's potential as a medium-sized power by attempting to break away from the "one size fits all" approach. It focused on the existing potential of universities and favoured an international approach over a national one by simply encouraging associations between universities – that is to say an approach that selected and appointed anything that had potential for excellence over that which did not. The programme was designed to be a path and not a finished product. However, the programme ended up expanding to practically the entire university system and lost a drastic amount of funding. In spite of this, it laid the foundations for internal selection and external action, offering an alternative to inertia that could probably be rekindled today.

In addition to the previous point, the horizontal distribution of jurisdiction has also contributed to today's unflattering panorama. In just under five years, jurisdiction over research matters has gone from firstly being taken away from the ministry responsible for universities – when 70% of the country's research was being carried out at universities – to then being left to innovation with no clear plan for it to be kept together or separate. Responsibility was then given back to universities. Finally, the matter of jurisdiction was entangled in the economic crisis.

The second factor is the lack of a consistent and sustained strategy, something which applies to both the internationalisation of research and the country's own strategy for science and research. This is demonstrated by the different regulations and legislation passed on this matter. The research landscape has been altered by the changes made to the Organic Law 6/2001 on Universities (LOU) and the Organic Law 4/2007, which introduced fundamental changes to research activities. The Law 14/2011 on Science, Technology and Innovation most recently introduced changes to the LOU. Despite this whole panoply of legislation, the truth is that there are still important limitations to the mobility of researchers, and these become serious obstacles when trying to promote the international dimension of research.

The third structural element is the limitation and thinning out of funding, a situation not comparable to countries with the same per capita income and GDP. In 2015, Spain's expenditure on R&D fell to levels similar to those reached in 2005. More

specifically, it dropped to 1.22% of GDP, which is below the European Union average of around 2%, according to data published in the 238/2016 Eurostat report. Spain has many more universities covering the three vertices of the knowledge triangle than those found in other economically-similar countries. While backing has been given to a university system that focuses more on the national territory than internationalisation, stimulus has also been given to a model for federal and regional agencies (CSIC, CIEMAT, etc.) that used to rival universities in their approach and funding.

Having looked at the core features of the system's structural flaws, we shall now propose some basic elements required to reform the system in the smallest viable way in order to promote the internationalisation of research from the ground up, taking into consideration researchers and research groups and allowing this ground-up approach to benefit the system as a whole.

Therefore, we point out the need for improvement in three fundamental areas. On the one hand, international talent must be attracted to the Spanish university system and scientific community. This may be national or international talent, but it must be highly internationalised. Secondly, it should be made easier to give researchers and research groups structural access to the world's leading research spaces. Thirdly, funds and incentives need to be generated to gain mass access to sources of inputs for global research projects.

The financing of the first proposal is obviously of fundamental importance. While it may be complicated – or at least it has been recently during the economic crisis – to create mechanisms that facilitate substantial investment in the attraction of talent, it may be beneficial to follow models that have proven their potential and become paradigms of success. One of the most solid systems has undoubtedly been the Catalan Institution for Research and Advanced Studies (ICREA), launched in 2001. This organisation, recognised legally as a Foundation, made an international call for talent and spread word through the most prestigious media channels. The incorporation of this talent is facilitated by employing a rigorous selection process and assigning contracted professors to universities and research centres under an open-ended contract, the main characteristic of which being the flexibility to negotiate conditions. Despite modest investment, ICREA has become a platform used to increase the amount of research projects and the ability to attract funding from sources like European Research Council grants. ICREA's returns are enormous in terms of its capacity to attract competitive funding, having increased this by 28%. The teaching and research staff on the ICREA programme only represent 1% of professors and researchers employed in Catalonia, but it attracts 44% of the research funding awarded on a competitive basis.

Spain needs to remodel its capacity to attract research talent, and what better way to do so than by putting into operation a state mechanism like the one

described above through an agreement between the State and the Autonomous Communities, in order to carefully deal with jurisdiction over education matters and make it sustainable. In a few years' time, the Spanish research system will most probably benefit highly in many fields from the presence of internationally-renowned leading researchers, and this will most definitely result in greater competitiveness. There is no doubt that such decisions must be made quickly. This is undoubtedly a huge challenge but, once again, there needs to be a combination of political will and a rationalised use of resources, and priorities must be identified.

In the second approach to putting structures in place that allow our researchers and research groups to start permanent collaborations with leading international research groups in strategic areas, we are faced with a double challenge: more specifically, the familiar problem of receiving funding to make a period abroad economically feasible; and the removal of administrative roadblocks that hinder mobility by not aligning teaching and research strategies and failing to generate two-way incentives, emphasising merit and ability demonstrated in the least detrimental way under the obligations of the system. Unfortunately, many established or budding professors and researchers have ultimately turned down the opportunity to spend time abroad after being faced with numerous difficulties when it comes to returning home and maintaining the purchasing power needed to take on the challenge of temporarily leaving their home institution with guaranteed success and peace of mind. Such difficulties include unpaid leave, extended periods of voluntary absence to pursue a particular interest that do not include the right to hold on to one's job, and research sabbaticals that come around every 25 years of academic life or that are purely used to carry out academic duties, such as those proposed by some of the Statutes of Spanish universities. Article 17.4 of the Law on Science made it possible for the first time to establish ties with institutions abroad by taking a temporary leave of voluntary absence without having to go through the limitations indicated above. However, a legal connection with the home institution was made a requirement which, in practice, has considerably limited its implementation.

If we only had to choose one reform, our choice would be rather simple. We propose that any member of teaching or research staff under contract at any internationally recognised institution – regardless of their home institution's resources – should be able to hold on to their position for five years, establishing automatic systems for compensating and hiring teaching staff. This incentive would exponentially improve our chances of pursuing our objectives, specialising our teaching practices and rejuvenating our teaching and research staff.

Thirdly, Spanish centres must be given more access to sources of materials for global research projects by sharing funding and budgets. Researchers should not be denied the necessary tools by the economic crisis, the decisions of short-sighted politicians or university autonomy. If university consortia need to be formed

or the necessary investment needs to be made by introducing new taxes in the Autonomous Communities, this should be done. This investment needs to start with specialist journals' databases and go as far as database projects for patients monitored in hospitals.

Despite the limitations of the system described above, Spain sits tenth in the world rankings for scientific production, according to data provided by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology. This proves that the universalisation model for higher education and the pursuance of the three missions in all public universities has also yielded positive results. While significant changes do need to be made to the system, the country's political and economic situation and scientific structure allow us to propose realistic reforms that can be easily applied with a systematic impact.



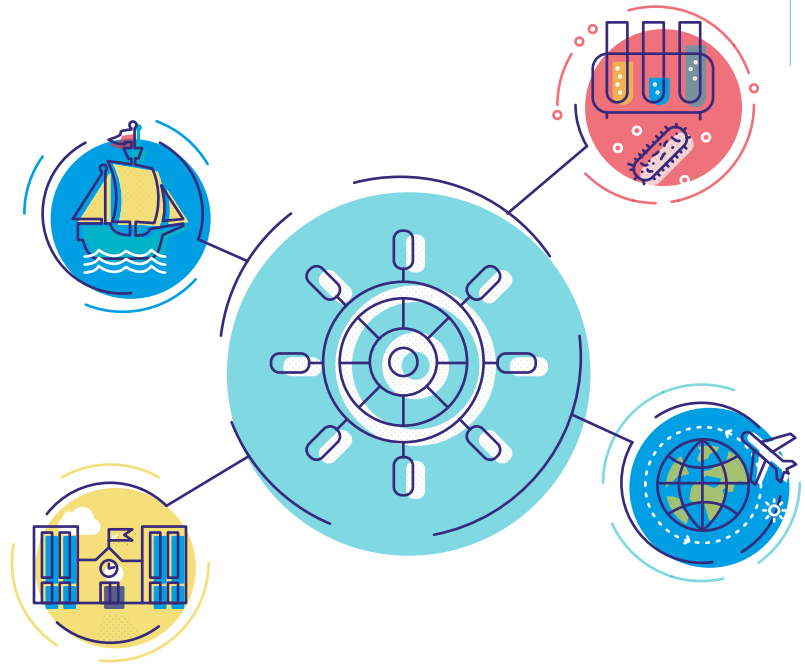
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# 06

## THE IDEA OF A “FLAGSHIP UNIVERSITY” IN THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FERNANDO CASANI & JESÚS RODRÍGUEZ-POMEDA

### Internationalisation and university rankings

Until the 1990s, the most broadly accepted concept of a university in developed countries had been that of an eminently national institution with a certain investigative dimension. The influence of neoliberal ideology has since modified this concept to normalise the strategies, structures and performance of universities in pursuit of globalisation. Nowadays, we often hear people speak of a “globalised higher education market”. Nevertheless, this normalising force does not act with the same intensity in all regions of the world; nor does it have the same impact on the various different types of higher education institutions. Therefore, it would appear more analytically appropriate to refer to the different internationalisation processes employed by universities in various places.

While the internationalisation of universities is far from being a universally accepted idea, Hawawini (2016, p.77) offers a comprehensive and precise definition: "... an ongoing process of change whose objective is to integrate the institution and its key stakeholders (its students and faculty) into the emerging global knowledge economy."

As it is an ongoing process, we need to consider whether the internationalisation of universities corresponds to the workings of a global market or rather to the globalisation of university activity. With all due caution and attention to detail, the latter would be the most appropriate answer. University rankings and their use of common indicators are one of the basic elements that propel internationalisation and globalise certain university activities. These rankings gained currency in the early 2000s as the arena that hosted international competition for academic status (prestige and reputation).

It is important to point out that rankings do not measure a university's degree of internationalisation, but rather the recognition enjoyed by its activities – especially research – in the international sphere. In a way, they indicate the extent to which their activities are integrated into the global knowledge society. Therefore, even if a university does not strive to become a global competitor in the higher education market, it is in its interests to become internationally recognised, in order to achieve the academic prestige that will allow it to stand out in its own regional or national setting. For this reason, prestige and reputation could be considered fundamental objectives in the process of internationalisation for institutions that cannot aspire to occupy outstanding positions in international higher education markets.

Although international rankings barely include indicators to measure a university's degree of internationalisation, they greatly influence an institution's international prestige to such an extent that if a university occupies a strong position in the rankings, it is more recognised internationally and, therefore, regardless of how internationalised its activities and students actually are, it is perceived as an internationally influential university.

In the case of Spain, this can be demonstrated by analysing the only ranking that specifically reflects the internationalisation of universities, created by Times Higher Education (THE) and entitled "The World's Most International Universities". It uses three typical indicators of internationalisation and complements them with an indicator of international reputation, based on the *Academic Reputation Survey* carried out for the global rankings. Each of these four indicators (international staff, international students, international co-authors in journal publications and international reputation) is given an equal weight of 25%. The 2017 rankings included 150 universities from across the world, of which only one was Spanish. This is the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (UAM), ranked 90th in the world. There is a paradox, however, because if we consider the situation of other Spanish universities

using the specific internationalisation indicators as our only reference point, the *Universidad Pompeu Fabra* would come in first place with a score of 65.1, followed by the following universities: *Alcalá* (55.8), *Navarra* (55.6), *Carlos III de Madrid* (53.1), the *Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona* (52.3) and, now only in sixth place, the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (51.6). This came out as the top Spanish university in the internationalisation rankings, however, due to a subjective reputation indicator formed by the expert opinions of those who participated in the survey. It thus becomes clear that prestige has an important knock-on effect for the international image of universities, because the prestige achieved through their standing in the rankings also lets them consolidate their strong image.

### Flagship vs. world-class universities

In the Spanish university system, the majority of higher education institutions run their education service on a national or regional level and carry out a limited amount of research. When research is undertaken, it is normally linked to their social and productive environment. These institutions are very important for the social and economic fabric in which they are situated, but they do not make a great impact on the international stage. In principle, there does not seem to be much sense in comparing them with "world-class universities", or WCUs (Altbach & Salmi, 2011), which occupy the top spots in international rankings, have a much greater mission and scope, and compete only symbolically in the global higher education market. In spite of this, it is crucial for these universities to become integrated into the field of global knowledge and to internationalise part of their activities, in order to appear in international rankings and achieve the prestige and reputation that will let them stand out in their natural fields of work.

This presents us with two different problems that often go hand in hand. The first is the issue of deciding which universities have the prestige and capacity to compete on the global market, and looking at each university's competitive standing. The second problem involves determining the quality of universities that lack the potential or ambition to compete globally but must strive harder to fulfil their respective missions.

In the first case, the university model shaped by international rankings (WCUs) allows us to classify universities that are dominating the global market. In the second case, however, this model is not quite appropriate, because not all universities have an international outreach, and so the concept of the "new flagship university" proves more suitable. This refers to institutions which, accepting international standards on the importance of research, have a set of characteristics and responsibilities on a regional and national level that prevent them standing out in international rankings (Douglass, 2016). These universities, aiming to carry out extensive research, therefore have more specific objectives in their local area and do not have the resources or capacity needed to become global competitors.

The concept of a "flagship university" seems much more appropriate than the idea of a "world-class university" when analysing the situation of Spanish universities.

## Conclusion

In the new context of higher education, increased competition does not point towards the existence of a single market where all universities are competing against one another to obtain scarce resources. Therefore, it does not seem appropriate for the majority of the world's universities to focus their efforts solely on improving their position in international rankings (which act as an indicator for potential clients). On the contrary, a high degree of influence in the local area (regional or national) has become their fundamental objective. Achieving this goal also allows universities to consolidate their own autonomy, because once they have gained a significant national reputation, they are able to reach better agreements with their interest groups (especially governments and funding agencies). Needless to say, such a reputation cannot come at the cost of solid international commitment (measured according to the usual indicators of scientific production: the publication of articles in respected journals, patents, etc.), because it is these indicators that are used to classify higher education institutions in today's knowledge society.

In this sense, a better reflection of said reality is provided by the idea of a "new flagship university" (Douglass, 2005, 2016), which is more useful for society. Moving up the rankings should not be an objective in and of itself, but rather another way of confirming whether a university is adequately serving the interests of society as a whole at its various levels (local, regional, national and international). This objective is even more realistic and appropriate (as we have seen in the case of Spanish universities, with a reasoning that could easily be applied to all leading universities in the rankings) when you take into account the fact that reputation plays a vital role in the relative standing of universities, because the highest-ranked institutions are also those with the best reputation.



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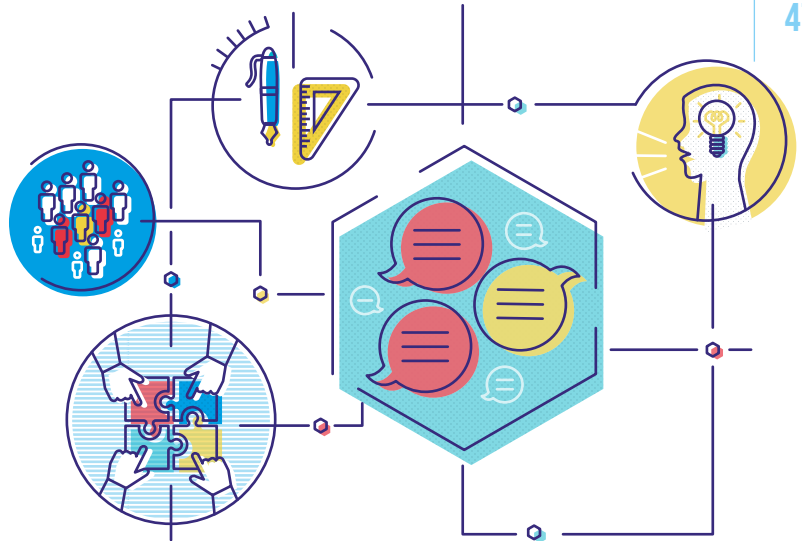
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## **SECTION III**

# **INTERNATIONALISATION POLICIES & PRACTICES**



# 07

## LANGUAGE POLICY FOR INTERNATIONALISATION: SPANISH AS AN ASSET

DOROTHY KELLY

### Introduction

Universities around the world have been devoting great efforts to the introduction of English-taught programmes (ETPs) as an instrument for internationalisation for over twenty years now. The argument goes that if we are to attract international talent, all students cannot be expected to be fluent in the national language of their host institution and hence universities should adopt (international) English as a language of instruction, at least for some of their academic offer.

And indeed, the past years have seen a huge increase in the number of English-taught programmes around the world, and in particular in Europe, many of them in countries whose national languages are languages of limited diffusion, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway or the Baltic States, but also in Germany, Italy or France (Wächter & Maiworm,

2014). According to Wächter & Maiworm (2014), even after the recent boom in ETPs, they represent only 6% of programmes and enrol a scant 1.3% of students in Europe. Furthermore, ETPs have not been without their detractors, who question the quality of teaching and learning, the political and social ramifications of not teaching in the local or national language, or the availability of sufficient numbers of qualified students and/or staff to make programmes viable.

## The case of Spain

Spain, where language learning has long been the Cinderella of the education system, has been a relative latecomer to this trend, but has slowly embraced it and the number of ETPs continues to rise. Indeed, well implemented ETPs or carefully developed instances of English medium instruction (EMI) on non-English-taught programmes can bring considerable added value to our universities, in particular by attracting non-Spanish-speaking international students, facilitating the learning of international and high-level language competences amongst local students, and enhancing the international profile and international partnerships of our universities.

However, it is no less true that level of mastery of foreign languages in general— and English in particular—in Spain, whilst vastly improved over recent decades, continues to be the Achilles' heel preventing many institutions from taking further steps toward enlarging their offer of courses or full programmes in English, as they have insufficient numbers of qualified local students, academic and non-academic staff to guarantee the viability of ETPs. Important policy measures addressing language competence have been put in place in pre-university education: for example, there is now a broad offer around the country of “bilingual” Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) streams in primary and secondary education.

At university level, different institutions and regional authorities have established the requirement that all students should be able to certify a B1 or B2 level in a foreign language on graduating. All of this with varying degrees of success and acceptance.

## Not English only

This situation means that, alongside the gradual implementation of EMI, there is a continued strong need for broader language policies offering opportunities for language learning to students, and academic and non-academic staff, ensuring a sound basis on which to build. Although English is of course a key language today, in our increasingly complex multicultural world it also behoves our universities to promote the learning of other major world languages—such as Arabic, Chinese, French or Russian—as well as other less widely spoken languages, as part of the protection of our rich global cultural heritage and the furthering of intercultural communication and understanding.

But not all aspects of institutional language policies need nor should concentrate



on foreign languages. In the bilingual autonomous communities, considerable effort is invested in promoting and developing their respective co-official languages. And all over Spain, the traditional emphasis on improving foreign language competences has often eclipsed consideration of the Spanish language as an important asset for our institutions and indeed for our internationalisation policies. A central factor in the origin of EMI in the Netherlands, Nordic countries and Baltic States has precisely been the fact that their national languages are not widely spoken. Spanish, on the contrary, is a major world language.

## Spanish as an asset

In the latest annual report by the Cervantes Institute, *El español en el mundo* 2016, data confirm that Spanish continues to be the second most widely spoken language in the world, with 472 million native speakers, and around 7.8% of the world population speaking the language. Spanish is also the second world language in number of competent speakers overall (natives, second language speakers plus language learners), calculated at 567 million in the same report.

Applying a series of criteria including the number of countries in which it is the official language, its use in international trade, or its use in international organisations, Spanish was considered the second language in international importance in 2014, behind only English. There are currently 21 million students of Spanish as a foreign language in the world. This scenario clearly offers huge opportunities for educational institutions using Spanish as a language of instruction.

The international importance of Spanish attracts a large number of students to learn the language, a substantial number of whom are interested in learning it in a native environment; the success of study abroad programmes centred on learning the language at a number of universities around Spain gives good witness to this. Spain continues to be the third receiving country for United States students on study abroad programmes with 9% of all students participating in 2014-15 coming to Spain, an increase of 5.1% from the previous year (*IIE Open Doors*, 2016).

Among the top 25 destinations, the attractiveness of Spanish-speaking institutions is confirmed with the presence of another six Spanish-speaking countries.

It is, of course, arguable whether this kind of programme is always a legitimately full instance of internationalisation, as students are often not in contact with their local peers (when participating in "island programmes"). However, where universities plan joint activities and make use of their links with international study abroad partners to further their international strategy in general (for example, with mixed and direct enrolment programmes among other forms of cooperation), huge opportunities may arise from their offer of programmes for Spanish as a foreign language.

Also from the point of view of internationalisation policy, academic offer both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels is open to native Spanish-speaking students from around the world. Argentinian, Chilean, Mexican or Guatemalan students bring intercultural and international experiences and dynamics to our campuses just as much as French, Chinese, Moroccans or Australians do. Speaking the same language is often confused with having the same culture, but anyone who has travelled between Spanish-speaking countries (or English- or French-speaking countries, for that matter) will rapidly be aware of the diversity existing between these shared language environments. Being able to open up our degree programmes, especially at postgraduate level, to native Spanish speakers from most of Latin America, and also to an increasing population in the United States, is a huge advantage for our universities.

Thirdly, among the 21 million learners of Spanish as a foreign language, there will be a substantial number of advanced non-native speakers of the language able to undertake undergraduate or postgraduate study in Spain. This is confirmed by the high performance figures year after year on the Erasmus programme, where Spain has maintained its place as a leading country for incoming students for many years. The vast majority of these students join undergraduate programmes, mostly taught in Spanish. These same students also constitute, of course, an obvious target group for recruitment for postgraduate programmes taught in Spanish.

In short, having as principal language of instruction a language spoken by 567 million people around the world is a huge asset for Spanish universities seeking to attract international students for credit mobility and for full degree programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels on Spanish-taught programmes.

It is also a huge opportunity to attract students wishing to learn or perfect their mastery of a language which is in increasing demand in the workplace due to the international importance of Spanish in international trade, international relations in general, making Spanish universities a prime destination for study abroad.

It only remains for our universities to take full advantage of these opportunities and incorporate them explicitly into their internationalisation strategies.

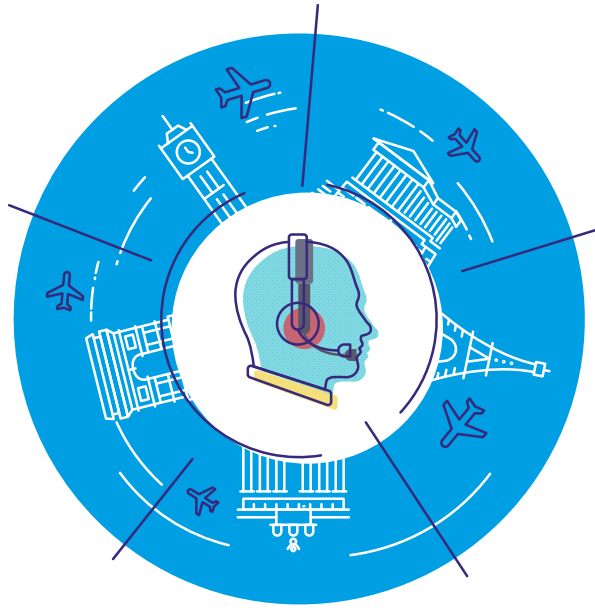


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# 08

## THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF NON-ACADEMIC STAFF

MARINA CASALS

### Introduction

For some time now, universities, governments and the European Commission have been investing in student mobility in order to train global citizens. The Erasmus programme has already been in existence for 30 years and has benefitted millions of students. Universities have focused on internationalising the student experience with the aim of developing students' international profiles and thus equipping them with a major asset as they enter the labour market. There has also been considerable investment in the internationalisation of lecturers in an attempt to boost the impact of their international research and publications and to increase the numbers of internationalised courses and international programmes, etc. But what about administrative staff?

The European Commission believes that a systemic change can be made through staff mobility, which is why the Erasmus+ programme invests heavily in this form of internationalisation. This article describes the present

situation and offers alternatives when mobility is not an option.

## **Mobility for administrative staff**

Under the Erasmus+ programme, non-academic staff can apply for funds to spend one week at a partner institution. One result of this is that most universities have seen an increase in the number of applications for staff visits from partner institutions, and this in turn has led them to develop an innovative solution to cope with this increasing demand: international staff weeks. These weeks allow the university to concentrate most of the large number of requests to visit into just one week and to showcase the institution's qualities to all of its partners at once. On the other hand, these weeks can also be used as an activity to internationalise at home, profiting from the many different cultures who gather together for these events.

## **Downsides to mobility**

Administrative staff need to already have a predisposition, an interest to go abroad, a mind-set that is open to internationalisation, and the motivation to go through the process. They must also have an acceptable level of English, which many people in Spain, at least, still do not have. Their personal or family situation must allow for mobility and their managers must understand and support the idea. Therefore, given all of these requirements, the mobility scheme can only realistically target a small section of non-academic staff.

Most importantly: can we be sure that a one-week exchange will instil our staff with the international mind-set we want them to have? It has been proven that if a person goes with the wrong attitude, a stay abroad may only serve to reinforce their own ethnocentric view of the world. This is certainly an aspect of mobility that merits further investigation.

## **What about after?**

After a positive experience abroad, staff members generally return having opened-up to new ideas and new ways, but the lasting success of the exercise depends entirely on the home institution's willingness or ability to adopt these new ideas. If the home institution is not willing or able to do so, will participating staff members become frustrated? And how will the possible frustration be managed? Is it possible that the mobility period abroad could end up having a negative effect? Can something that is regarded as so positive in fact backfire?

## **Alternatives to mobility**

In 1999, Bengt Nilsson was pondering a solution for all the students at Malmö University who for whatever reason were unable to experience a mobility period abroad and came up with the concept "Internationalisation at Home". Since then, most universities have implemented plans for internationalisation at home in

their own institutions, with particular emphasis on the internationalisation of the curriculum. Nevertheless, the majority of these plans mainly target students and continue to overlook the backbone of the universities: their non-academic staff. As stated by Brandenburg, "most strategies and analyses ignore administrative staff as a crucially relevant component".

## Internationalisation at home for staff

In 2011, the *Universitat Rovira i Virgili* (URV) thought that a good system for targeting all staff (those willing to travel and those who could not or would not) would be to create a training course on internationalisation at our own institution, thus not requiring staff to travel. This training programme would be delivered to administrative staff in their own language and in their home institution. The course would transmit the message that internationalisation is important, that the institution is putting a lot of effort into the process and that everyone has a role to play. In short, it would be an informative and empowering message.

By implementing this course at our own institution, we successfully addressed some fundamental challenges: staff no longer needed to have a high level of English and could attend the course regardless of their personal circumstances. Managers of the staff who wanted to attend were more willing to agree to this course than to have a staff member leave the office for a full week. And finally, the course could target administrative staff who had not yet opened their minds to internationalisation.

## Initial results

The results were encouraging. On the first day, views put forward by some attendees showed that a good number of stereotypes were still very much alive. However, by the last day these same attendees were convinced of the importance of internationalisation and had become advocates for it.

In terms of expected learning outcomes of the internationalisation course for non-academic staff, it is hoped that participants will:

- Understand what internationalisation is and why their institution is working towards it
- Feel part of the internationalisation effort and be able to contribute actively to it.
- Have a better understanding of intercultural communication and be better prepared to face the challenges derived from it
- Learn from the experience of fellow administrative staff members
- Feel that they are an important agent for change towards internationalisation within their own institution

## Changing mind-sets

Inspired by these changes, we decided to offer the course on an annual basis as part of the continuous training that we offer to our staff. We believe that, in time, this will change the institutional mind-set of our university from within.

The positive results of the course have also led the URV to export it as an example of good practice to other institutions both in Spain and abroad and to apply to the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships programme for funding under the name of SUCTI project (Systemic Universities Change Towards Internationalisation). The SUCTI project was selected for funding and it will thus be improved, grow and expand. It is coordinated by the URV and it benefits from the involvement and expertise of the EAIE (European Association for International Education), the CHEI (Center for Higher Education Internationalisation of the *Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore* (Italy), the Global Impact Institute (Czech Republic); the UNESCO Chair for University Management at the *Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya* (Spain); the University of Porto (Portugal), Justus Liebig University in Giessen (Germany) and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland).

## Measuring impact

Another important aim of the project is to measure the impact of training on internationalisation. To do so, a survey has been developed to analyse and track the possible effects that the course has on participants' mind sets. Participants fill in a survey based on statements prior to the course and fill in the same survey after the course finishes. The four aspects measured thus far are:

- Attitudes (favourable or not-favourable to the internationalisation process)
- Stereotypes or prejudices (are there any?)
- Communication (perceived capacity to communicate)
- Internationalisation culture (i.e. culture which favours or obstructs internationalisation)

The survey shows that, on completion of the SUCTI course, there is a clear trend of slight improvement of participants' attitudes towards internationalisation, perceived communication skills, international culture of the institution and understanding of prejudices and stereotypes.

The survey initially consisted of twenty items and the response format was of five Likert's options. The survey has undergone a test of statistical reliability, through which we identified six of the twenty questions that needed rewording for them to be clearer to respondents. These questions have since been improved. Without these unclear statements, the statistical reliability of the survey leads to a technical consistency of the scale and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, which shows good reliability.

Figure 1 presents the total responses to date (27 respondents as of January 2016) showing a comparison between the mean scores in each section of the survey prior to and after the SUCTI course.

The comparison between the pre and post measurements shows differences that can be attributed to the training on internationalisation received by participants at the university.

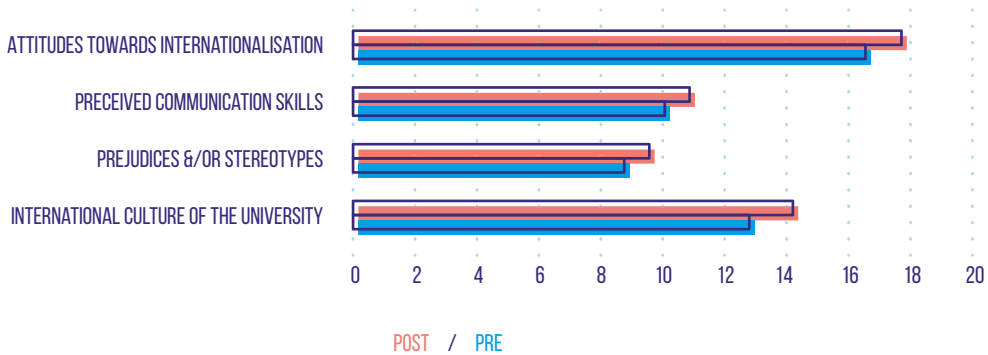


Figure 1: Comparison between mean scores (SUCTI project)

These surveys and evaluation method will be reviewed as part of the SUCTI project. The survey itself will be reviewed and improved if needed and a third questionnaire will be added to the two existing ones and will be given to participants three months after the end of the training course in order to include the impact measurement. It is hoped that the results will contribute to scientific research in internationalisation and benefit the field of internationalisation at home and universities as a whole.

### A picture is worth a thousand words

One of the central values of the SUCTI project is that we, regardless of our position at our institution, are all important players in the internationalisation process of our own organisation. This is why the SUCTI project has adopted the image of *castells* (human towers), which are very typical in Tarragona, the region of Spain where the URV is located. They are an excellent way of transmitting the important message that each and every staff member of the institution is needed in the process of moving towards internationalisation. In the same way that the success of a *castell* depends on the contribution of each and every *casteller* (person in the *castell*), the contributions of all the members of a university are essential to its internationalisation process.



The SUCTI project web site: [www.suctiproject.com](http://www.suctiproject.com)

**Note by the Author:**

A previous article on "Targeting Administrative Staff" was published in the EAIE Forum Magazine (Winter 2015). This current piece has been further developed and updated.



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# 09

## A SHORT HISTORY OF MARKETING AND ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

ANTONI LUNA GARCÍA & MAITE VIUDES

### Background

International promotion? What's that?

The Spanish university system has traditionally been conceived as a public service provided for and by Spanish citizens and has therefore paid little attention to attracting students from around the world. In fact, this public service university model did not even allow for competition to attract students from around the country until the late 1990s. Until then, students had been assigned to their local universities without competition between institutions. Therefore, Spanish universities have not traditionally needed to compete to attract and recruit students. In this sense, the DNA of the Spanish university system did not include – and this is largely still the case – a culture of active policies to attract students on a national level, and therefore much less so internationally. In this article, we shall analyse the

evolution of this issue, paying special attention to the attraction of international degree-seeking students, although we shall also refer to the evolution of postgraduate students and credit-seeking students on mobility programmes

The Spanish university system has historically been rather unwelcoming towards international degree-seeking students. Those seeking admission had to either do part of their secondary education in Spain in order to then take university entrance examinations, or go through the long and complex bureaucratic procedures to validate the secondary education results issued by their home countries.

The situation changed slightly in the 1990s following the introduction of the Erasmus programme and the launch of private universities in Spain. When the Erasmus programmes came into operation, Spanish universities were required to organise welcoming and counselling services for international students on mobility programmes, and to open up their classrooms for the first time to students from other countries. This entire process has gradually been made more efficient over the past few decades, especially since 2007, when legislation was introduced to adapt the Spanish university system to the European Higher Education Area.

Another important outcome of the arrival of Erasmus students has been the professionalisation and specialisation of international relations teams. Specialist meetings and conferences on international relations, such as the European Association for International Education (EAIE), have made it possible to professionalise the sector and compare the marketing strategies of other European countries with a longer history of attracting international students, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries.

Moreover, Spain approved its first private university licences in 1990, and these institutions would act as a wake-up call when it came to attracting international degree-seeking and postgraduate students. Some of these universities immediately launched campaigns to attract students from around the world. Despite their best efforts, their capacity to attract international students was limited by the same bureaucratic obstacles as those encountered by public universities, such as the validation of qualifications, visas, etc.

## **Bologna and international Marketing**

Spanish universities' adaptation to the European higher education system was a turning point for university marketing, because it partially brought our degree qualification structure in line with the rest of the countries in Europe and, indeed, most countries in the world. In 2007, master's degrees were established for the first time as the official qualification between bachelor's degrees and doctorates. However, the adoption of the 4+1 model (4 years' bachelor's plus 1 year's master's) – compared to the more common European 3+2 model – has also hampered universities' ability to attract European undergraduate students, but it has made

their selection of master's degrees more attractive.

Creating these official master's programmes in 2007 opened up new possibilities to attract international students to Spain. For the first time ever, there started to be real competition amongst Spanish universities to attract students on both a national and international level. Furthermore, the administrative barriers were less complicated for master's degrees, and universities needed students for their new programmes, so marketing and recruitment offices were opened in some institutions.

The latest Facts and Figures from the Spanish higher education system (*Datos y Cifras del Sistema Universitario Español*) report of the Ministry of Education shows that a total of 85,973 foreign students chose to study at Spanish universities in the 2014-15 academic year. International undergraduates represent 4.1% of all registered students, which is below the OECD average of 8.5%. International master's students make up 17.8% and those on doctorate programmes constitute 22.8%. With regard to students' nationality, the majority come from Latin America and the Caribbean. A small but growing number of students in Europe and Asia are choosing to study at Spanish universities, and the same can be said of students from the Middle East and North Africa.

Since 2007, some Spanish universities have started participating more actively in international organisations and postgraduate study fairs with the aim of attracting students. Since 2001, universities have also had to compete to attract students on a national level, as they are no longer obliged to study at their local university. Some of the leading universities in this regard have created professional marketing and recruitment policies with increasing effectiveness.

Furthermore, marketing campaigns have been created for some of the most important university fairs by public bodies such as the Ministry of Education, the Foreign Ministry, regional governments and even some local councils. These new active internationalisation strategies led to the creation of the Universidad.es platform in 2010, a government agency run by the Ministry of Education whose main objective was to promote the Spanish university system around the world. The Spanish Service for the Internationalisation of Higher Education (SEPIE), part of the Ministry of Education, has now taken over the functions of Universidad.es.

Another initiative came from the rectors of Spanish universities through the Spanish Rectors' Conference (CRUE), creating specialist internationalisation forums. Some regions have joint marketing initiatives. Other initiatives come from regional university alliances like *Alianza 4 Universidades (A4U)*. Created in 2008, this alliance brings together the four most dynamic universities in Madrid and Barcelona, creating joint internationalisation strategies.

The OECD's report "Education at a Glance" 2016 indicates that Spain attracts 2.5% of

foreign master's and doctorate students, which is still a long way behind countries like the United States (26%), the United Kingdom (15%), France (11%) and Germany (10%).

Despite all of these initiatives, the number of degree-seeking students attracted to Spain is extremely modest when compared to our closest neighbours and considering the potential of a country with an education system that uses such an internationally spoken language as Spanish.

## Recent changes and future perspectives

The past few years have seen changes suggesting a future that is much more open to attracting degree-seeking students from around the world. Firstly, the possibility has emerged to organise three-year degrees in line with the model used by the majority of European countries. It is gradually becoming possible to use the 4+1 system alongside the new 3+2 model.

Moreover, the admission requirements for international students are becoming more flexible. On the one hand, students from EU Member States can take entrance examinations and get their secondary studies verified in their home countries to be granted access to Spanish universities on an equal basis with local students. Services used to recognise non-European students' qualifications and grant them university access are also being made more flexible. This is leading to an increased intake of both "credit mobility" (Erasmus, exchange, etc.) and "degree mobility" students registered both on postgraduate courses (master's and doctorate programmes) and bachelor's degrees.

But if there is one aspect that has changed the way the directors of Spanish universities view the issue of attracting degree-seeking students, it is the possibility of charging different fees for local students (including those from the European Union) and non-EU students. Registration fees for the latter are between four and five times higher than those for local students. The effects of the economic crisis have reduced the amount of funding received by public universities, and this has led university leaders to look for new revenue streams. Some universities are now viewing internationalisation not only as a strategy to secure a strong national and international standing, but also as an additional source of income.

There is still a lot of work to be done. In order to improve our standing within the sphere of international education, an international recruitment strategy on a national level strategy is essential, alongside an important allocation of resources, especially by creating a strong scholarship scheme to attract talent to our universities. The first step in the right direction was made with the Strategy for the Internationalisation of the Spanish University System 2015-2020, a report prepared for the Ministry of Education in 2014 by a group of experts.

Some universities have already started international recruitment strategies at undergraduate and postgraduate level, especially private universities, business schools and some public universities. However, most institutions have progressed very cautiously, due in part to insufficient funding or a lack of specialist staff in this field. In any case, it must be recognised that clear strategic planning for internationalisation is required for good results, in order to prioritise initiatives that contribute to the smooth running of universities at local, national and international level.



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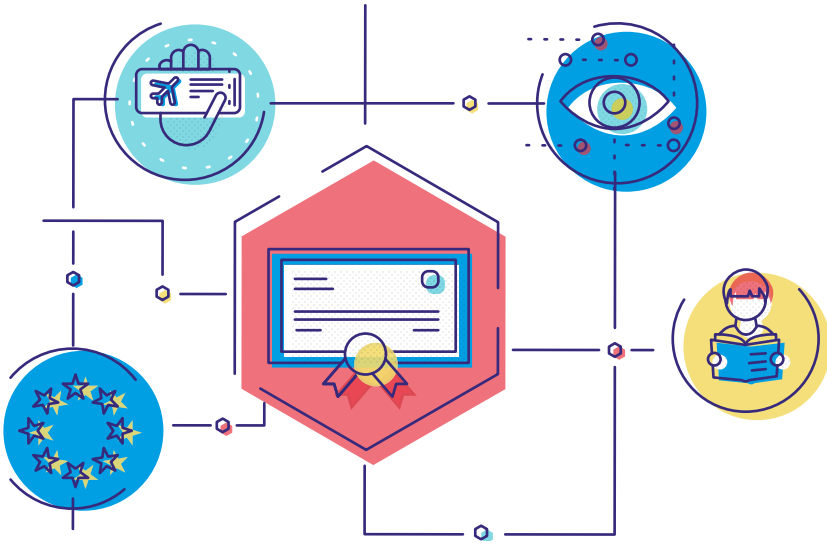
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## **SECTION IV**

THE INTERNATIONALISATION  
OF **HIGHER EDUCATION**  
IN **SPAIN**

A VIEW FROM THE OUTSIDE



# 10

## THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF SPANISH HIGHER EDUCATION IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Introduction

Higher education has become a key actor in the global economy and society. Whereas in the past higher education was mainly a component in nation-building, the current global knowledge society requires higher education to play an international role. Through their research and education activities, institutions of higher education contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals as defined by the United Nations, to innovation and development, and to the creation of professionals and citizens with skills and sensibilities appropriate for this globalised era. As a result, we see a higher education sector that is increasingly globally competitive and strategically collaborative. This is reflected in growing competition for talented students and faculty and in greater emphasis being placed on reputation- and brand-building, but also in more attention to internationalisation at home: the development



of an internationalised curriculum, and of international and intercultural learning outcomes and competences.

Against this backdrop, the internationalisation of higher education has taken enormous steps forward over the past three decades, manifesting itself in a broad variety of initiatives, projects and programmes. How can we position the internationalisation of Spanish higher education in this new international higher education arena? The contributions to this publication address several of the issues and actions that characterise the state of the art of internationalisation in Spain. But how does the Spanish reality relate to global trends in internationalisation? In this concluding section, we look at some of the main characteristics of internationalisation of Spanish higher education in that global environment: its position within the European Higher Education and Research Areas; its engagement with its former colonial domain, Latin America; and its relation to the United States. In conclusion, we address some of the opportunities for the internationalisation of Spanish higher education in the global context.

## Spain in the European Higher Education and Research Areas

Rumbley and Howard (2015) state in their contribution about Spain to a European Parliament Study, *Internationalisation of Higher Education*, that "The European context is (since Spain's entry into the European Union in 1986) a major factor in the development of national policies and strategies for internationalisation in Spain" (p. 169). This is most strikingly reflected in the fact that Spain is both the largest recipient and the largest sender of Erasmus students, but also in its involvement in the European (EU) Research Programmes and in the Bologna Process.

The role of Spanish institutions of higher education as major senders and recipients of Erasmus students is, in itself, a positive manifestation of their internationalisation. However, it would be too easy to say that Spanish dynamism in the Erasmus programme has come about purely as a result of the quality of Spanish higher education. The inflow of Erasmus students is also influenced by other factors, such as the increasing importance of the Spanish language, which makes studying in Spain more attractive; the friendly culture and climate of the country and the fact that there is a large outflow of Erasmus students from Spain, stimulating reciprocity in exchange.

The large number of Spanish Erasmus students studying in other countries reflects the interest of other European institutions in receiving quality students from Spain. However, given the high unemployment rate among the younger generation in Spain, another possible hypothesis for the Erasmus outflow is that Spanish students are attempting to explore options for degree study and employment in other countries, as well as search for education of better quality than can be found at home.

These dynamics, in combination with the relatively low participation rate of Spanish research and researchers in EU research programmes, such as Horizon 2020, mean that there is still a way to go for Spanish higher education to become more competitive within the European Higher Education and Research Areas.

Still, the experience of Spanish students, faculty and administrators in Europe through the EU programmes is a strong stimulus for a more competitive role, and has moved forward the regionalisation and internationalisation of Spanish higher education in significant ways. Indeed, involvement in Erasmus Mundus activities is one of the ways the country is manifesting itself as a global player, forging strong links with partners in the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America, in particular.

## **Challenges in the relationship between Spain and Latin America**

The historical and cultural links between Spain and Latin America have facilitated cooperation in various sectors, and higher education has been one of the fields in which Spain has played an important role in the region. While these connections still exist, various factors have brought about a shift in the dynamics of higher education, creating new challenges for the academic and scientific relations between Spain and Latin America.

Firstly, the development of internationalisation within higher education institutions in Latin America has led to an extension of their networks beyond Spain, through processes such as the internationalisation of research, the setting up of double degrees in which French HEIs have been particularly prominent, and the development of projects financed by various bodies such as the European Commission, which promote the creation of multilateral networks.

Another factor, related to internationalisation, is that of linguistic competence. Many Latin American universities have established policies and strategies to promote multilingualism. While proficiency in other languages still presents many challenges in Latin America, the progress made in language competence has allowed a growing number of students and staff to develop their academic activities in countries where languages other than Spanish are spoken.

A third factor concerns the differences in the collaborative work involving Latin American universities with their Spanish counterparts, compared to that carried out with institutions in other European countries. The active participation of cooperation agencies such as the DAAD (Germany), Campus France and Nuffic (The Netherlands) in Latin America has shown that it is possible to foster the development of capacity building, mobility and cooperation programmes, while at the same time promoting these European countries as study destinations. Spain, however, currently lacks instruments to develop these types of collaborative

projects. Furthermore, non-European students are charged fees in Spain, whereas in countries such as Germany, tuition is free. In addition, the rankings positions of Spanish higher education institutions is, in general, lower than those of other European countries. This has led to a decrease in the number of Latin American students in Spain and an increase in mobility flows from Latin America to other European countries.

Finally, the experience in cooperation activities gained by Latin American higher education institutions has transformed their outlook and they now seek to build relationships in which all parties benefit rather than participate in purely transactional alliances.

Faced with these challenges, there are several factors that Spain can leverage. There is a significant amount of under-used capacity of infrastructure for teaching and research in Spanish higher education institutions. Spain can attract talent and generate income through the development of agreements with public institutions in Latin American countries that have established mobility and training programmes. Academic staff who have emigrated to institutions in LA can play a coordinating role for cooperation and the development of projects. Spain can take advantage of the long tradition of exporting academic programs, both formal and continuing education, to deepen the cooperative relations.

## **Spanish internationalisation and the United States**

Spain, which hosts 9% of the total number of American students studying abroad, is currently the third largest recipient of American study abroad students, just after the United Kingdom and Italy. This has been the case for many years, making Spain a major player in study abroad in the United States. There are also other forms of cooperation – in research, exchange and joint programmes between Spain and the United States – but this one-way flow in study abroad students from the United States to Spain is the dominant characteristic of the relationship between the two countries, in terms of higher education. Rumbley and Howard (2015) state correctly that many of these students participate in programmes delivered partially or exclusively by their home institution. Accordingly, “this raises questions about the extent and nature of the effects of the US ‘study abroad’ phenomenon on internationalisation in Spanish higher education – particularly in terms of engagement between US and Spanish students, faculty and staff” (Rumbley and Howard, p. 173). So, unlike the case of the active role of Spanish universities as recipients of Erasmus students, the contribution of American students and faculty to the quality and internationalisation of Spanish higher education is limited. Only by advocating for more direct enrolment of American students in, and reciprocal exchange with, Spanish universities, might more integration of those students occur within and outside the classroom with their Spanish students and teachers. In this way, a deeper internationalisation effect could be achieved. This would be

beneficial for both the Spanish and the American counterparts in this relationship.

Meanwhile, Spain should not rely on a perpetual healthy supply of US study abroad students. US outbound mobility to the Spanish-speaking world has been diversifying in recent years, with 16% of US study abroad participants currently studying in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## Opportunities

Spanish higher education—notably, with respect to its internationalisation—has made major steps forward in recent decades, in particular as a result of the reestablishment of democracy after the Franco dictatorship and Spain's membership in the European Union (Rumbley, 2010). These developments have provided the context for the country to enhance its performance in research and higher education, as evidenced by its active involvement in the European Higher Education and Research Areas, and its connections with higher education in other parts of the world, even though there is still a way to go in terms of increasing reputation and quality. We have described some of the positive and critical aspects of the competitive position of the internationalisation of Spanish higher education. What are some key opportunities for the years to come for Spain's internationalisation agenda?

To answer this question, one must take into account the changing political climate in Europe and other parts of the world with respect to globalisation, internationalisation, immigration, and other matters. Developments in these areas will have an impact on the way institutions of higher education operate internationally. There might be a shift away from the dominance of American and north-western European actors in regard to internationalisation of higher education. Will Spain move with the nationalist-populist, inward-looking current in countries such as the United States, Poland, Hungary, and to a certain extent the United Kingdom (in the light of Brexit and anti-immigration trends there)? Or will it position itself as an important outward-looking international player, also with respect to higher education?

Investing strategically in the country's research and education systems; increasing Spain's attractiveness to high quality international students and faculty by expanding and improving services and facilities; focusing more on relations with countries and regions other than Europe, the United States and Latin America; insisting on the rightful place of Spanish as a global language for academic and scientific collaboration and exchange and giving more attention to internationalisation of the curriculum and internationalisation at home in order to prepare Spanish students to be global professionals and citizens—all of these are important measures that can contribute to deeper and more meaningful internationalisation of the Spanish higher education sector.



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