



FONTYS VISION OF INTERNATIONALISATION



> FOR SOCIETY

> INTERNATIONALISATION: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

In our increasingly global regions, Fontys develops talent and knowledge, with and for the professional field. The Province of Brabant is in need of qualified staff who can move easily in this international context. And, with its location in the border region with Germany and Belgium, the Province of Limburg is a quintessentially international region.

We also see our students wanting to focus more on international social issues during their education, in preparation for their role in our multicultural and mostly internationally oriented society. This affects how they look at and what they expect from their studies.

To work and live in our regions, workers must have intercultural competencies and international knowledge. Our mission is to equip Fontys students with this so that they feel at home in society.

Internationalisation has great value for our students and society, making it an essential part of our teaching and research. We use the following definition for internationalisation: *"Internationalisation is the intentional integration of an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of higher education. This deliberate integration aims to improve the quality of education and research for all students and staff and should lead to a meaningful contribution to society"* (De Wit, 2015).



INTERNATIONALISATION DESERVES A VISION

Fontys sees it as its mission for its regions and students to further embed internationalisation in its programmes and research. As such, internationalisation has been named as one of the strategic topics in Fontys for Society 2021-2025:

“Especially in this day and age and especially in this highly international region, it is essential for almost every student to gain international experience and to acquire intercultural skills.”

This calls for strengthening our action on internationalisation in teaching, research and support processes. Internationalisation impacts many policy areas, including educational development, programmes portfolio, recruitment, admission, student housing, research and professional development of lecturers. It affects the entire Fontys organisation: students, lecturers, institutes and departments. It is a vast topic and in order to fulfil our promise, choices must be made. For a sub-aspect of internationalisation – educating international students – there are external conditions, such as current student housing issues, that reinforce the need to make choices. These choices are made through policies and processes based on a sharp vision of four guiding principles.



INTERNATIONALISATION: FOUR PRINCIPLES

Principle 1

Every Fontys student gains international orientation and acquires intercultural competencies. To achieve this, we ensure that all study programmes embed these two aspects in student learning outcomes or learning environments.

A growing portion of our student population gains international experience abroad. To achieve this, we provide the space within all our programmes to acquire competencies outside the Netherlands in various ways, appropriate to the diversity of learning paths of all our students.

Every student is a global citizen and, as such, able to contribute to societal challenges. Society is becoming increasingly global and the Dutch economy reaches far beyond its borders. This requires students who are internationally oriented and possess intercultural competencies. It is therefore important for every student to gain these experiences and competencies.

The extent and manner may perhaps vary by profession, but this orientation and these competencies need a structural, well-considered and embedded place in every study programme. They can be embedded both in the learning outcomes and in the learning environment of the programme and can take place within and outside the Netherlands. Sustainable travel must become the standard in this regard.

In addition to developing international and intercultural competencies, gaining international experience enriches students' personal development. Therefore, we explicitly choose to make it even more accessible to all our students to gain learning experience abroad. Again, this can be realised in many ways, to suit the student's needs and learning trajectory. We set up our organisation and processes in such a way that every Fontys student has an equal opportunity for an international experience.

Principle 2

We're primarily educating for Dutch society. By doing so we also contribute to solving global societal challenges.

2a. Where there are shortages on the Dutch labour market and prospects of international students entering the Dutch labour market are high, a foreign-language programme is appropriate. Where we have international enrolment, we put maximum effort into guiding international students to participation in the Dutch labour market.

2b. A foreign-language portfolio is also appropriate for small-scale education that by its very nature is provided from an international perspective, as well as for specialised programmes for the international labour market.

We are aware of and acknowledge shortages in the Dutch and regional labour markets. In order to contribute to society's need for these knowledge workers, we offer programmes for students from other countries.

Our study programme portfolio policy is designed to help reduce these shortages. We also design our recruitment and student housing policies to best meet this labour market demand. If necessary, we apply a preferential policy based on the greatest job market prospects in the Netherlands for international students.

Educating for Dutch society does require the programme to ensure graduates are employable and meet the profile the employer is looking for. In order to integrate into and enter the Dutch labour market, international students must have knowledge of both the Dutch language and the Dutch culture. By offering a foreign-language programme and educating international students, Fontys takes its responsibility to work with our partners in the professional field to optimally guide these students towards the Dutch labour market.

Study programmes that naturally train for an international professional field also fit within our foreign-language programme portfolio.

Principle 3

We strengthen the international perspective and international research cooperation by making targeted choices. Internationalisation of our research should contribute to the quality and quantity of practice-based research in Fontys' research themes.

A solid national knowledge base and cooperation are prerequisites for any international cooperation

International cooperation should strengthen the quality of research and provides an opportunity to secure more national and international funding. Our regional cooperation partners and our research themes are the starting point and a strong foundation for international research. Competition in the field of funding for international research is high, and a strong focus on and targeted investment in international collaborations are required to differentiate ourselves.

Principle 4

We design our organisation in such a way that we can encourage, strengthen and guarantee our vision of internationalisation on the basis of education, research and support processes.

Realising the vision of internationalisation requires us to maximally embrace the consequences that this vision brings. Among other things, it requires investing in educational development, professional development of staff, harmonising support processes and strengthening collaboration.



PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONALISATION

Fontys' vision is based on the value of internationalisation in higher education viewed from different perspectives as defined by the Education Council (2018).

Fontys focuses on three of these defined perspectives. First and foremost is the students' perspective: internationalisation is primarily of added value to the quality of education and talent development of our students. Next, we deploy internationalisation from the economic perspective. Internationalisation allows us to even better meet the labour market needs of our regions. Finally, we embrace the added value of internationalisation from a societal perspective.

Internationalisation helps shape our students into global citizens who are part of our society with an open attitude and can contribute to strengthening social cohesion in the Netherlands.

The fourth perspective mentioned by the Education Council is the commercial, organisational perspective. Internationalisation provides additional revenue and can offset declining student numbers. As our objective is to develop and educate talents, focused on the needs of the labour market, Fontys does not opt to make choices based on this fourth perspective.



TRANSLATION TO POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Internationalisation has become an integral part of our teaching and research. We are aware of the challenges that foreign-language education can have for the accessibility of education for Dutch students. We are also aware of the conditions we must realise together to ensure that internationalisation can have the intended value for the quality of our education and research, as well as the intended impact on the labour market and society. We shape policies that guide and support the realisation of our vision. These include recruitment policies, student housing policies, admissions policies, language policies and policies regarding our foreign-language programmes portfolio. We are harmonising support processes that will allow us to be more effective and ensure compliance.

In doing so, we permanently embed the added value of internationalisation into our organisation.



SOURCES

De Wit, H., Hunter, F., Egron-Polak, E., & Howard, L. (Eds). (2015). Internationalisation of higher education: A study for the European parliament.

Fontys (2020). [Fontys for Society 2021-2025](#), Eindhoven: Fontys University of Applied Sciences.

Nuffic (2020). [Model Internationale oriëntatie interculturele competenties](#).

Education Council (2018). Letter to Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Advice on Internationalisation in Higher Education.

