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## Why is it important to plan for internationalisation?

- major global trends in higher education with impact on university strategies for internationalisation

Increasing and mass  
demand of university  
education

Privatisation and  
diversification

Inclusion vs exclusion

New actors

Virtual vs physical  
mobility

Ranking

Globalisation vs  
regionalisation

Increasing calls for  
accountability from both  
public and private funders  
to provide evidence and  
demonstrate quality



## Definition and overview

Internationalisation as:

«the *intentional process* of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and *to make a meaningful contribution to society*»

(De Wit, and others... 2015)



## Why is it important to plan for internationalisation?

- To recognise an internal shift from marginal activities at the periphery to integrated and embedded approaches led from the centre
- to clarify the institution's objectives for internationalisation and articulate how internationalisation is expected to enhance the institution's main mission(s)
- to select the most appropriate modes and forms of internationalisation for the institution, taking into account both the institution's missions and objectives and the environment affecting internationalisation
- to involve key stakeholders actively in developing the internationalisation approach to gain valuable insights about the best approach and to strengthen engagement in, and support for, the approach chosen
- To see internationalisation not as a goal in itself but as a way to enhance the quality of education and research and their contribution to society



## Which are the main risks?

- **Standardization.** Risk to replicate plans that refer only to Anglo western models of internationalisation, not suitable for all the environments
- International rankings. They insist only on few indicators of internationalisation: recruitment and international publication. Better to get inspired by **Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Lack of experience in strategic thinking and planning**
- **Definition of objectives and actions that go** beyond the current capacity of the institution
- **Underestimation of the need of resources** (not only financial)
- Lack of involvement of the **university community**
- Lack of **autonomy** in carrying out actions described in the plans
- Institutional **vulnerability** and turnover



## Main steps:

There are many ways in which a university can engage in a strategic planning process, but whatever the approach, there are basically three questions it needs to ask itself:

1. Where  
are we now?

2. Where do  
we want to  
be?

3. How do  
we get  
there?



## Where are we now?

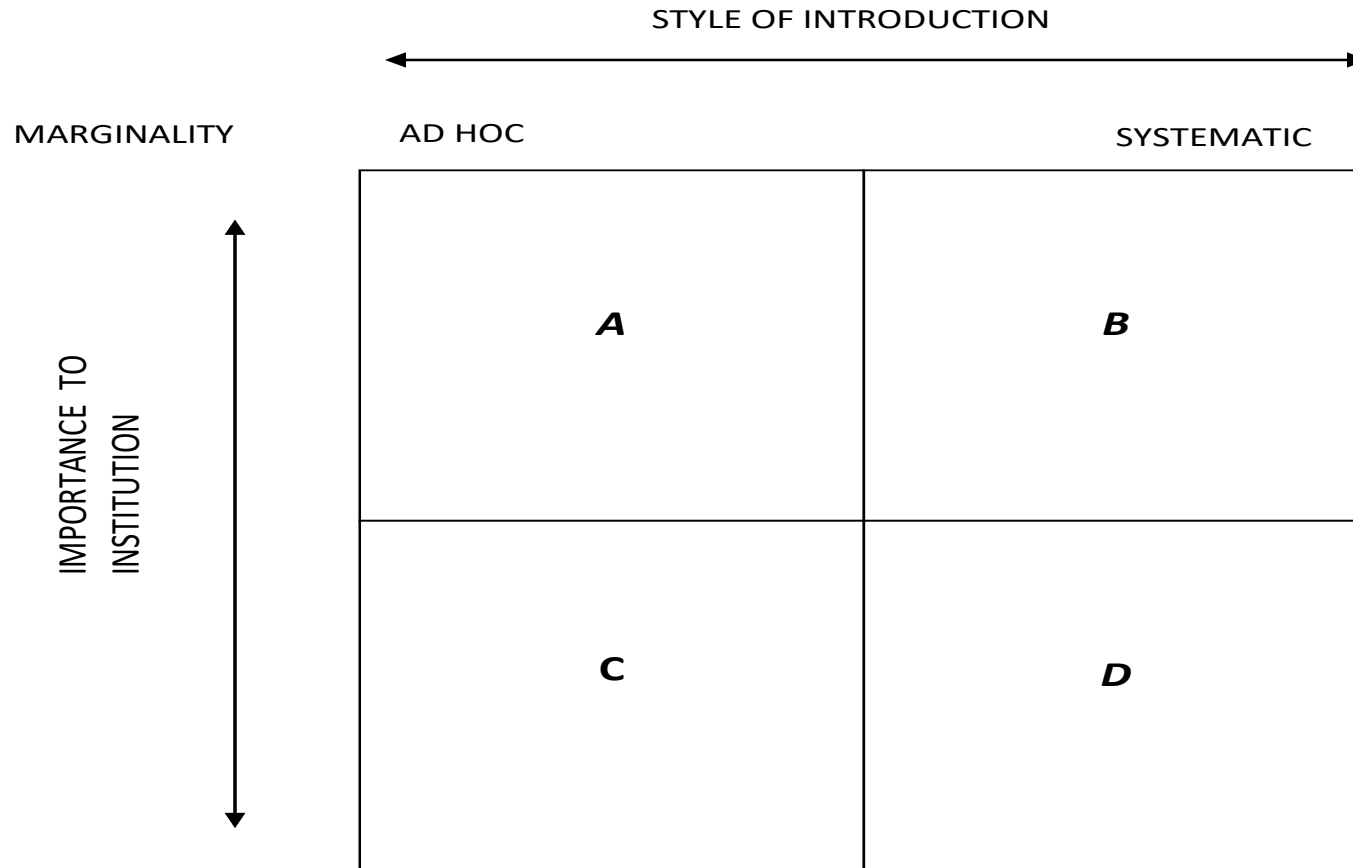
### 1. Where are we now?

- understand the current state of affairs:
- What are the current academic activities and outcomes in terms of education and research?
- What are the international programmes and projects the university is currently involved in and to what end?
- How many collaboration agreements are in place and what do they achieve?
- What are the international profiles of staff and how are they being used?
- Which are the opportunities for students?
- Who is attracted to visit/study/do joint research in our institution?
- Which internal resources are dedicated?



## Where are we now?

Institutionalisation of approaches to internationalisation in universities (Davies 1999)







**The vertical axis** indicates the development of international activities via growth in various domains from marginal to central **importance** in the institution

The **horizontal axis** indicates the development in terms of **systematisation** of approaches (as distinct from ad hoc responses) to emerging challenges and opportunities

**Quadrant A:** in this diagram since the volume of international effort and the recognition of the importance are relatively limited at present, and there are still various processes and structures to be developed to support this growth in a more systematic manner

**Quadrant D:** in this diagram, the volume of international effort and the awareness of the importance are high, and the university has organised services and structures to facilitate internal processes and accompany growth of internationalisation initiatives



## Where do we want to be?

the university needs to:

- understand its own aims, values and aspirations
- understand the internal and external factors that are requiring it to change its current approach to internationalisation

2. Where do  
we want to  
be?

SWOT analysis to identify the university's strengths and weaknesses as well as to map present future opportunities and threats within the external environment.

An accurate diagnosis is a key step in the process to answering the next question about institutional direction



# SWOT ANALYSIS MATRIX



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## Strengths

Strengths are things your organization is already doing well, the unique resources your institution or your territory possesses, or any competitive advantages you have and makes you unique. Strengths are internal factors, so you can build on them and use them to your advantage. But are also factors that the University shares with its own territory that may refer to the city, the region, the country and local stakeholders that can make you more attractive at international level

### Key questions

- What do we do well?
- What have your partners told you they are interested in your institution ?
- In what areas do we outpace our competitors?
- What's unique about your curricula, research topics, territory and possibility of fieldwork?
- Which advantages do you have over other institutions of your country? Of your region?
- What is your staff is able to do that other institutions can't do?



## Weaknesses

Weaknesses are areas where your institution could improve in terms of internationalisation, where resources are needed, or areas of internationalisation where other institutions of your country or region are surpassing you. Weaknesses are also internal factors, so you can often address and overcome them

### Key questions

- What can we concretely improve in terms of internationalisation? Which resources do you need to carry out such improvements?
- Where do we fall behind other institutions of your country or region in terms of internationalisation?
- Where are you lacking in knowledge or resources for internationalisation?
- Are your staff not skilled enough?
- Is there any internal barrier to foster internationalisation that you could potentially remove?



## Opportunities

Opportunities are areas you can take advantage of now. These could be new resources available to you, emerging trends you could lean into, or any strengths you've yet to adopt into your strategy. Like threats, opportunities are external factors because they're beyond your control.

### Key questions

- What emerging trends can we take advantage of? Which opportunities?
- Which are the regions/country in the world that might be more interested in cooperating with you?
- What ongoing external changes (at national or international level) will bring your opportunities?
- How can we exploit this sort of “post covid” situation?
- Can you take any advantage in terms of internationalisation from the current situation of your country?



## Threats

Threats are anything that could negatively impact your institution and its internationalisation activities from the outside or any obstacles your institution currently faces for internationalizing. As an external factor, threats are often beyond your control.

### Key questions

- What are the negative aspects of the current situation for underpinning your internationalisation effort?
- What are the obstacles for internationalisation you are facing in the current mission?
- Which trends in internationalisation are your unprepared for?
- What economic or political issues could impact your internationalisation activities ?



## Exercise

- **Take 1 hour to draft the SWOT analysis of your institution in relation to internationalisation**
- **Consider dimensions of internationalisation both related to education, research, the whole institution and the faculties**
- **You will be provided with some samples from other institutions or countries**
- **You will be asked to work together with another institution, looking either for common aspects or for divergences**
- **We are expected to share the results of our work in a joint session at the end**





## Let's summarise

SWOT analysis is a planning methodology that helps organizations build a strategic plan to meet goals, improve operations and keep the activities relevant. During SWOT analysis, organizations identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (the four factors SWOT stands for) pertaining to organizational growth and improvements both in policies and services.

An in – death SWOT analysis is a key step in order to overcome the risks of strategic planning for internationalisation, in particular the risk of standardisation.



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