The IMPI Project—Main findings of the 2nd Testing Phase

(April 2011—February 2012)

Contents

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1. Introduction

The overarching **aim of the Indicators for Mapping and Profiling Internationalisation (IMPI) Project** was to develop a **comprehensive list of indicators** that can be used by higher education institutions, from very diverse geographical and academic contexts, in the **evaluation and monitoring of their internationalisation activities**. This comprehensive set of internationalisation indicators—entitled the **IMPI Toolbox**—was developed over a period of 2,5 years by the IMPI project team[1] and tested by two groups of European higher education institutions, in two consecutive testing rounds, to ensure the external validity and usefulness of this instrument.

The present document summarises the **findings of the 2nd** and last **Testing Round** conducted in the framework of the EU-funded **IMPI Project**. It first gives an overview of the 3 workshops that together constituted this testing round. It then briefly presents the general and specific findings of this project phase, and draws some concluding points. The annexes present some examples of how to organise institutional data for the purpose of group benchmarking, as well as some examples of institutional level actions that were identified as good practice by the institutional representatives involved in the 2nd IMPI Testing round.

2. Overview of the 2nd IMPI Testing Round

Building on the design of the 1st Testing Round, organised between April 2010 and February 2011, the **2nd Testing Round** consisted of **3 separate workshops** and explored the **usefulness of the IMPI toolbox** for two different purposes—institutional **self-assessment** and inter-institutional international **benchmarking** (i.e. group comparison).

In total, 20 institutions actively took part in this 2nd Testing Phase. These 20 institutions came from 8 different European countries, namely from: Finland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland. For this project phase, the 20 institutions were divided in **four benchmarking groups**—two medium-size (involving 3-4 institutions each) and two larger groups (consisting of 6-7 institutions each). Several criteria were taken into account in deciding the composition of the benchmarking groups, namely:

- the expressed interest of participating institutions—some of the participants had expressed clear preferences concerning the profile of institutions with whom they wanted and did not want to compare data;
- the geographical origin of institutions—as many participating institutions came from two European countries (France and Spain), there was a need to avoid that these countries were concentrated in any one group; and

[1] You can read in detail about the composition of the project team on the IMPI website: http://www.impi-project.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1.

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- the need to have both relatively homogeneous as well as more heterogeneous groups (in terms of type and size of institutions).

The four groups conducted their work in 3 separate workshops, under the guidance of a group leader and 1-2 co-leader(s) from amongst the IMPI project partners (namely CHE Consult, ACA, CampusFrance, Nuffic, Perspektywy and SIU).

Workshop 1: Vienna, 25 May 2011

In contrast to the 1st Testing Round, in which the participating institutions were asked to choose from the start between a self-assessment or a group benchmarking experience, all institutions that took part in the **2nd Testing Phase** were asked to **first go through a limited self-assessment exercise**, before continuing with the group benchmarking process. This decision was taken because the 1st Testing Stage revealed, amongst other findings, that those institutions that completed the IMPI self-assessment process benefitted most from the use of the Toolbox and from the evaluation results. Therefore, it was deemed by the project partners that a preliminary—self-assessment—stage would benefit all institutions in the 2nd round by helping them better prepare for the next phase—group benchmarking.

This **first workshop** in **Vienna** was thus devoted to the selection of 1 internationalisation goal and of up to 7 indicators from the IMPI toolbox by each participating institution, for the purpose of conducting a **self-assessment exercise**. The participants had a choice between **two types of self-assessment**: an evaluation of the evolution of the entire institution over a certain period of time, or a comparison of two different "units" of analysis (e.g. study programmes, faculties, departments, etc.) within the same institution.

The Vienna workshop was followed by a **data collection stage**, during which the participants gathered data on the selected indicators and delivered them to the group leaders. Group leaders and co-leaders analysed the individual datasets in relation to each institution's internationalisation strategy and goal, and delivered a confidential **Self-assessment Report** to each institution.

Workshop 2: Copenhagen, 12 September 2011

Building on the self-assessment experiences, the members of each group moved towards **the next step in their participation in the IMPI project—group benchmarking.** For this purpose, during the 2nd workshop, in Copenhagen, they tried to reach an agreement within the group on several common parameters, namely:

- select 1 (out of 5 possible) internationalisation goals in the IMPI toolbox, to be their focus area during their group benchmarking;
- agree on up to 15 indicators to be used by the entire group in the sense that the group members were to benchmark one another on each of these 15 indicators;
- define a common timeline for group comparison, of minimum 3 (academic) years; and

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- agree on a common set of definitions of generic terms (such as "international student", "incoming student", "staff", etc.) that were to be used for data collection, to ensure that the information thus gathered for group benchmarking would be comparable across all the institutions participating in one group.

As the institutional strategies of participating institutions rarely mentioned any clear reference levels, all institutions present in Copenhagen were asked to **formulate their own targets (benchmarks)**, by defining what they would see as a "very good performance level", a "satisfactory performance level" and a "room for improvement level", for each indicator selected. One group fixed only minimum and maximum reference levels. The aim of this action was, first of all, to help relate the performance of each institution to its own ambitions, and be able to measure the proximity or distance to actual targets. Secondly, this step was also designed to allow for a comparison between the ambitions and views of group members, in addition to the actual comparison of performance (i.e. of data).

Based on these common parameters, the individual institutions started collecting related data after the Copenhagen workshop. To support the participating institutions in the data gathering stage, the IMPI team developed a **data collection template**, which proved to be a very efficient standardised way of organising data reporting within the institutions. Data were delivered for evaluation to the group leader and co-leader(s) in November—December 2011. The group leader and co-leader(s) produced on this basis a **Group Benchmarking Report**, which was forwarded in January 2012 to the group members, in preparation for the last IMPI workshop. All four group reports were based on the same **report template**, jointly developed by the IMPI team.

Workshop 3: Paris, 9-10 February 2012

The four benchmarking groups met with their leaders and co-leader(s) at a last workshop in Paris, to discuss the **results presented in the Group Benchmarking Report** and to **look into the usefulness of the IMPI toolbox** for monitoring and evaluating internationalisation activities at the institutional level. The institutions also discussed institutional practices that seemed to be behind good performance examples in each group, trying to learn from each other how to improve future performance in the respective areas.

3. General findings

The 2nd Testing Phase confirmed, for the second time during the IMPI project, that the **selection of indicators and the collection of institutional data** are actually only an **intermediary stage in the assessment process**. This step must be preceded by a thorough **reflection on the goal(s) of internationalisation** the institution in question is pursuing/wants to pursue, and on **aims** for engaging in such an evaluation process. Without such careful pre-assessment reflections, the results of inter-institutional benchmarking will inevitably be of limited value for the individual institutions.

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During the 2nd IMPI Testing Round, the discussions about the links between internationalisation goals and the actual internationalisation indicators provided extremely valuable insights for the institutional participants. The (different) priority levels given to these goals within the benchmarking groups also generated interesting discussions.

Furthermore, it became apparent during this Testing Stage that **agreeing on clear and comparable definitions across group members and collecting data accordingly, is a *sine qua non* condition for successful benchmarking**. Those institutions that did not manage to closely follow the group definitions delivered datasets that were ultimately not comparable to those of other group members. In other words, the data collection efforts of such institutions yielded only minimally useful results.

This round also confirmed that **a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators is advisable**, for both meaningful self-assessment and for inter-institutional benchmarking. The two types of indicators closely and essentially complemented each other. While the quantitative indicators provided the actual figures on which inter-institutional comparisons could be made, the qualitative indicators revealed very important contextual information that informed the interpretation of hard data, as well as specific strategic choices and critical differences across institutions.

Each of the four groups had to agree on a common goal and to choose a common set of between 14 and 20 indicators (as shown in the table below) to conduct the benchmarking exercise. The selections made by the group members revealed that there were **some differences between the interests of the four groups, reflected both in the goal and indicator selections**. This confirmed the validity of the IMPI project approach, i.e. of developing a very comprehensive set of indicators that will manage to cater for the needs of higher education institutions with very diverse internationalisation interests and profiles.

	No. of indicators chosen	Goals selected
Group 1	14	Goal 4 "to enhance the international reputation and visibility of the unit"
Group 2	20	Goal 4 “to enhance the international reputation and visibility of the unit”
Group 3	16	Goal 4 "to enhance the international reputation and visibility of the unit"
Group 4	15	Goal 3 “to well-prepare students for work and life in an intercultural/international

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4. Specific findings

4.1 Methodological issues

Self-assessment as a first step for group benchmarking

Making **self-assessment a mandatory step before group benchmarking** proved to be a very inspired project decision. As a result of the self-assessment stage, all participants came to:

- better understand data collection limitations within their own institutions;
- see how important defining clear concepts is, for any assessment process;
- see how crucial it is to properly communicate information about the project and its aims internally, in order to be able to gather the necessary information and achieve the evaluation objectives;
- understand for which purposes the IMPI toolbox could be used, and for which not; and
- assess the value of selected indicators for measuring goal achievement.

All in all, the self-assessment step made all institutions better aware of the opportunities but also of the inherent challenges of such measurement processes, and helped boost the quality of their data delivery in the group benchmarking stage.

The selection of indicators

One of the main findings of the 1st Testing Round was that working with a smaller number of indicators bears more fruit, as it gives institutions more time to discuss the definitions of generic terms, which is a crucial element for valid comparisons, and to collect accurate data. This insight was taken into account in the planning of the 2nd Round, when the choice of indicators was suggested to be limited to 7 for the self-assessment stage and to 15 indicators for group benchmarking, although the ultimate decision belonged to each group. **Working with a limited number of carefully-selected indicators** indeed **helped improve the quality of data delivery**, and as a result, the quality of the 4 Benchmarking Reports.

The role of moderators

Both in the 1st and the 2nd Round, the **2 group moderators—a group leader and a co-leader—played an essential role**. They made sure the institutions stayed focused, achieved the results planned for each of the three workshops, and overcame conversation deadlocks. They also queried data that did not seem accurate and produced the self-assessment and the benchmarking reports and were the direct contact for the participating institutions on all project-related matters. It also became apparent during the IMPI project that having at least two people per group to manage the moderation tasks is essential. The

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group leader was generally in charge of moderating the group discussion, while the co-leader(s) supervised the logistical and technical matters, intervened whenever certain decisions were not clear and took detailed minutes of the meeting, without which moving to each subsequent stage would not have been possible.

It also seems advisable that such people come from outside the institutions that are involved in the benchmarking. More “neutral” moderators may bring important insights to the data analysis and interpretation, and are more likely less constrained by “insider information” when it comes to asking clarifying questions, which appears to be extremely useful in the group benchmark process.

The group design

The IMPI partners had previously agreed to **test the use of the IMPI toolbox in both fairly homogeneous as well as in very heterogeneous benchmarking groups**, to see what effects group composition might have on the benchmarking process. In principle, the expectation was that the more heterogeneous a group would be, the more difficult the data interpretation would become, given the stark differences between the contexts in which the different group members operate. While this hypothesis was generally confirmed in the 2nd IMPI Testing Round, the group work also hinted at another very interesting finding. The **heterogeneity of groups turned out to be a big plus and contributed to the exchange of interesting examples of institutional practice** in 3 out of the 4 groups. Given the variety of institutions, the approaches they had taken over the same issues were also very different. This gave the other group members novel ideas about how to implement certain actions differently, which in many cases actually meant more efficiently and creatively.

Not only the diversity level within the group, but **also the group size turned out to be a critical element for successful benchmarking**. Benchmarking in small groups, in particular, presented unique challenges. For example, the decision by two participating institutions to abandon the benchmarking process[2] before its completion drastically reduced the size of one already small group. This kind of situation can have a major impact on group dynamics, and could have negatively affected the morale of the remaining 2 partners—although fortunately this was not the case. Also, quantitative data analysis may be somewhat misleading when it involves a very small sample of institutions. On a more positive note, personal rapport and levels of trust and engagement—particularly among institutions with similar profiles—can become much stronger in small group settings. Reaching compromises and joint decisions in bigger (and more heterogeneous) groups proved at times more challenging.

[2] Both had to do so due to internal restructuring and budget cuts.

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4.2 Benchmarking process and results

Data quality

As already pointed out above, the **self-assessment stage helped to significantly improve the quality of data delivered for group benchmarking**, compared to the 1st IMPI Testing Round. This improvement was also facilitated by the group leaders and co-leaders, who, during the Copenhagen workshop worked to ensure that enough time was devoted to the discussion of definitions, in order to avoid as much as possible incompatible data delivery by the participating institutions. Also, in the 2nd Round, the group leaders and co-leaders were themselves more experienced with the process of leading institutions through the self-assessment and group benchmarking exercises. This arguably led to more efficient group management, which in turn had a direct effect on the quality of data delivered.

However, while the quality of data delivery has improved overall, this does not mean that all participating institutions delivered reliable, compatible or complete datasets. Incompatibilities between delivered datasets were still observed in the 2nd Testing Round of the IMPI project, but on a much smaller scale than in the 1st Round. Frequent reasons for deviating from the common definitions were

- the impossibility to filter the datasets of previous years according to the definitions agreed in the context of the IMPI project, because the institutional databases did not technically allow this;
- misunderstandings about the meaning of some terms previously defined;
- the inability to consistently follow the agreed-upon IMPI definitions. This came as a result of the need, in many cases, to involve various institutional actors (departments, services, etc.) in the data collection process. All groups stated that the International Relations Office (IRO) often did not have direct access to all required data and that the more other units needed to be involved in the collection process, the more likely it was to receive incoherent or incomplete data.

Still, only data for a minority of indicators were affected by such problems—**in most cases data were comparable**, even if not between *all* higher education institutions in one group.

Building a **data review step** *after* the delivery of the first Benchmarking Report was identified as a solution that could help to solve some of these data incompatibility problems. This option was, for example, given to one of the IMPI benchmarking groups, just after the Paris workshop. The members of this group had, after the last IMPI workshop, close to a month to make data corrections, before the finalisation of the Group Benchmarking Report.

Active participation in the benchmarking process

Another important lesson learned in the 1st IMPI Testing Round was that whenever a group member could not be physically or virtually present in a workshop, this had ensuing negative consequences: these institutional representatives were less likely to understand the indicators in line with the rest of the group, had more difficulties to deliver data, and probably

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felt less committed to the decisions taken by the group as well as to the overall assessment process.

In the 2nd round, the group leaders therefore emphasised the **importance of continuity in participation**. Except for rare cases, this was achieved. The overall effect was that the groups had more continuity in their discussions from one workshop to the next and a “group memory” was firmly established, allowing for smoother progression.

Interpretation of benchmarking results

Analysing the group datasets and formulating meaningful benchmarking conclusions was clearly not the easiest of tasks, knowing that institutions were allowed to select only a limited number of indicators (that reflected just a small portion of all internationalisation activities undertaken at home and/or abroad) and given the groups’ inherent diversity.

Nevertheless, many **useful insights** were gained in this process:

- As a rule, **benchmarking data should always be read with a critical eye**, given the risk of looking at incomplete or incompatible data, a shortcoming which is not always immediately apparent.

- The **interpretation of benchmark results MUST take as much as possible into account national, regional and institutional contexts and regulations**. The interpretation of results improved once the institutions in a benchmarking group were given the opportunity to discuss the results amongst themselves. Contextual information gained through such discussions proved crucial for understanding many trends observed in the reports and also helped clarify misunderstandings.

- **Minor differences in defining the same concept by the group members can have major consequences**—it can ultimately lead to unusable datasets.

- **Comparing quantitative data is a very complex task**, **as there are many ways of looking at the same dataset**, which will, depending on the criterion that is taken into account, lead to different conclusions. For example, an upward trend is not always a sign of progress. Cutting down on certain (inefficient) internationalisation activities can often be a strategic choice for improvement. So, in specific cases, a decrease can also be a sign of advancement. In addition, there are many ways of selecting the “best performing institution” in a group. It can be the one with the highest absolute numbers, the one with the highest percentages, the one with the highest growth rate over time, the one that obtains its target level with the highest margin or even the one that has decided to reduce inefficient activities.

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- **Formulating benchmarks either for self-assessment or for group benchmarking is most of the times very challenging**, due to a range of factors, such as 1) the interrelatedness of indicators, 2) difficulties in forging an internal agreement on benchmark indicator choices and definitions, 3) (unwanted) political or financial consequences, etc.

Usefulness of group benchmarking

The 2nd Testing Round was very useful, both for the IMPI team and for the institutional participants.

The **IMPI team received good insight** on how to:

- further improve the IMPI toolbox (both content and language-wise), and enrich it with a few new indicators;
- move the IMPI analysis from the institutional to the programme level;
- articulate, based on the experiences of individual institutions, a set of benchmarking guidelines/lessons learnt, that will hopefully be useful in the future for other higher education institutions that might want to engage in such processes; and
- organise follow-up activities in this area.

On the other hand, the **institutional participants** entered the IMPI project with **various expectations, all of which were completely or partly fulfilled**. Many of them wanted and in the end managed to:

- learn if they were well-positioned in comparison to others;
- gain ideas on how to expand their internationalisation activities;
- discover if their approach to internationalisation was mainstream;
- assess if their internationalisation monitoring tools were adequate or could be improved;
- develop evidence that could be used to better advocate for attention to, or resources for, internationalisation; and/or
- identify the “best” internationalisation indicators that could be proposed to regional/national authorities that want to make internationalisation part of the criteria used to calculate the level of university funding.

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5. Conclusions

The 2nd Testing Round of the IMPI project was a major learning experience for all parties involved—the IMPI project team and the institutional participants. It confirmed the usefulness of the IMPI Toolbox for institutional self-assessment and inter-institutional benchmarking, but also helped identify some of the common mistakes that can be made during such processes as well as proposed some practical solutions to overcome them.

This stage of the IMPI project also showed that the **highest added value of group benchmarking lays, though, not in the data comparison per se, but in the peer learning element**. Institutional participants learnt from their group colleagues how to implement similar activities in a different (more efficient) fashion, and came to understand why others seemed to be doing better in certain regards.

Most participants also concluded that the **benchmarking experience could become even more meaningful if the entire process were to be repeated** after a year or two, in other words if group benchmarking would not be just a one-off process. In fact, two of the institutional representatives voiced their intentions to continue the benchmarking process with each other beyond the project lifetime.

Hopefully, these insights and experiences of participating institutions in the 2nd IMPI Testing Round will prove useful for future users of the IMPI Toolbox.

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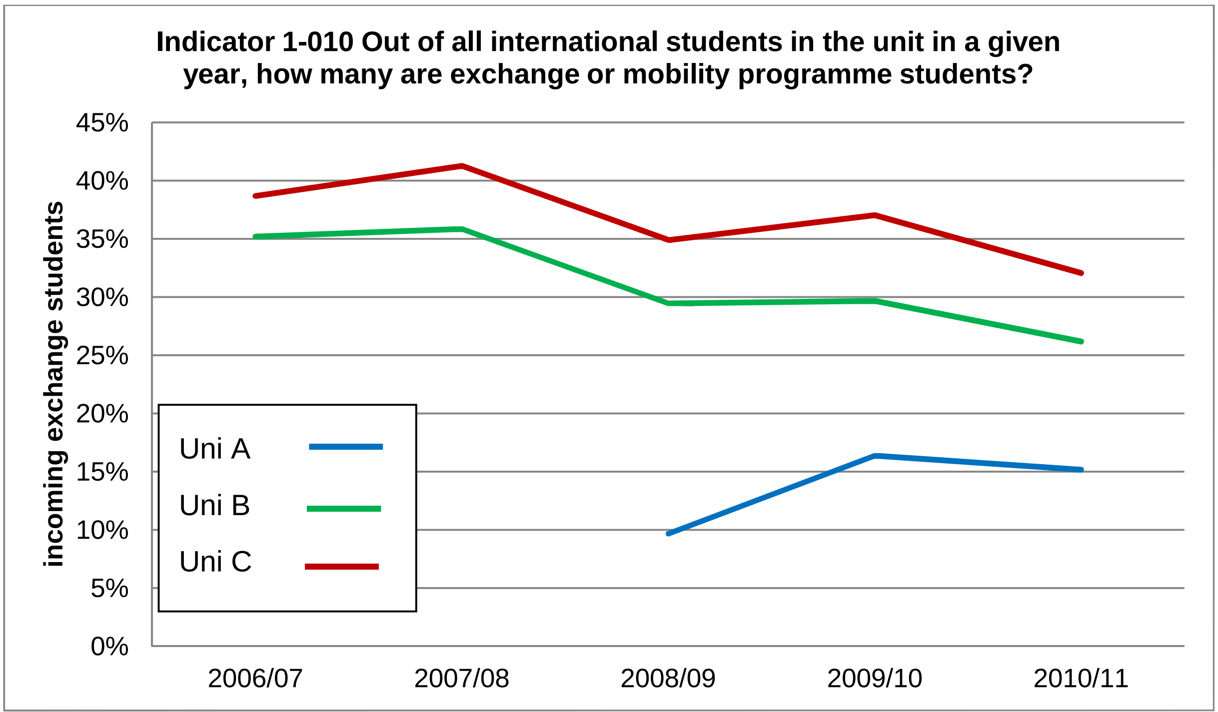
Annex 1: Examples of results and modes of data presentation

One of the concrete outputs of the 2nd IMPI Testing Round were the Group Benchmarking Reports. Each of these documents contained the analysis of data delivered by all members of each benchmarking group. This section gives some concrete examples of how data was organised and presented for the purpose of group benchmarking, to illustrate different possible approaches to data analysis and interpretation.

Example 1:



This graph shows that the red university has a higher percentage of international students in exchange programmes than the other two institutions. We can also observe for all participating institutions a downward trend in this percentage indicating a decreasing trend in the number of exchange students among all international students.

This, however, does not mean that the red university is in any way performing better than the other two. The decision around what is better depends on the perspective of the observer. If a university wants most of their international students to be full-degree students, e.g. because the institution relies on the tuition fee income from this group, the performance of the red university might be considered very good. If, in contrast, a university focuses on exchange as a major quality of their internationalisation the numbers might look worrisome.

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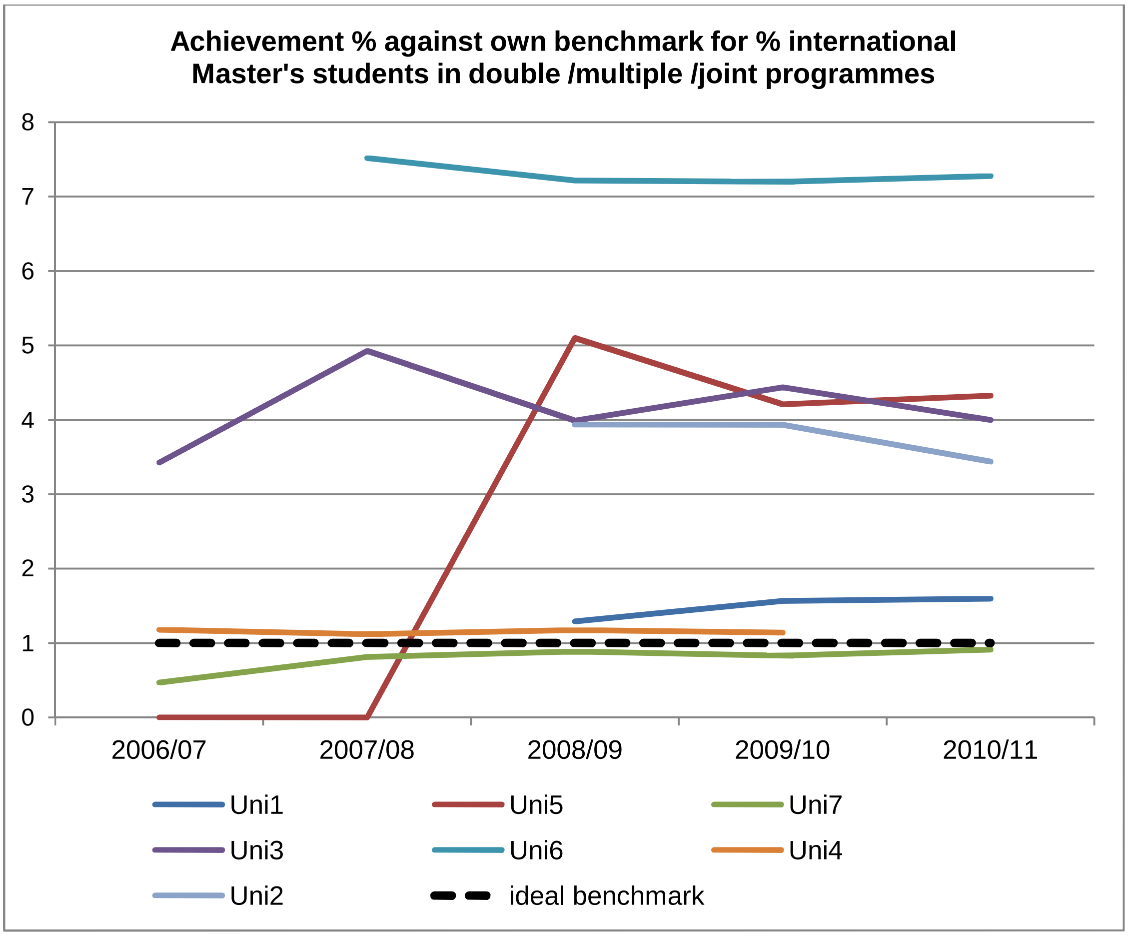
Example 2:



This graph shows how different universities perform against their own benchmark. The 100% line (labelled as the "ideal benchmark" in the legend) indicates totally successful performance against this indicator, when measured against an institution's definition of success. The real value behind the definition of "success" could be totally different for each of the institutions in this benchmark group (e.g. 20% for Uni1, 50% for Uni2, 5% for Uni3, etc.). However, the normalisation of the values against a common benchmark of 100% allows to control whether an HEI achieved what it aimed for or how much it missed its goal. As we can see, most HEIs in this sample over-performed against their own targets, which could indicate, for example, inefficient use of resources. However, Uni4 and Uni7 managed to stay close to their own maximum goal.

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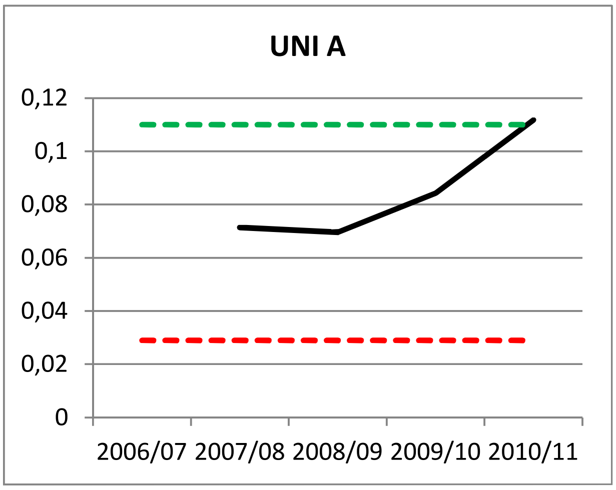
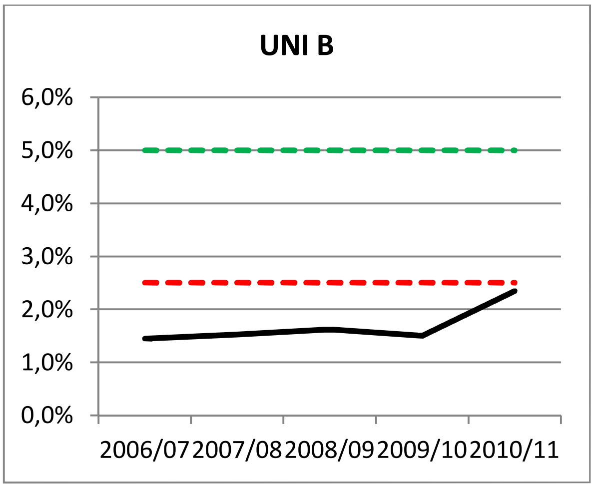
Example 3:

Using maximum and minimum benchmarks to control performance





While an institution's own benchmark gives a HEI guidance as to what to strive for, it has the disadvantage of leaving unanswered the question of how close to the benchmark is considered "good" or "satisfactory". To solve this problem, IMPI also used the idea of a corridor, i.e. each HEI defined what their minimum acceptable performance would be, below which results would be considered "failure". They also determined what their maximum achievement would be prior to collecting data. In the figure above, Uni A performed well just until the last year, as it stayed within its own benchmark parameters. In the last year, it exceeded its own maximum benchmark slightly, so it might be useful to re-consider activities, in order to better fit the benchmark and not waste valuable resources. It would also be interesting to explore whether the set benchmark is still valid against the institution's own goals. Uni B, in contrast, underperformed in most of the years, but started to get closer to the minimum benchmark in the last year. Here again, it might be useful to adjust activities in order to reach the set benchmark.

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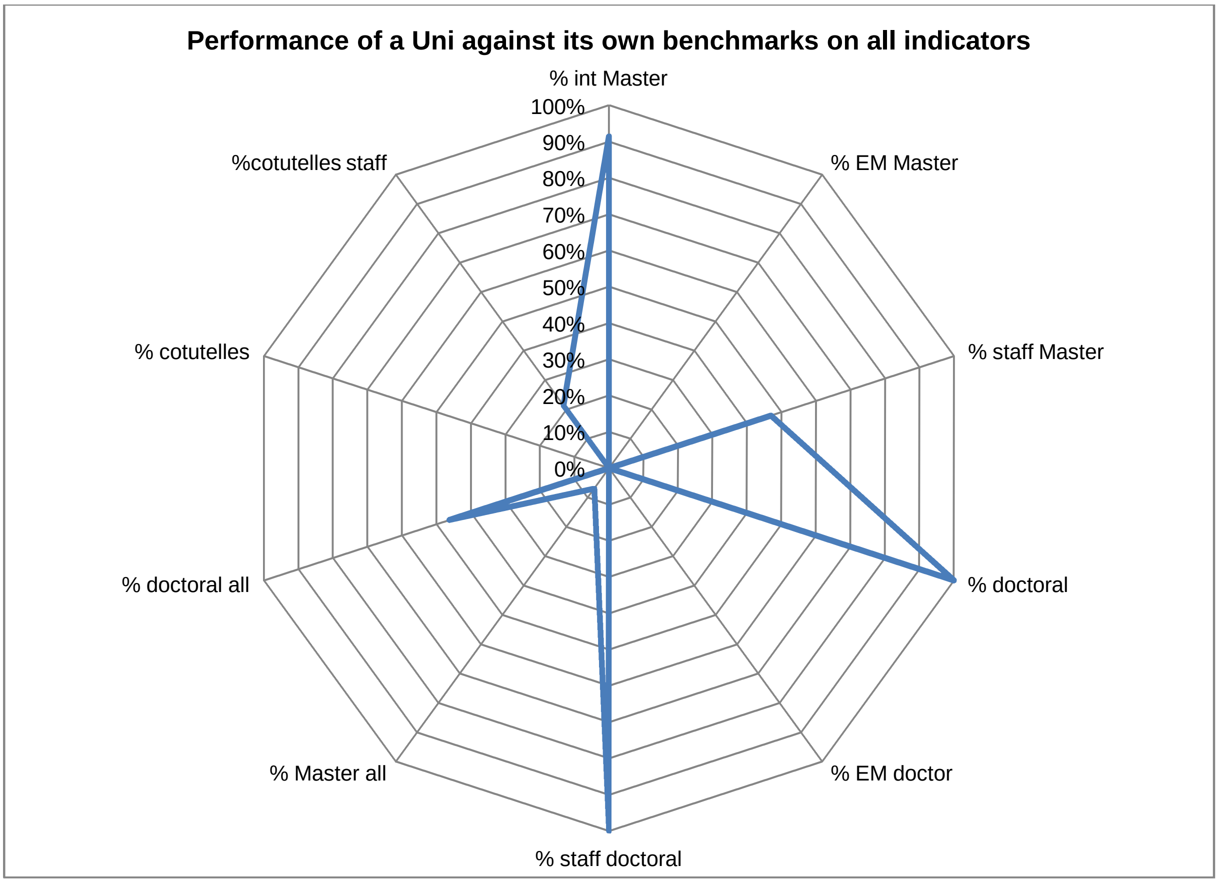
Example 4:



This visualisation (commonly referred to as spider web) allows for controlling the performance of a higher education institution over all the indicators for which it delivered data. By using the actual results achieved against the institution's own ideal benchmark for each indicator as the basis for calculating the visualisation, we achieve a normalisation and can thus compare aspects with very different numerical values or scales. The wider the web is, the better the institutional performance against its own benchmarks. Such visualisation can be very helpful for an overall view to identify areas in need of further improvement.

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Example 5:

Even simple tables such as the ones below can prove useful for analysis and discussion purposes. Without question, employing percentages in this analysis can be extremely misleading, given the very small number of institutions involved and the limited number of indicators examined. The numbers can, however, serve to illustrate how the data collection process can prove to be more or less challenging for individual institutions in a general sense, and possibly in regard to particular areas (i.e. indicator categories) connected to internationalisation efforts. This information may prove quite useful when it comes to thinking about future approaches to benchmarking. For example, 'evidence' of weakness or strength when it comes to data availability in specific domains may help institutions select future benchmarking partners (or potentially 'market' themselves as strong benchmarking peers) or think differently about working with specific indicators or indicator categories.

Indicator response totals and response rates, by institution and overall

Indicator	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	All institutions	Response Rate
01-009	1[†]	1	1	3	100%
01-033	1	1	1	3	100%
01-035	1	0	0	1	33%
02-001	1	1	0	2	67%
02-014	0	1	1	2	67%
02-018	0	1	1	2	67%
02-023	0	1	0	1	33%
02-033	0	1	0	1	33%
02-047	0	1	0	1	33%
04-012	1	0	1	2	67%
04-020	0	0	0	0	0%
06-027	0	1	0	1	33%
06-045	1	1	0	2	67%
07-014	1	1	1	3	100%
Total responses	7	11	6	24	57%
Response rate	50%	79%	43%	57%	-------

[†] *Note*: A '1' indicates data received for the indicator in question, regardless of data 'quality' or completeness; a '0' indicates no data available or received.

Overall, institution B looks to have been most successful when it comes to generating the data called for in this exercise. However, there are differences across the institutions according to indicator category[3]. For example – apart from category 7, where there was just one indicator selected and all three institutions managed to generate responses – data collection on student-focused indicators (category 1) seemed to be the easiest for the

[3] Indicators with the start code 01- belong to category 1, with 02- to category 2, and so on.

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institutions to handle. However, institution A had a slightly easier time than either B or C in gathering student-related data, with a response rate of 100% for this category. Meanwhile, institution B was able to do much more than its counterparts when it came to the indicators focused on staff issues (category 2), but could produce no information for the funding and finance indicators (category 4). The next table summarises how the institutions performed in terms of data collection by category.

Beyond this statistical information presented in the two tables, the discussions about the reasons behind these different pictures of data availability in each institution were particularly revealing. They showed different level of prioritisation across institutions of these data categories and also helped identify some important gaps in data collection.

Indicator category response rates, by institution

Indicator Category	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Average, all institutions
Students	100%	67%	67%	78%
Staff	17%	100%	33%	50%
Funding and Finance	50%	0%	50%	33%
Research	50%	100%	0%	50%
Promotion and Marketing	100%	100%	100%	100%

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Annex 2: Institutional examples of good practice

Some higher education institutions were identified within their groups as providing examples of good practice, for specific internationalisation activities. These institutional examples are concisely presented in this second annex.

a. Université de Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA): involvement of staff at all levels in joint degree programmes

Dr. Laure CASTIN, Director of International Relations

"At the Reims Champagne-Ardenne University, a cooperation agreement describing a joint degree between two partner Universities has just been officially signed. The office of International Relations, in close relationship with the professors, has worked hard on this project for many months.

Involving staff at all levels in joint degrees is rather difficult to be done and make people, not only from different departments, but from different universities, work together, when they are not used to, is even more challenging. But it has to be done if the institutions want the joint degrees to be successful.

At the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, we realized that the first thing to be done was to clearly identify the different people, in both institutions, who will have to play a role at different levels in this international partnership: the persons in charge of international mobility in the Offices of International Relations who will be counseling and helping foreign students to come to the university, the persons who will have to register them in the relevant academic curriculum, the different professors who will teach in this degree, the deans of the faculties in case a problem arises, the account department who will receive the payment of tuition fees. They all need to be informed of the specificity of the joint degree and they need to understand the purpose of it. They also need to know who is in charge of what in the whole process. At the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne, the Office of International Relations has made efforts to monitor the collective work that way. It requires regular meetings to keep people updated, pedagogical skills and a great amount of patience and self-control sometimes.

Problems of any kinds may inevitably arise when having people from different departments in a sole institution work together. Your department may be located close to another one but it doesn't mean at all that you know what your neighbor is doing. And to tell the truth, you may even think that anyway, he works less than you do.

But when you try to make people from different universities, speaking different languages by the way, work together it is even more complicated. Then, you understand that people, involved on international programmes, have to know each other and have to be aware of intercultural skills. Training people should undeniably be a key to success. For instance, organizing sessions on intercultural skills in both institutions and enhancing administrative

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mobility to exchange best practices between the two institutions linked by the joint degree should help people work together.

In 2009, at the beginning of a joint degree in the Faculty of Law and Political Science at URCA, the secretary of the department involved stayed for a week in the partner faculty in Slovakia to get to know her counterpart better and compare their way of working. After she came back, she realized how helpful it has been for her. There are no more misunderstandings, and solving daily problems appears to be easier. She has become a great ambassador of the administrative mobility for other secretaries or other civil servants. Each year (for four years now), there is a call for tender for candidates for administrative staff mobility, organized by the Office of International Relations at URCA. Candidates have to describe their professional project and its envisaged outcomes. They report after coming back. Administrative outgoing mobility in Europe is supported by the ERASMUS programme, administrative outgoing mobility overseas is paid from the budget of the Office of International Relations, as this was considered a priority in the four-year contract with the French ministry of High Education and Research.

It takes time and energy but at the end, we are quite convinced at URCA that this approach can be considered as a step forward to mobilize our institution to internationalization, a step forward to the implementation of a real international culture within our institution."

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b. Universitat de Girona: data collection on visiting academic staff

Laura RIPOLL, Director Oficina de Relacions Exteriors

"When counting mobility flows, students tend to be the "easy" group. This is due to the need for most students to enrol at their host university and the relative simplicity of counting those numbers. In addition, there are quite a number of tools available to universities to count the outgoing flows. However, when we talk about staff mobility, in general of academic staff, things are not so easy anymore, especially for the incoming flows, and the Universitat de Girona is no exception in this regard.

For the outgoing flows the "counting tool" was easy to set up. Every staff member of the university, who intends to leave, must fill out a form to ask for permission: the main purpose of the form is linked to insurance matters, but it is quite obvious that those applications can also be counted for different purposes. Additionally, as of last academic year, those applications are online, which makes them much easier to be counted, and provides a lot more information that can be easily used.

When talking about the incoming flows, the first thing to be realised is that there is staff coming to our university with some kind of contractual link and there is some staff with no contractual link at all. When the link is there, they are registered, even though at times it seems difficult to know by whom, i.e. which service has the records.

In order to try to find out information about the incoming flows without any "contractual link" the Office in charge of International Relationships (ORE) proposed to create another online application form.

This application form is based on two principles: make it easy for the "inviter" and give him/her some sort of reward. The reward is that his/her guests will have the feeling of being really welcome at the university and will immediately (that's the key point!) receive an ID card and internet access code upon their arrival. We do realise this is not very much, but we see it as a first step, and, in any case, it is more than it was offered until now in terms of speed."

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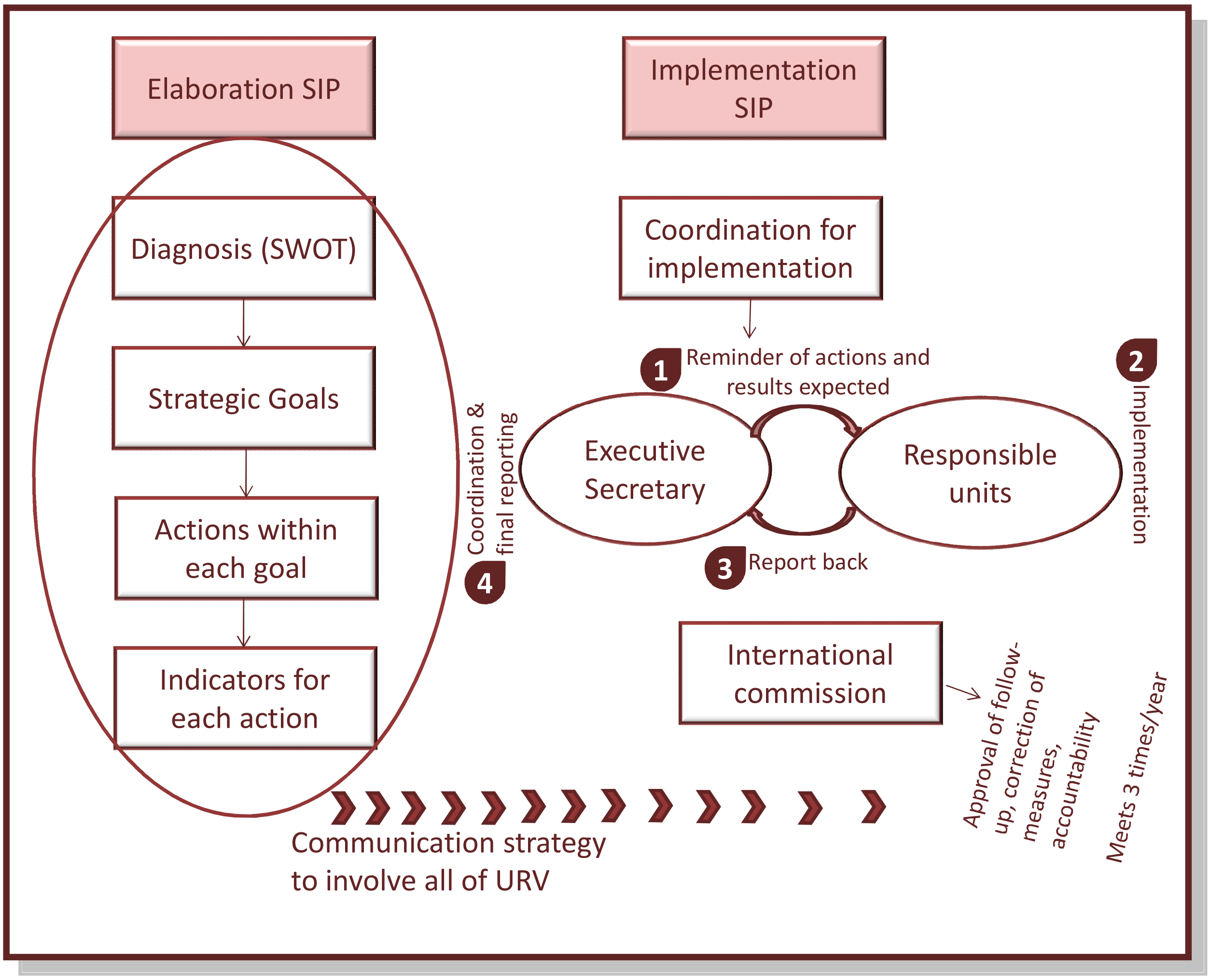
c. Universitat Rovira i Virgili: Strategic Internationalization Plan - elaboration and implementation

Marina CASALS SALA, Coordinator Rector's Technical Office

"The elaboration of the Strategic Internationalization Plan (SIP) of the Rovira i Virgili University took place between June 2008 and May 2009, when it was approved. It was a participatory process that started with a very large diagnosis phase through a SWOT analysis, it followed with the setting of the 4 strategic goals and the definition of actions for each goal. Each one of these actions had a responsible unit identified, a deadline, and the key performance indicators expected as result from the action in question.



A well-developed communication strategy made the SIP available to the whole URV community, who was able to participate in the process at several stages. This communication strategy continued into the implementation phase, through its "URV International" news bulletin, among other tools.

In the implementation phase, which started right after the approval of the SIP in 2009, the coordination of the process is centralized by its executive secretary, who reminds the

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responsible units of the actions they should be implementing and the results expected. The units then, implement these actions accordingly and report back to the executive secretary, who is in charge of the overall coordination and the final reporting on the advancement of the SIP.

The reports on advancement in the implementation process are then presented to the International Commission. This commission, formed by representatives of the different stakeholders of the URV, is in charge of the approval of the follow-up and the consequent correction of measures necessary for the good development of the SIP. The SIP was conceived as a living document, therefore it needs to be adapted and revised taking into account the changes in the regional, national and international context of Higher Education, as well as the inner institutional changes. The International Commission meets three times a year for this purpose."

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d. University of Almeria (Spain): Plurilingualism Promotion Plan

Sagrario SALABERRI, Institutional Coordinator

"One of the main objectives of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is to promote the international mobility of students and staff with the purpose of enhancing the improvement in quality and international competitiveness pursuing the employability opportunities of the European graduates. Within this context, the command of foreign languages has become a major need for university students. This international dimension requires the design of active policies by Higher Education Institutions to help define action plans, as well as tools to facilitate their management.

The University of Almería has always been sensitive to the importance of internationalization processes and university activities that necessarily affect teaching, research, management and training. The international status of this university demands, among other things, a proper dissemination of an academic and research offer that includes the mastery of foreign languages among the members of the university community and the enhancement of mobility processes.

The University of Almería launched in 2009 the Plurilingualism Promotion Plan[4], approved by the Council of Government in February, 2009, by which different courses from all the degrees offered by the institution are taught in a language different from Spanish.

Coordinated by the Vice-Chancellorship of Internationalization and Cooperation for Development, it is considered a pioneer project among Spanish Higher Education institutions aimed at promoting students' language learning. Under the framework of this innovative practice, courses from different areas of knowledge are taught in a language different from Spanish.

Since its first call, more than 90 undergraduate and Master's degree courses (over 250 ECTS) are currently taught in a foreign language, mainly in English (95%), lingua franca for international communication, followed by French (3%) and Italian (2%).

The main objectives pursued by the implementation of the Plan are:

1. To complete our students' language training of our students to facilitate their academic and professional mobility within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and internationally, through a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach.
2. To expand the offer of courses course offer to international and visiting students participating in exchange mobility programs.
3. To promote the mobility of academic and administrative staff to enhance their educational, research and professional development.

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[4] Plurilingualism Promotion Plan. University of Almeria, available at: http://cms.ual.es/UAL/universidad/organosgobierno/vinternacional/actividades/actividad/RRIIPLURI201112

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4. To increase the possibilities of establishing joint degrees with other universities.
5. To facilitate the implementation of complete bilingual degrees.

Structure of the Plan

All professors at the University of Almería are allowed to participate in the Plan. In order to guarantee continuity, a 3-year commitment is required for both the professors implied and the department they belong to.

Among the requirements necessary to participate, the following can be highlighted:

- Professors must certify a minimum B2 language level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Those who do not own an official accreditation must pass a language examination specially designed by the Language Centre of the University.
- All participants must attend every year a 30-hour seminar on Methodology in Content and Language integrated Learning (CLIL) in university settings, whose contents include a series of lectures concerning teaching strategies in foreign languages, teaching materials adaptation, integrated curriculum, and intercultural skills to be applied in their lectures.

Benefits

The University of Almeria is aware of the great challenge for professors engaging in such hard task. For this reason, a series of compensations are addressed to motivate the academic community to join the Plan. Among these compensations there are:

- ECTS reduction.
- An economic grant addressed to improve both language and methodological skills.
- Priority in the creation of course groups (e.g. the minimum number of students for a group to be created is 10. However, those courses attached to the Plan are allowed to be created with fewer students).
- Recognition in the Assessment Program of professors' teaching activity (DOCENTIA), managed by the Spanish Agency for Higher Education Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA).
- Certificate issued by the Vice-Chancellor of Internationalization attesting the teaching in a foreign language.

The university considers the Plurilingualism Promotion Plan to be an example of good practice for internationalization since it provides the students in Almeria with a great opportunity for personal development that will favour their increase of their professional opportunities in the current global labour world by the achievement of language, multicultural and citizenship skills."

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e. Saxion University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands): Measuring Internationalisation through ambitions, targets and indicators

Marloes BUTER, Policy officer, International Office

“The goal of the internationalisation strategy of Saxion is to generate international learning outcomes for students, which enable them to use these in their professional career after graduation. This is a strategic goal for all education at Saxion - to prepare the students for a more internationally-focused working area. Each school or programme has therefore to find an answer to the question: what kind of competencies would the future graduates need (e.g. speaking a foreign language, be aware of technical specifications from other countries, intercultural competencies, etc.)? Every programme has to define its own ambitions and goals in this regard. If the programme educates students for the local labor market, then it needs a different type of internationalization than those programmes that educate students for the global market. The programmes need to be creative in determining these international learning outcomes. Within this context, the role of the central level is to enhance the discussions, but only the faculties and departments can have a say in what kind of competencies their students would need.

At Saxion, the following target is set: all students must have obtained 30 *international ECTS* upon graduation. The progress towards this target is yearly monitored in the *Saxion Internationalisation Monitor (SAINT-monitor)*, an evaluation which is carried out at programme level. In the SAINT-monitor, each programme can indicate if it has formulated international learning outcomes for students, if it has translated these learning outcomes into “qualifications” and in case it has done so, indicate where in the curriculum students can obtain ECTS for these qualifications. At Saxion there are different criteria that prescribe what it means for a course or module to have an international orientation. These include a part of the study period with for instance a minor, internship or graduation thesis abroad. Besides a part of the programme abroad, internationalisation@home forms an important part of programmes. Students can gather international ECTS in different ways while in the Netherlands:

- Studying English or another foreign language (cultural aspects have to be part of the course as well);
- Taking courses or module with a focus on intercultural skills, an internationally comparing subject or knowledge about a specific country or region;
- Engaging in international projects;
- Taking part in international classrooms (more than 3 nationalities);
- Participating in the international week;
- Making excursions abroad.

Besides these activities in which students can obtain international ECTS, programmes can also indicate if they have other means which are used in order to support internationalisation in the curriculum. These means can be:

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- Teaching in English;
- English literature and cases with an international context;
- The use of local knowledge of international students in the education;
- The use student experiences abroad;
- Supporting virtual mobility;
- Organizing international projects;
- Organizing an international week;
- Planning excursions abroad;
- Planning international guest lectures;
- Participating in international conferences or symposia;
- Student participation in an international research project; and
- Organizing a “Buddy system” of Dutch students and international students.

By monitoring the progress towards the target, through indicators for internationalisation at programme and academy level, the process of internationalisation has become a part of the quality control cycle and is based on facts and figures that can also be used in the process of accreditation.”

Conclusions

The IMPI benchmarking process has identified several good practice cases, some of which have been presented above. However, higher education institutions need to be aware that good practices from other institutions often cannot be copied straight to another institutional context. Instead, good practices from elsewhere will need to be adapted to the local institutional context, a process that may take time and investment.

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