



Kurdistan Regional Government
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Sulaimani Polytechnic University

Strategic Plan for the Internationalisation of
Sulaimani Polytechnic University (SPU)
2019- 2024

Think Globally ... Act Locally

Tigris Project

Strategic Committee for Internationalisation

Prof. Dr Soran Saeed Beana, SPU Scientific Vice President

Associate Prof. Dr. Noor Ghazi, SPU Scientific Director

Dr. Hogar Mohammed Tawfeeq, Director of SPU International English Language Centre (IELC)

Mr. Bakhtiar Sharif, SPU Registration Office Director (Focal Point)

Mr. Sherko Kader, SPU Research Center Director

Mr. Jamal Kakbra, SPU I.T Director

Mr. Sarkhell Sirwan Muhammed, SPU-CDC

SPU 2019-2024 INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY

Introduction

This document defines key terms and identifies the main objectives which the University seeks to achieve through its next phase of internationalisation. The internationalisation strategy is also linked to other documents which contain aims, interventions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the achievement of the university's goals. The university aims at reaching a highly internationalized institution. The implementation of this strategy will include separate action plans by the University under regular monitoring.

'The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of under graduate & postgraduate education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.' "[Jane Knight](#)"

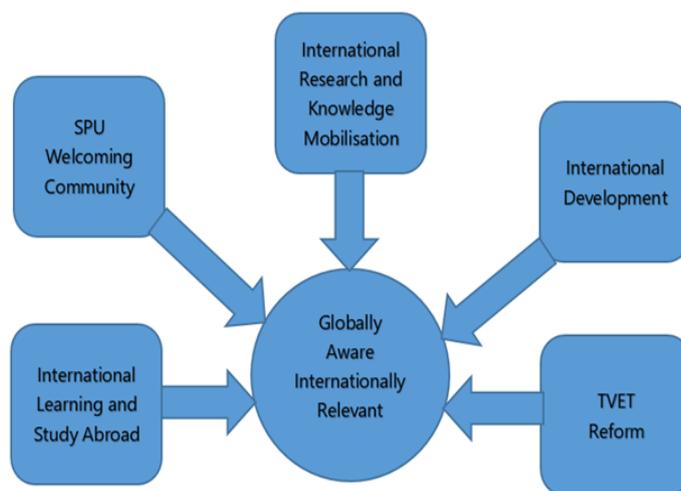
The intent of SPU is to move forward the procedure of internationalisation in a dynamic and meaningful manner to further upgrade the university's previous policies. This is to promote its credentials as an internationally recognized polytechnic university for applied sciences, research and postgraduate studies.

Recruitment of foreign academics and researchers have increased opportunities to create internationally co-authored and globally impactful research, with a greater propensity for high citation impact. Additionally, enrolment of international students will raise the profile of the University to attract additional students and yield wider benefits.

In order to implement the strategy in a wide manner, the main elements of the strategy will be viewed through the 'All International' campaign. The 'All International' campaign will emphasise the wide and varied opportunities for internationalisation for all staff and students at SPU. This

campaign will also be used to present an external-facing version of the internationalisation strategy through the SPU's website (www.spu.edu.iq).

Figure 1: Components of the Internationalisation Plan



The 2019 - 2024 strategic plan captures the core activities of SPU over the next 5 years by:

- understanding and strengthening existing diversity.
- making its strategic path through changing socio-political, economic and higher education as well as declaring its vision, mission and values.
- focusing on the core activities in research, teaching and learning.
- embedding community engagement and civic commitment in its academic mission.
- dedicating its strength to realise its vision of a research-intensive institutions
- embracing diversity to enrich the University's intellectual environment and providing conditions for teaching and learning as well as research
- prompting and encouraging researchers to publish their scientific works in local, national and international accredited Journals.
- working on implementing the UNESCO –TVET plan.
- defining overarching goals and key performance indicators.
- aiming at becoming a semi private University.

The Plan also focuses on services and key resources required for achieving the University's academic missions which include:

- staff and students which are the University's core human capital asset
- infrastructure and physical facilities that are central to creating an environment in which students and scientists are able to excel in their studies and missions.
 - library facilities, research support, teaching, learning, communication resources and platforms that are necessary for sustaining the knowledge production.

Vision

The vision can be summed up as follows:

- To be a leading research-intensive university of applied sciences, which is locally, nationally, and internationally recognised for its quality, relevance and impact,
- To educate people so that they become successfully and highly qualified scientists and experts in their field,

- To create new knowledge and make differences locally and globally.
- To sustain social, environmental and financial areas based on four key principles: quality, relevance, financial capacity and diversity.

Mission

The primary purpose of SPU is to use quality, relevance, diversity and sustainability as its navigational markers. It also continues to pursue excellence in research, teaching & learning and integrate these functions to society and communities.

Values

The members of the University of Sulaimani Polytechnic believe that...

.... SPU's community of scholars must be founded on the pursuit of knowledge through practical research, teaching and learning, with membership acquired on the basis of intellectual merit, ability and the potential for excellence;

... differing perspectives, arising from diverse backgrounds and histories, which define SPU's institutional identity, deepen scholarly inquiry and enrich academic debate.

We at SPU hold academic freedom, innovative thought, ethical standards as well as integrity, accountability and social justice. SPU staff and students are the University's core asset. SPU fosters an inquiry-led and evidence-based approach to create knowledge as well as an academic citizenship, whereby SPU is committed to exploit intellectual abilities in the interest of our nation and humanity.

We at SPU recognize that in a resource-constrained world where vast disparities remain, the University must endeavour to produce graduates who appreciate the importance of community services, entrepreneurial endeavours and innovative actions in generating employment and development in the local and national communities.

2019-2024 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In brief, the Internationalisation Strategy's objectives are to:

- Raise the profile and increase international esteem of the Sulaimani Polytechnic University and its research capacity.
- Embrace, learn from and respond to cultural diversity and embed cross-institutional internationalisation.
- Champion and extend the University's unique position as the best University in Kurdistan Region and Iraq
- Further increase and enhance partnerships and networks in the wider national and international world.
- Continue to increase and support exchange students internationally.
- Study and survey annually the needs of the labor market locally and nationally.

Framework to Evaluate the Strategic Objectives

For each of the main strategic objectives, SWOT (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS) analysis is used to evaluate the university's competitive position and to develop proper processes.

Figure 2: The strategic Plan as integrator and Source

	Enrollment Projections	Student Population	New Academic Programs	Changes in Pedagogy	Initiatives & Partnerships	Student Services Initiatives	Staffing Need	Staff Training & Development	Community Relations	Facilities Initiatives	IT Initiatives
Academic Master Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Enrollment Management Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Budget Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
IT Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Facilities Master Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Advancement Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Student Services Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Library Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Residence Life Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Athletics Plan	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

A. International Learning and Study Abroad

Objective A1. Increase the participation of SPU students in international experiences from 0.03% to 3%.

Actions:

- Making SPU student destination choices in international education through meeting their needs and understanding characteristics of prospective students.
- Offering packages to undergraduate and postgraduate students to have an international experience.
- Offering Summer and Fall academic orientation programs
- Enhancing international experiences within Colleges and institutes and reducing barriers for participation through:
 - Creating a comprehensive bursary package for all international students who are enrolled in SPU via the Ministry of Higher Education.
 - Ensuring that all students have opportunities to engage in an international experience without taking students longer to finish a degree.
 - Ensuring that appropriate mechanisms for students' safety abroad are in place.
 - Reducing bureaucracy in relation to credit transfer and applying for programs and awards.
- Increasing the number of exchange spaces in target countries and signing international MOUs with close ranking universities.
- Offering comprehensive international summer programs.
- Increasing comprehensive international internship programs.
- Increasing and/or joining selective national and international unions of universities to share international experience programs.

Objective A2. Provision of 5% more opportunities for Colleges and institutes, staff, and students to enhance their international and cross-cultural learning at home and abroad.

Actions targeting colleges, institutes and staff:

- Increasing the workshop series on cross-cultural learning for staff at colleges and institutes.
- Developing the International Week at SPU that will increase learning and communication of international activities via facilities.
- Increasing strategic international partnerships to facilitate international exchanges for colleges and institutes and staff.
- Increasing staff exchange/job shadowing program.
- Developing and increasing international learning certifications that is open to staff, colleges and institutes including language development opportunities.
- Increasing and developing those processes and mechanism that serve to acknowledge international work of colleges and institutes, not only in the area of research, but also in teaching and service provision.

Actions targeting students :

- Continuing to encourage international curricula development for graduate and undergraduate programs and through technology enhanced learning.
- Continuing to increase and promote dual and joint degree programs for postgraduate students.
- Continuing to increase and promote dual-degree and joint-degree programs for undergraduate students.
- Increasing the international learning certifications with appropriate learning outcomes

Objective A3. Increasing and diversifying the international undergraduate student body at SPU.

Actions:

- Gradually increasing the number of incoming international students to 3%.
- Diversifying application pool to help ensure adequate diversity of student body.
- Encouraging applicants to apply to a wide range of programs at SPU.

Objective A4. Developing and increasing international and strategic plan for graduate students

- developing the strategic plan.

Objective A5. Supporting the work of the portfolio of the University.

Actions:

- Creating opportunities to recognize the cultural diversity of colleges and institutes and fostering appropriate networking opportunities.

Objective A6. Better recognizing the diversity of staff on campus and engaging them accordingly.

Actions:

- Increasing the mechanisms for collecting information about the cultural heritage and languages spoken by staff on campus.
- Developing the existing SPU Staff Ambassador program whereby representatives would be available to meet with visitors of similar cultural or language backgrounds.

B. Sulaimani Polytechnic University: A Welcoming, Supportive Community

The University offers employment opportunities through the graduates through a career development center.

Objective B1. Providing international students with continuous support and services from the day they apply to SPU to the day they graduate in order for them to have similar retention and completion rates as domestic students and they are satisfied with their experience.

Actions:

- Identifying academic programme needs that help with international student success and develop programmes accordingly.
- Identifying language requirement needs so that SPU International English Language Centre is able to develop more programmes in support of ESL(English as second Language) students and prepare native language and culture courses.
- Participating in the International Student Barometer Survey to begin measuring international student satisfaction and to compare SPU fares with other universities worldwide.

C. International Research and Knowledge Mobilization

Since its inception in 2012, SPU has a strong history of engaging in international research collaborations and knowledge mobilization.

Furthermore, the SPU Research Centre has been working extensively with International Universities such as (reading and Leicester Universities) for generating support for research activities at SPU and for supporting joint international research between researchers of respective universities.

The Research Center of Sulaimani Polytechnic University has five core priorities, “Going Global”, “Mobilizing Knowledge”, “Preparing Global-Ready Graduates”, “Partnerships with Impact”, and “Leadership through Interdisciplinary Research”, which are global or international components. Each priority contributes to promoting global citizenship and international relevance.

Objective C1. Supporting Research Center’s international priorities to enhance SPU reputation on the world stage.

Actions:

- Ensuring that the university visiting scholar programs can be utilized for strategic initiatives.
- Increasing opportunities for research-based international internships for graduate and undergraduate students from 0.012% to 4%.
- Encouraging and supporting international mobility with targeted institutions and priority areas.
- Increasing opportunities to exchange programs of graduate students.

D. International Development Alumni Engagement and Communications

Alumni Engagement:

Over the last few years a lot of work has been done on international alumni engagement. So far SPU has over 700 international alumni living in different countries.

Objective D1: Double the international alumni engagement and triple the number of international media hits.

Actions:

- Working closely with the newly established international alumni advisory board to advise on developing international linkages, partnerships etc.
- Working with alumni to create international internship, research, and job shadowing opportunities for students. (CDC)
- Using the alumni contacts to facilitate development of strategic university partnerships and to strategically enhance recruitment efforts.
- Using the SPU alumni to enhance SPU’s activities internationally.
- Developing a comprehensive international communication strategy that takes into account the decentralized nature of communications and marketing at SPU.

The different actions will be measures as follows

Goal	Objective	Action	Indicator	Benchmark
<i>International Learning and Study Abroad</i>	Objective A1. Increase in the participation of SPU students in international experiences from 0.03% to 3%.		Achieve better participation of students in mobility / int. Experience	3% in 5 years
		• Promoting SPU to be able to provide consulting services for national and international stakeholders.	Feedback of students and int. Universities on conferences and fairs (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		• Offering packages for undergraduate and graduate students to to make international experiences	increase in share of students that received/used these packages	(+ 10% annually)
		• Arranging summer and fall academic orientation programs to make international experiences.	increase in share of students that participated in orientation programs	(+ 10% annually)
		• Enhancing and increasing promotion of international experiences within colleges and institutes and reducing barriers for participation	Feedback of students on information (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		o Creating a comprehensive bursary package for all international students who are enroled in SPU via the Ministry of Higher Education.	Feedback of students on package (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		o Ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage in an international experience without taking students longer to finish a degree.	increase in share of students participating in int. Experience at home or abroad	(+20% annually with goal of 100% after 5 yrs)
		o Ensuring that appropriate mechanisms to ensure students’ safety abroad are in place.	Feedback of students on security package (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		o Reducing bureaucracy related to credit transfer and applying for programs and awards.	Feedback of students on credit transfer and application (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		• making a twofold increase in the number of exchange places in target countries and signing MOU’s with international universities with	increase in number of exchange places	200% in 5 yrs

		close ranks.		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering comprehensive international summer programs. 	increase in number of int. Summer programs	20% per year
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the comprehensive international internship program. 	increase in number of int. Internship places	20% per year
			increase in membership in int. Associations	1 per year, max3.
Objective A2. Providing 5% more opportunities for Colleges and institutes, staff, and students to enhance their international and cross-cultural learning at home and abroad.		Actions targeting colleges, institutes and staff:	increase in opportunities for staff and students	(+5% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the workshop series on cross-cultural learning for staff at Colleges and Institutes. 	increase in workshop series	(+5% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the international Week at SPU that will encourage learning and communication of international activities by means of various facilities. 	establishment of Int. Week	Yes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing strategic international partnerships to facilitate international exchanges for university staff. 	increase in strategic int. Partnerships	(+5% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing staff exchange/job shadowing programs. 	increase in staff exchange/job shadowing places	(+5% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and increasing international learning certifications that is open to staff, colleges and institutes that includes language development opportunities. 	increase in staff participating in int. Learning certificate	(+5% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing and developing those processes and mechanism that serve to acknowledge international work of colleges and institutes, not only in the area of research, but also in teaching and providing services. 	Feedback of staff on these processes (survey)	at least average level 7 out of 10
		Actions Students:		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to encourage international curricula development for graduate and undergraduate programs through technology enhanced learning. 	share of programmes with international curriculum	(+20% annually with goal of 100% after 5 yrs)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the increase and promotion of dual and joint degree programs for postgraduate students. 	increase in number of postgrad students in dual and joint degree programmes	(+10% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing the increase and promotion of dual-degree and joint-degree programs for undergraduate students. 	increase in number of undergrad students in dual and joint degree programmes	(+10% annually)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the international learning certifications with appropriate learning outcomes that students will be able to earn through their degree programs. 	increase in number of students in int. Learning certificate courses	(+10% annually)
	Objective A3. Increasing and diversifying the international undergraduate student body at Sulaimani		Gradually increasing the number of incoming international students to 3%.	Increase in number of incoming int. Students
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversifying application pool to help ensure adequate diversity of student body. 	Increase in number of countries of applying int. Students	(+10% annually)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging applicants to apply to a wide range of programs at Sulaimani Polytechnic University. 	Increase in number of programmes for which int. Students apply	(+10% annually)
	Objective A4. Developing and increasing international and strategic plan for graduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing the strategic plan. 	plan is developed	yes
	Objective A5. Supporting the work of the portfolio of the University.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating opportunities to recognize the cultural diversity of colleges and institutes and fostering appropriate networking opportunities. 	increase in number of such opportunities	(+10% annually)
	Objective A6. Better recognition of the diversity of staff on campus and celebrating as well as engaging staff accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the mechanisms for collecting information about the cultural heritage and languages spoken by staff on campus. Developing the existing SPU staff ambassador program whereby representatives would be available to meet with visitors of similar cultural or language backgrounds. 	increase in mechanisms for collecting information existence of the ambassador program	(+10% annually) yes
Sulaimani Polytechnic University: A Welcoming, Supportive Community	Objective B1. Providing continuity of support and services to international students from the day they apply to Sulaimani Polytechnic University to the day they graduate, thereby ensuring that international students have similar retention and completion rates as domestic students and are satisfied with their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying academic programme demands that help international student succeed and develop program accordingly. 	report on identifying needs is written	yes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the needs of language requirement so that SPU International English Language Centre will be able to suggest and develop more language training programmes in support of best preparing ESL(English as Second Language) students for meeting their language requirements and their future academic courses. 	report on identifying language requirements is written	yes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in the International Student Barometer Survey to begin measuring international student satisfaction and to compare SPU fares with other universities' worldwide. 	sign up with Student Barometer	yes
International Research and Knowledge Mobilization	Objective C1. Support Research Centers international priorities thereby enhancing Sulaimani Polytechnic University's reputation on the world stage.	Ensuring that the University Visiting Scholar Program can be utilized for strategic initiatives.	Assessment of VUSP	yes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing opportunities for research-based international internships for graduate and undergraduate students from 0.012% to 4%. 	Increase in share of students who do research based internships	from 0.012% to 4% in 5 years
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging and supporting international mobility (colleges and institutes, gradstudent) 	increase in share of outgoing students	(+10% annually)

		with targeted institutions and and priority areas.		
		• Increasing visiting graduate students opportunities.	increase in number of incoming students	(+10% annually)
International Development - Alumni Engagement and Communications	Objective D1: Making a twofold increase in the international alumni engagement and triple the number of international media hits	• Working closely with the newly established international alumni advisory board to advise on developing international linkages, partnerships etc.	Feedback of alumni board on cooperation quality (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		• Working with alumni to create international internship, research, and job shadowing opportunities for students. (CDC)	increase in internships, research and job shadowing opportunities through alumni	(+10% annually)
		• Using the alumni contacts to facilitate development of strategic university partnerships and to strategically enhance recruitment efforts.	increase in partnerships through alumni	(+10% annually)
		• Using the SPU alumni to promote SPU and to enhance its activities internationally.	increase in student recruitment abroad through alumni	(+10% annually)
		• Developing a comprehensive international communication strategy that takes into account the decentralized nature of communications and marketing at SPU.	Feedback of alumni board on promotion quality (survey)	level 7 out of 10
		• Developing a comprehensive international communication strategy that takes into account the decentralized nature of communications and marketing at SPU.	existence of int. Communication strategy	yes

SPU’s strategy connection between the international strategies and the overall strategy development plan

SPU Strategic Plan Overview

Our strategic plan has exciting prospects for students, campuses, study centers and staff. Our priorities remain focused on growing our partnerships while leveraging the collective work and expertise of our staff alongside our campus and international partners. Through continued and enhanced collaboration on these initiatives, students are able to benefit from the highest level of support, preparation, and academic programming.

The Role of English Language in the Internationalisation of Higher Education

The task environment of higher education institutions has arguably changed dramatically over the past decades thanks to the influence of globalisation and English language’s continued predominance in academic settings. Thus, academic institutions need to cope with many new challenges and obstacles in the implementation of internationalisation strategy of knowledge and means. Bearing this mind, such moves underscore the language barrier and lack of communication in a multilingual level. This puts more demands on university authorities to tackle the language question and think of curricula transformation from local languages to the global language: the English language. However, the implementation of this process is challenging not only for students but also for both faculty members and staff of universities because of their language constraints.

Therefore, SPU’s International English Language Centre (IELC) has been founded since 2014 to provide English language support courses for undergraduate and postgraduate students at our University and other institutions who are in need to improve their English. The services that are provided by IELC are as follows:

- Providing English Language Foundation Course for first year undergraduate students

- Providing Pre-sessional Academic English Course for postgraduate candidates who they need to meet their language requirements for admission purposes
- Providing in-sessional Academic English Courses for postgraduate students of our university
- Delivering IELTS exam under the supervision of British Council-Iraq because it has been an authorized IELTS venue since 2016
- Providing writing advisory services and revising scholarly papers and dissertations
- Offering various training language courses for general, communication and academic purposes
- Offering IELTS preparation courses for postgraduate candidates and exam takers

The overarching goals of this strategic plan are:

- Enrollment growth internationally as we mentioned in the above table
- SPU's stakeholder collaboration through career development center
- Research and joint degree with the our partnerships
- Technology and enterprise resource management
- Raising up the quality education through implementation of Bologna process, accreditation and quality assurance.
- Offering postgraduate joint degrees through our partnerships with international institutions.
- Increasing students' internship internationally through our partnerships with global institutions.
- Promoting the mobility of staff and students
- Promoting research mobility
- Providing language support for university staff and students